

BULLETIN

2018



New Music South Africa

Bulletin of the South African Section of the
International Society for Contemporary Music

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EDITORIAL

South Africa has a tenuous relationship with home-grown composers of Western Art Music and their works. This is well known to all of us; *ons het dit aan ons eie bas gevoel* (we have felt this on our own skin - we encountered this ourselves). Indeed, in his essay, *Seeing Things As They Are - Musings on being a South African composer*, John Simon touches on this, not just in passing. It is in this environment that NewMusicSA strives to support composers.

This year's issue of the NewMusicSA Bulletin comes at a time of rebuilding NewMusicSA. During 2017 the leadership of NewMusicSA was depleted, leaving but a small band to hold the fort (or to make the music). We have been slowly rebuilding the executive and will certainly welcome additional help. We have, in both years, managed to organise a successful Indaba, publish a Bulletin and maintain a successful presence at the ISCM World Music Days. In that sense, NewMusicSA, the South African section of the International Society for Contemporary Music has continued its work in the promotion and support of contemporary music in South Africa.

The theme of next year's Bulletin will be **Resilience**. South Africa has undergone a tumultuous decade under rapacious politicians and bullies. Nature has also contributed in the form of rampantly consuming fires, enervating droughts and powerful, destructive floods. There are signs that this, at least the human element of it, is turning around. Certainly everyone (except maybe those with evil intent) would welcome a time of peace, tranquillity and prosperity. In any case South Africans of all stripes are known for their resilience, even when it is the worst of times, which we believe 2019 will not be.

We want to celebrate **Resilience** in Bulletin 2019. Please submit contributions, big or small, serious or less so, of any kind, around this theme. Essays, interviews, news items, reports and stories of human lives (always around music) are all welcome. And certainly, send in the scores (by the score). Incidentally, the word *Resilience* need not feature in the title or the text.

Lastly, I join John Simon in hoping that South Africa's gifted composers might, one day, soon become a little more accepting of one another!

NEWS

ISCM WORLD MUSIC DAYS, 2019

The following composers and their works have been selected for submission to the ISCM World Music Days in Tallinn, Estonia, 2019 (in alphabetical order):

Michael Blake	...only the song of the birds
François de Villiers	Yearning for Fulfillment
Jaco Meyer	Imitationen
Keith Moss	Hymn for Klara and Eva
Franco Prinsloo	Pula! Pula!
Abraham van Eeden	String quartet, 2nd movement

These composers entered as part of the Official Submission for the ISCM's South African Section. The WMD festival will take place from 2 to 10 May 2019 and the ISCM have stated that they are obligated to select one work for performance out of the six. We will announce the selected candidate when we are informed by them.

NEW CD RELEASE

Michael Blake has recently released a CD of his compositions for violoncello and piano, entitled "The Philosophy of Composition", on Wergo. He says he is "thrilled with the fabulous performances by Friedrich Gauwerky and Daan Vandewalle".

If you are interested in finding out more, or obtaining a CD, you are welcome to email Michael on michaelblake@sun.ac.za.

KEITH MOSS: SÃO PAULO CONTEMPORARY COMPOSERS FESTIVAL

Congratulations to Keith Moss who has been lucky enough to be accepted among 20 other composers from around the world to attend the São Paulo Contemporary Composers Festival in September 2018. A new work will be premiered at the Festival, recorded and broadcast live on Brazilian national television and radio, after which he plans to bring the recording home. There is a further possibility of having one of his orchestral works premièred by the Brazilian National Orchestra.

CD RELEASE

Benjamin Fourie has recently released a CD of his recital at last year's Indaba. He played Olivier Messiaen's "Eight Préludes", Étienne van Rensburg's "Sonata W36/94" and Malcolm Dedman's "Four Kinds of Love".

Tracks from the CD can be viewed at cdbaby, or you may email Malcolm Dedman (malcolmdedman@gmail.com) for information.

Sadly, Benjamin passed away on 30 April, losing his fight with cancer. He will be sadly missed as South Africa has now lost a well respected international pianist, even more so as he was a willing performer of new South African works. For a complete obituary, please see the home page of our website.

STERKFONTAIN COMPOSER'S WORKSHOP, FEB. 2018

The Sterkfontein Composers Meeting was held, in a shortened format, in Stellenbosch instead of in Sterkfontein due to funding constraints. Compositions

were submitted to the committee prior to the workshop, which eight composers (listed below) attended. Each composer workshopped his/her work with the Resident Ensemble, the Stockholm Saxophone Quartet, during the week. Composers had the opportunity to have individual sessions with Andile Khumalo, Michael Blake, and Paul Hanmer. At the end of the week, the Stockholm Saxophone Quartet performed all the works as part of the intense programme of the Purpur Festival of the Transgressive Arts concert.

The composers had an opportunity to present some of their compositional work to the Quartet; in turn, the Quartet also presented some of their favourite repertoire. It was an excellent time of getting to know one another, celebrating one another's music, and constant learning. The atmosphere was positive and uplifting throughout the week. The participants felt it was an enormous privilege to spend the week with such talented and generous performers and composers.

The recordings of each composition, recorded in the Gallery of the University of Stellenbosch, are accessible through the Sterkfontein Composers Meeting Facebook and Soundcloud platforms.

Participants: Kirsten Adams, Natali Frenz, Arthur Feder, Jesse Dreyer, Peter Ndlala, Lloyd Prince, Galina Juritz, Pierre-Henri Wicomb.

Michael Blake (michael@michaelblake.co.za) from Africa Open will provide further information if required.

ISCM WORLD MUSIC DAYS, 2018

This year, we were well represented at the World Music Days in Beijing, China. The Official Submissions were the ones we asked members to submit works to us and, out of the six works which were presented to Beijing, John Simon's "Coquette" for solo flute was chosen.

Additionally, as a piece by Maike Watson was included last year, she could not enter again this year under the banner of the "Official Submissions" (ISCM rules), so she decided to enter as an individual. Her work "VI Aphorisms" for piano solo was selected.

We offer our hearty congratulations to both these composers whose works were performed in Beijing in May. Please read John Simon's very entertaining report in this issue, on page 30.

KAROO KLASSIQUE

Karoo Klassique is a yearly music festival held in Oudtshoorn; this was the tenth Klassique. This year there were ten concerts, also three additional dinner theatre concerts.

The audience enjoyed the world première of two works for piano, clarinet and violin by South African composers Clare Loveday and Arthur Feder, in the concert entitled *The New Old - Die Nuutheid van Oudheid*. This was played by the trio consisting of Waldo Alexander (violin), Mareli Stolp (piano) and Morné van Heerden (clarinet), and the concert also included works by Darius Milhaud and Igor Stravinsky.

Loveday is fast becoming one of the most significant and innovative composers of her generation. Feder is a fresh voice that engages influences and styles across the spectrum of South African music.

NEW WORKS BY MEMBERS OF NewMusicSA

New works written by members of NewMusicSA in 2018, will be listed in the 2019 Bulletin. Please submit the titles, instrumentation, and approximate length (minutes and seconds). Do not forget your own name! Please note whether the work is

completed (only), or was submitted, e.g. for a competition, and whether successful. We will also list works previously written but newly published (by whom?), or premiered (when and by whom?) Indeed, as this listing has not recently been included, we will include new pieces from 2014 to 2018.

Please submit all this information by 31 March 2019. This request will also be made in the early 2019 Newsletters.

INTERVIEW

IN CONVERSATION WITH MATTHIJS VAN DIJK

Ansie de Swardt

Ansie de Swardt:

My name is Ansie de Swardt, producer of this podcast which was recorded as part of the South African National Youth Orchestra's Annual Summer Camp in December 2017.

I had the opportunity to speak to Matthijs van Dijk, the composer of 'Dance.', the first piece played by the Youth Orchestra in two of their concerts.

Matthijs van Dijk:

My name is Matthijs van Dijk. I am a Cape Town based composer and violist, and I am currently in Johannesburg for the National Youth Orchestra Festival. The Youth Orchestra is currently preparing to play a symphonic work of mine called 'Dance.'.

A:

I understand that this is a new piece. Is this the première that we are hearing tonight?

M:

Yes, this is the first time that it's being performed.

A:

It's certainly a very interesting piece. When you created it – it's now two years ago – did you have a picture in your mind? Is there some meaning in this piece?

M:

It is a lot more about ideas than telling a story. Part of it came from when I was living in New York for a couple of months. There was a certain practice that I saw

there which was of hardcore contemporary classical music being performed in bars. That immediately captured my imagination. There is a certain environment that comes with going into a concert hall and you have to be on your best behaviour and you're not allowed to clap during movements and things like that. Versus being in a bar where if you find the music particularly boring you can get up and go and have a smoke, then come back and enjoy it.

*

So through that, something that I had been toying with for a while was the notion of instead of a club hiring a DJ, finding a small group of musicians and performing dance music in those kinds of environment.

A:

There is a lovely jazziness to your piece. That's almost a big band sound we have there, not so?

M:

There are definitely touches of that. I like popular music. When I was a student still, I used to play in a Rock band. There were periods where I'd go through these extensive rehearsal periods, I'd be rehearsing with my bands, in the downtime I'd be listening to Mahler or Shostakovich, or I'd be playing a run of an opera (I'm a violist myself). I'd play a run and I'd go home and listen to System of a Down, Nine Inch Nails or Radiohead. That balance. As a composer, you've got to be in that time that you're in. And really draw from those inspirations.

When I was a student, I kind of felt embarrassed about it. And I would always say: "Yes there are elements of rock or EDM (electronic dance music) or jazz or whatever hiding in it". But it would always be deeply buried. I knew it was there and it gave me a warm feeling inside. But it could be interpreted as "Oh that's Shostakovich".

On that same trip in New York there was a composer with whom I had a masterclass called Missy Mazzoli and we sat down for tea in her apartment. She

said to me "You know, you say there are elements of rock or metal in your music..." (I'd played her some of my stuff or sent her some of the stuff at the time). "You say it's there, but I can't hear it." She basically challenged me. There are hundreds of people who write (like) Shostakovich or Mahler or Ravel or whatever (at times). But she encouraged me to sort of embrace the voice – "my voice".

A:

I'm also interested to hear from you: Do you have a specific process when you compose a piece? Does it fall into your head, out of the sky? Do you hear something that triggers it? Do you write sketches? How do you do it?

M:

It depends from piece to piece. Generally when I start writing I try to have an idea of where I'm going. I try to aim specifically for how I'm going to end it. But a lot of the time I will think about it for ages and then finally sit down and write it. There's something about the panic of deadlines to get the creative juices going.

A:

We were talking about your composition and how you got around to it. Would you say that in what you do, there's a specific "South Africanness" in your music?

M:

I don't know. There's a little bit of a minefield as much as I think that opens the question: as a South African composer, do you have to add an element of "South Africanness" to it? I think the whole idea of cultural appropriation comes into it, too. For a long time, one of the standard requests that you would get as a composer would be "Please write a piece XYZ and it must include an African element." That's very broad. Do they mean instrumentation? Must it sound like "The Lion King"? What exactly do they want from that?

So I have, for a long time, steered clear from it. If you wanted to hear an African composer there are far better composers out there that can do it than me. I think of Neo Muyanga, Bongani Ndodana-Breen. They will bring that voice. I can only write

from my own experience, so I will tend to write from a guy who grew up in Gardens and went to a lot of bars. So there is that "night-clubby" or rock feel. I would say that yes, there is an element of South Africanness in it, in as much as I am South African. But when it comes to the strong "African element", I steer clear of that.

As for the South African element in the orchestra, it's fantastic to see people from every walk of life coming together. Music is the age-old unifier, that brings everyone together. There is definitely a certain energy and everyone has different experiences that they can bring to the ensemble.

A:

The programme that these kids are playing is quite diverse. Do you think that there is an interaction between playing Tchaikovsky and playing your work, and playing your work and playing Stravinsky? Do they cross-pollinate each other?

M:

A little bit but a lot of that comes from the influences from what I grew up listening to. So one of my big musical memories of "I want to be a musician" was attending a National Youth Orchestra course in '98. It was the second year I did it and I was playing at the back of the first violins in the Concert Orchestra and we played Tchaikovsky's Fourth Symphony. And that for me was an eye-opener. "Wow, this is great music!" Although I wouldn't say I want to write something as melodic as Tchaikovsky, there are certain orchestral textures I will use where there will be a little bit of cross-pollination.

Same as with this particular piece. The end specifically is a bit of a wink at the end of "Rite of Spring", that fading off into nothing kind of thing. Especially at the climax of the piece, there are certain harmonic clashes that I use which are very much, again, heavily inspired by the "Rite of Spring" specifically.

A:

It is what it is. I almost heard two climaxes in the piece and a quietening down in the middle. Is it almost like two movements?

M:

The whole thing is definitely a juxtaposition of two ideas. It's the old going against the new, as I mentioned, the whole idea of embracing the Rock or the EDM element of it. The title itself 'Dance.' (with the full stop at the end) is a bit of a challenge. I keep thinking of "The Marriage of Figaro", where Figaro says to the Count "You will dance to my tune". It's that challenge where, it's like "I will hide this element; I will now bring this out." So at the climax you will have various types of styles happening simultaneously against the driving percussion dance side of things.

A:

Last question: How did you find the performance of this Youth Orchestra which did not have much time to rehearse all of it, and the interpretation by the conductor? How did you think it's going?

M:

I'm very happy with how it sounds. I have long thought that the best kind of performances that you can get, especially with New Music, are either from specialists or students. I used to play in an orchestra for many, many years, - there is a slight kind of feeling where you've seen it all before, as an orchestral player. A lot of those environments are not particularly happy. You go in and play and go home. Whereas with the chamber group, you have more control over musical choices. In an orchestra, you are being dictated to by the conductors. So you know, you are doing, not quite an office job, but along those lines. So when you're working with professionals, you have people who say "Yes, I have played every Beethoven Symphony thousands of times. Whatever you throw at me, I've experienced before." You have to remind them that this is a little different from a Beethoven Symphony and it gets complicated.

So I was very, very happy with how the kids are playing. There is a certain energy with those kinds of performances that, although the orchestras in SA are fantastic and they have fantastic energy in themselves, there is a certain kind of youthfulness that you'll only get from this kind of environment.

A:
Indeed yes.

*

Well thank you very much for your time.

M:
Thank you!

Transcription by Jaclyn Scott

* [Music clip - will be available on [NewMusicSA's](#) website]

ESSAY

SEEING THINGS AS THEY ARE - MUSINGS ON BEING A SOUTH AFRICAN COMPOSER

John Simon

While growing up in South Africa during the nineteen-sixties it was clear to me that local composers counted for very little. After graduating as an economist I went into self-imposed exile for fourteen years. When I came back in 1979 the SABC's music department was taking South African composers more seriously than before.

Naturally they needed to be decent conservative types if they were to flourish under the prevailing system. Overseas exposure, such as I had had, was a cause for suspicion. When the old regime started to crumble, musical opportunities improved dramatically as doors, which had long been closed to composers like me, were suddenly opened. Things got even better in the years immediately after 1994.

However, by 2000 most of our orchestras, along with many performing arts bodies, were in a state of collapse. The national broadcaster had not only lost its National Symphony Orchestra (NSO) but had lost its way, and composers and performers found the once bustling recording studios deserted, the music producers living off golden handshakes, and performance and dissemination possibilities a thing of the past. A bright light shone a few years later with the birth of two green shoot orchestras, and the bouncing back of opera, and to a lesser degree, ballet. However, this uptick has not proved as far-reaching as one might have hoped for.

2018 is a strange time in musical South Africa. After all, we still don't have a national broadcaster promoting our composers and performers, so that even if your piece is played wonderfully well by whoever, you will still have no chance of hearing it on the country's national wavelengths. After years of talk, there is still no National Symphony Orchestra about to replace the old NSO. There are no musical philanthropists to be found anywhere. People still sit in offices at UNISA and decide which South African composers should be mentioned in the country's national school syllabuses, and which South African composer's piano music should be

included in piano grade exams. The English universities have more or less given up the musical ghost, and the Afrikaans ones often have a bureaucratic feel that harks back to the way things once were. We have three main philharmonics, of which two have the same CEO and artistic director. The music rights people no longer reveal the source or amount of royalties one earns as a composer. A musical award is very rarely given to a South African composer; and when it has been given it is usually a *bronze category* award.

What can a young South African composer do in these difficult times? He or she will doubtless have to teach in some capacity or other; and if he or she does write something worthwhile he or she will experience considerable difficulty in getting it performed. Some will go overseas only to discover that they are now foreigners in an increasingly nationalistic world, and will find it difficult to get significant performances or broadcasts in their adoptive country. The composer's original nationality will prove a disadvantage in many places. If he or she works twice as hard as a local they might just have luck. Britain is remarkably supportive of its composers - and of foreign ones, especially if they come from places like the USA, Scandinavia or Finland (with its six orchestras). Just like the much admired Aussie, our South African is not going to be given a passport to easy compositional success in the UK - or elsewhere.

I had to wait until I was thirty-eight before I received my first South African orchestral performance. The year was 1983 and things were slowly moving towards a more enlightened musical future that was to last for ten years (from about 1988 to 1998), when orchestral performances were professionally recorded and broadcast nationally. During these years South Africa seemed to open up musically, and there were increasing possibilities for composers. Unfortunately these times, as already mentioned, soon passed.

NewMusicSA is a small organisation, but it has integrity at its core. It allows its members to submit works that are judged objectively, whether for an Indaba, the ISCM or a national competition. This is a real plus. It deserves the support and membership of many *more* South African composers, as well as performers committed to bringing South African art music back from the brink and into the

spotlight. Hopefully it will *grow* in a country filled with talented performers (often very tribal in their approach to local composers!) and gifted composers (who one day might become a little more accepting of one another!). None of this, of course, can replace a dedicated national broadcaster to *record, broadcast* and *disseminate* music. However, we have a rich ethnic musical heritage, which does offer possibilities. This, together with a change of mindset that encourages what is good and worthwhile musically in one's fellow, should help to give budding composers a creative environment that offers greater possibilities. I wish NewMusicSA much success in the years ahead and would definitely not rule out the possibility of it eventually becoming the 'Composers Association (Guild) of South Africa' with an accessible office in a major city.

May 2018

www.johnsimon.org.uk

REPORTS

NewMusicSA INDABA 2018

Malcolm Dedman

The 2018 NewMusicSA Indaba took place between 5 and 7 October at Nelson Mandela University's South Campus, Port Elizabeth. It was considered to be a great success by participants and attendees.

There were three major concerts, held in the evenings at the campus' Auditorium. The first (Friday evening) was performed by the viola and piano duo Elmarie van der Vyver and Mathilda Hornsveld, who gave a programme of music by Niel van der Watt, Franco Prinsloo and Pieter Bezuidenhout. The duo will be playing some of this music during the International Viola Congress (IVC) in Rotterdam later in the year. During the afternoon, two of the composers and the performers gave a talk on the music in this concert. Four of the five works performed were given their World Première. The work by Niel van der Watt had received its World Première at last year's Indaba in Pretoria.



Saturday evening saw a concert recital given by the young pianist Dominic Daula. He played a varied programme of music by Hubert du Plessis, James May, Hendrik Hofmeyr, Casey Chiang, Malcolm Dedman and Arnold van Wyk. Two of the six works performed were given their World Première. During the morning, Dominic gave a presentation on the music he was to play.



Dominic Daula's recital

The chamber concert given on Sunday evening was a tribute to Nelson Mandela, especially appropriate as the university is named after this great icon and this year is his 100th anniversary year. Two pieces by Malcolm Dedman were a special tribute: *In Honour of Madiba* for flute, viola and piano and *The Passing of an Icon* for soprano, string quartet, piano and percussion. The latter was conducted by the composer. Two pieces by John Simon were played: *A Peal of Bells* for cello and piano and *Sonatina* for two flutes. This varied programme also included Douglas Scott's *Entsha uphazamisa umhlangano (The meeting is interrupted by the new arrival)* for solo clarinet; Lise Morrison's *Mamela, mamela, mamela* for solo violin ('Mamela' translates as 'listen'); Hendrik van Blerk's *Breezeway* for brass quartet

and finally *Dance of Africa* by Malcolm Dedman. Four of these eight pieces were given their World Première and three their South African Première. The pieces were performed by university students and staff, as well as local performers known to the university.



Performance of Malcolm Dedman's 'The Passing of an Icon'

In the morning three of the composers gave a talk about the music in the Sunday evening programme.

On Saturday afternoon, there was an informal concert given by students of the university. Seven student composers presented their works for a variety of different combinations and these were also performed by university students. The purpose of this concert was for the composers to receive feedback on their work, this being provided by David Bester, Malcolm Dedman and Miles Warrington.

Additionally, Malcolm Dedman gave a talk on Saturday morning about some European music developments over the last 100 years, some of which has informed South African composers, as presented in this Indaba. A follow-on talk was provided on Sunday morning by Dr Miles Warrington who focussed on more recent developments, especially in the field of electro-acoustic music. He used his recent

composition PSITHURISM as an example of work being done in this field.



NELSON MANDELA
UNIVERSITY

Department of Music and NewMusicSA

INDABA
2018

New Music Indaba
5 to 7 October 2018 | 19:30
Nelson Mandela University South Campus Auditorium

Concerts and discussions introducing New Music that represents our African heritage and South African culture.

To be performed by the staff and students of Nelson Mandela University.
Guest Artists: Elmarie van der Vyver, Mathilda Hornsveld and Dominic Daula

Adults: R50 · Pensioners: R30 · Students/Scholars: R20
Free entrance for music students

For more information, contact: Alethea de Villiers on 041 504 2643 (office) or 083 735 3735

BUSINESS AND ARTS SOUTH AFRICA **NewMusicSA** **SAMRO FOUNDATION**

NewMusicSA is especially grateful to the staff of the Nelson Mandela University, especially to Alethea de Villiers, Nicky Bosman and David Bester, whose hard work

helped to make this Indaba possible. None of this would have been possible if it wasn't for the university providing the premises for which NewMusicSA are especially grateful; also the event could not have been held if it wasn't for funding from Southern African Music Rights Organisation (SAMRO) and Business Arts South Africa (BASA) who have both given generous grants.

As a result of this Indaba, NewMusicSA has welcomed two new members.

During the Sunday afternoon, NewMusicSA board members held their Annual General Meeting, to which all members were invited. All board members and three NewMusicSA members were present, with one of these, Daniel Hutchinson, being elected onto the board. The following table lists the current board members with their appointed offices and portfolios.

Board Member	Office	Portfolio
Malcolm Dedman	Chairman	Membership
Douglas Scott	Secretary	
Diale Mabitsela	Treasurer	
François de Villiers		Bulletin editor
Lukas Ligeti		Africa liaison
Daniel Hutchinson		Communication

北京现代音乐节 BEIJING MODERN MUSIC FESTIVAL ISCM WORLD MUSIC DAYS 2018

John Simon: Representative of NewMusicSA at the ISCM World Music Days in Beijing

Shortly before my departure in May for the ISCM World Music Days in Beijing ("Northern Capital" 北京), the Festival organisers e-mailed to say that when I arrived at Beijing's Terminal Two it would be advisable to take an officially approved orange, blue and black taxi to my hotel; a taxi with a meter and an honest driver to go with it; someone at the wheel who wouldn't rip me off on Day One and leave an ugly taste in the mouth for the rest of my nine day stay. I did as suggested and shook hands with the driver who would take me to the city. Like everyone else he spoke only Chinese, but when he saw the address of my hotel in Chinese characters on the official invitation he made signs to indicate he knew where to go. As he sped through the heavy early Saturday morning traffic I marvelled at how he avoided having an accident - all of this for a mere 104.40 Yuan. Less fortunate airport arrivals were paying up to 400 Yuan, I told myself, as I waited at the reception desk of the China Palace Hotel.

My Tower A room on the twelfth floor of the three-towered hotel was suitably four-star, if a little stiff. I felt tired yet elated at having made it to Beijing from Salford without a hitch. The view from the apartment windows was filled with skyscrapers and high-rise buildings that disappeared in the distance in the blurring midday heat.

Early that afternoon I set off for the Central Conservatory of Music. It was here that many of the concerts would take place and here that I had to sign in as South African delegate to the ISCM. I set off on the twenty-five minute walk, discovering that every street in addition to a two-way system for cars, almost all of them heavy sedans, had a lane on either side for bicycles, motor cycles and other small vehicles, making crossing a risky undertaking. Near to where I thought the

Conservatory must be I came across an elderly man pushing a poodle in a plastic-hooded pink pram and asked him for directions. We started to chat in English and it turned out he had been a professor of engineering and had lived in Scotland. He said he would take me to the Central Conservatory's main gate.

Due to my having inadvertently set my watch an hour ahead of local time, I was the first delegate to register. This gave me ample opportunity to explore the campus. Most of the buildings were modern; many high-rise. Surely the most attractive one, though, was the Prince Mansion Concert Hall where many renowned orchestras had played. This converted mansion, which dates back to 1777, had once been the official residence of China's last emperor Puyi 溥仪. Its graceful green and brown exterior gave character to an otherwise unremarkable campus.

Shortly after my return to the China Palace Hotel and subsequent setting off to a nearby shopping mall, a fearsome storm with gale force winds and driving rain swept into Beijing. I was buffeted along relentlessly by the storm and found myself flying through the main entrance of a large pharmacy. My unceremonious arrival saw a tall plastic stand with balloons attached to it collapsing to the floor, the liberated balloons flying upwards to the delight of nearby children. Jet lagged, exhausted and soaking wet, I decided to skip the Festival's opening concert and returned to the China Palace Hotel. During the small hours I watched CGTN (China Global Television News) and was pleasantly surprised to find how objective the news was.

In spite of many good intentions I missed the Sunday afternoon electronic music concert, but managed to make it to the evening concert, given by Ensemble Modern from Frankfurt. The highlight was a performance of Bernd Alois Zimmermann's *Présence, a ballet blanc* for piano trio and narrator filled with Webernian ultra expressiveness and quotes from Richard Strauss. Needless to say the piece also contained many original sonorities by BAZ himself. Unfortunately some of the evening's other offerings didn't quite match the stature of *Présence*, especially one that started with a cello and viola being played upside down.



Saturday morning at Tiananmen Square

The following morning, and on the subsequent four mornings, the General Assembly of the ISCM met in a conference hall at the Merchantel Hotel, situated between the China Palace Hotel and the Central Conservatory of Music (CCOM). Much time was spent on approving amendments to the ISCM's statutes due to the impending relocation of its headquarters from Utrecht to Vienna. All the proceedings were in English, which meant that every important point had to be translated into Chinese so that the Beijing, Shanghai and Nanjing delegates could understand what was being voted for. Welcome relief smiled on the Thursday morning when the matter of *which* city should host the 2021 ISCM Festival was addressed. Tallinn in 2019 had been decided on, so too had Auckland and Christchurch in 2020, but what of 2021? Would it be Shanghai/Nanjing or Athens? The Shanghai/Nanjing delegations explained how their conservatories would share the Festival Days and presented the assembled delegates with a preliminary budget. The Greek delegate argued that the start of his country's independence

struggle in 1821 was the critical reason why Athens should host the event. However, there were only the vaguest hints as to where the festival funds would be coming from. So the outcome (decided by secret ballot) was inevitable. This left the Greek delegate bereft of words. His subsequent outbursts were patriotic ones, if bizarrely comical. He was given a mild ticking off, since most of the delegates were friendly types with a commitment to contemporary music. They understood his intense disappointment.

The World New Music Days concert schedule consisted of two chamber concerts each afternoon and a full orchestral (or large ensemble) concert in the evening.

When I studied the schedule I was surprised to find how many performances there would be. Surely it would be impossible to listen to so many new works, many of them composed entirely at the computer? Happily most of the concerts turned out to be worthy of the listener's time. A few highlights deserve mention. Michael Seltenreich, originally from Israel, won the ISCM Young Composers' Award for his sextet "Sparks and Flares". Jean-Pierre Deleuze from Belgium won praise for his "Shôrô" for string quartet, as did Gyula Bánkóvi's "White Angels" - a Crumb-inspired work with elusive Magyar rhythms. The latter works were performed by the Mivos Quartet from America. Li Liu's piano trio "Beyond the River" was the feistiest piece I have yet heard by a woman composer (I scribbled an impetuous "excellent" on my concert schedule); what an exciting helter-skelter ending it has! Liu's piece was one of a group of Chinese piano trios performed by the New Zealand Trio. The Australian String Quartet's Friday afternoon recital included Ping Gao's "Bright Light and Cool Shadows" - a delicately crafted string musing - as well as Peter Sculthorpe's Janáčekian Eleventh String Quartet ("Jabiru Dreaming"). The final matinee concert was given by Trio Clavino from the USA (clarinet, violin/viola and piano). Although given the thumbs down by some, I enjoyed their recital, especially Christy Banks's fulsome clarinet. Two South African works featured in the first of the Tuesday matinee concerts: Maike Watson's "VI Aphorisms" for piano performed by Alvin Zhu, and the writer's "Coquette for solo flute" performed by Ling Li. Both met with approval from a generous audience. Maike's piece inexplicably was the only piano solo in the whole Festival.

The evening concerts were more formal. Regrettably, I felt overwhelmed by the brashness of many of the orchestral pieces, written by (seemingly) inexperienced composers with scant regard for theme or melody. To my mind the best work was "Correntandemente" (a neologism) by Welsh composer William Mival, performed by the Tianjin Symphony Orchestra. Its assured orchestration included impressive brass writing, especially for trombones. In the same programme the young Italian composer Marco Longo's "Light-Lapse" for large ensemble, a musical progression from darkness to light and then back to darkness, evolved impressively until it reached a brilliant climax. This was where the piece should have ended; unfortunately the music "crumbled on.... and vanished in a void" according to the composer's notes. Sadly the paucity of many of the Festival's programme notes showed just how little value many composers place on this concert prerequisite. Perhaps a few of the programme notes lost their meaning as a result of poor translation into English.

Since I was leaving Beijing early next day I only heard the first half of the final Saturday concert given by the China National Symphony Orchestra. The first piece "Three Postludes for Orchestra" by Lutosławski was followed by two raucous pieces that signalled it was time to leave. With Lutosławski ringing in my ears I made my way back to the China Palace Hotel, crossing the CCOM's lantern-filled grounds with something like a heavy heart. I had spent the morning and early afternoon in central Beijing visiting Tiananmen Square 天安门广场 and the Forbidden City, where the Ming and Qing dynasties held court from the beginning of the Fifteenth Century until 1912. I had taken the "subway", as the underground is known in Beijing, and had visited the Forbidden City with its twelve palaces. Now as I returned for the last time to my hotel I came to realise how positive my experiences had been. My Chinese hosts had been gracious and interested in what I was doing, even if they only had a few words of English in which to express this. (A few Chinese words on the visitor's part often acted as an incantation, enabling people to open up and smile appreciatively.) I had walked the tree-lined route day and night as I to'd-and-fro'd between the Conservatory and the hotel. I had seen many a dedicated grandparent waiting outside a nearby school ready to collect a grandchild. I had noted just how well-adjusted the children seemed, one moment

intensely serious, the next kicking a ball about with gusto on the Conservatory campus. Clearly adults in Beijing were devoted to stimulating their young, including the next generation of Chinese musicians.



The Entrance to the Forbidden City

On my second Sunday I left for Beijing International. I found the nearest subway station with some difficulty and had to change lines twice with a heavy case in tow. As my third tube sped towards its goal, then surfaced, I saw an amazing country spread out before me - at work and seemingly at peace with itself. People appeared to be productively employed wherever I looked. My fellow passengers quite naturally were occupied with their Smartphones (books were noticeably absent): a materialist society for sure, I told myself. Then I thought of the many talented Chinese composers I had met and whose music I had listened to with interest; how every title or subtitle had had an association with nature: rivers, lakes, clouds, mountains, seascapes, sunsets, forests; even light, fire and flame. Clearly they saw the world with different eyes from some of their Western counterparts,

whose titles included "Sonic Cells on a Structured Surface", "Trafficking", "Unhinged", "Combo", "Organismo", "On the Instability of Current Events", "Coquette" and the like. I was left admiring; puzzled.

约翰·西蒙

2018年8月23日

VISBY COMPOSERS RESIDENCY REPORT

Diale Mabitsela

My time in Visby was an incredibly fruitful and informative period. I saw the residency as an opportunity both to reflect on the masters degrees I had completed at Wits and at Oxford, what I had learnt and how I had developed as a composer, as well as to pursue a compositional project I had been interested in for some time. I was given one month (September-October 2017) in the Visby International Centre for Composers (VICC) to see through these aims. Communal accommodation was provided for all composers in residence. Each composer was also given a working space equipped to deal with each person's demands, e.g., a fully kitted out studio for electro-acoustic musicians, notation rooms or a grand piano room.



The Proposed Project

The proposal I had submitted was to write a Roman Catholic mass for choir and miscellaneous instrumentation. I decided to focus my attention on composing a

communion motet based on Psalm 131 and then to develop and complete the rest of the mass upon returning to South Africa based on material in the motet, thus rendering an imitation mass as was common from the 14th to the 16th century. By and large I succeeded in executing the first phase of this plan. Most of the motet was complete at the time of departing from Visby to return home.

Working Space

I also gained in many other ways from my time on Gotland. The Notation room in which I was situated was equipped with two pianos (an upright and an electric), a Mac with Pro Tools, Logic, Sibelius and a sound card and midi controller. I was able therefore to adopt different approaches and techniques that helped with the compositional process. I also had time to practice my keyboard skills in addition to carrying out some research and analysis on choral works I had grown to appreciate in my time as part of the Schola Magna at Blackfriars, Oxford.

The Community and Environment

One of the more important aspects of the residency is the community of composers that forms in and around the centre. We enjoyed multiple conversations, attended



concerts and on one occasion, we had a listening session in which we heard each other's pieces and gave each other feedback. Having travelled with Dr Andile Khumalo, I benefitted greatly from our frequent interactions and the many different issues and ideas we deliberated over. The centre was also based in the same venue as the Gotland School of Composition. As such we were able to interact with lecturers and students from the school. We were also allowed to attend lectures and seminars. A seminar on the music of Arvo Pärt was particularly insightful and helped to inspire my general approach to my own work.

Location

The Island was perfect as a geographical location. It is situated some distance away from the mainland and thus from many of the distractions that might prove counterproductive. Nevertheless, the town of Visby was itself quite enjoyable with many restaurants and cafes. A notable feature is the way in which the old medieval



town is dotted with the ruins of old churches, echoing forwards into the present from the past. In some way, I felt a connection to the past given the nature of my work: in composing a mass setting I am engaging in a task that once dominated the landscape of music compositional work but is now very much stripped of its

former importance. Like those ruins, my project stands as a living testimony to a former time. Lastly, being situated on the harbour, Visby was also a great place to find private space to reflect and perhaps become rejuvenated so as to begin again on the great journey of life as a composer.

Thanks

I would like to offer my sincerest thanks to the VICC as well as to NewMusicSA for making this time possible. It was a really inspiring experience and I hope to make the fruits of my labour in Visby available in due course for others to enjoy.

SCORES

DANCE OF AFRICA

For Violin and Pianoforte

by Malcolm Dedman

Dance of Africa was commissioned by the South African violinist Cathy Irons and was written in 2011. It is for violin and piano and lasts under 4 minutes.

This piece is based on three short West African rhythmic cells which would normally be played on instruments such as congas, clave and cowbell. The work develops melodic and harmonic material based on these three rhythms, as well as a mode written especially for this piece - A Bb C Db E F F# G A. The manner in which it uses these rhythms and mode suggests a blend, or fusion, of African and Western musical styles.

Dance of Africa was first performed in New Zealand on 12 September 2013 by Cathy Irons (violin) and Flavio Villani (piano); then later in Germany on 1 June 2017 with Ingrid Wendel playing violin. It was recently given its first performance in South Africa during the NewMusicSA Indaba in the Nelson Mandela University, Port Elizabeth, on 7 October 2018. This performance was played by David Bester (violin) and Erika Bothma (piano).

Dance of Africa

for Violin and Piano

2011

Malcolm Dedman

Allegro, ♩ = 132

Violin

mf

Piano

5

Vln.

f

Pno.

mf

f

8va

10

Vln.

8

Pno.

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15

Vln.

Pno.

p

20

Vln.

Pno.

mf

p

mf

8^{va}

poco rit. A tempo

Vln.

Pno.

f

p

f

p

8^{va}

25

Vln.

Pno.

mf

mf

30

Vln. *f* poco rit.

Pno. *f*

35

Vln. *p* *mf* *Meno mosso, ♩ = 108* pizz.

Pno. *p* *mf*

40

Vln. *p* *f* *arco accel.* *A tempo, ♩ = 132*

Pno. *p* *f*

Vln.

Pno.

45

Vln. *ff*

Pno. *ff*

50

Vln. *f* *p*

Pno. *f* *p*

55

Vln. *mf*

Pno. *mf*

Più mosso, ♩ = 144 60

Vln. *p*

Pno. *p* *ff*

Vln. *pizz.*
f

Pno. *f*

65

Vln. *arco*
f

Pno. *p*

70

Vln. *pizz.*
f

Pno. *ff*

75

Vln. *pizz.*
f

Pno. *p*

80

Vln. arco *f* rit.

Pno.

Meno mosso, ♩ = 108

Vln. *p* pizz. *mf*

Pno. *p* *mf*

85 arco *p* *mf*

Pno. *p* *mf*

90 poco accel. A tempo, ♩ = 132

Vln. *p* *f*

Pno. *p* *f*

95

Vln.

Pno.

8va

Detailed description: This system covers measures 95 to 99. The violin part (Vln.) consists of a steady eighth-note accompaniment in the right hand, with a dotted quarter note in the left hand. The piano part (Pno.) features a complex texture with chords and moving lines in both hands. An 8va (octave) marking is present above the right-hand piano staff.

100

Vln.

Pno.

ff

ff

Detailed description: This system covers measures 100 to 104. The violin part (Vln.) continues with the eighth-note accompaniment, marked *ff* (fortissimo). The piano part (Pno.) also features a complex texture with chords and moving lines, marked *ff* in both hands.

rit.

Vln.

Pno.

f

p

f

p

Detailed description: This system covers measures 105 to 109. The tempo is marked *rit.* (ritardando). The violin part (Vln.) has a more melodic line, marked *f* (forte) and *p* (piano). The piano part (Pno.) continues with a complex texture, marked *f* and *p* in both hands.

105

Più mosso, ♩ = 144

Vln.

Pno.

f

f

Detailed description: This system covers measures 105 to 109. The tempo is marked *Più mosso* with a quarter note equal to 144 (♩ = 144). The violin part (Vln.) has a more melodic line, marked *f* (forte). The piano part (Pno.) continues with a complex texture, marked *f* in both hands.

A tempo, ♩ = 132 110

Vln. *mf p*

Pno. *mf p p* *8va*

115

Vln. *mf f*

Pno. *mf f* *8va* *8va*

120

Vln. *mf p pp*

Pno. *mf p*

125

Vln. *pizz. arco ff*

Pno. *ff*

MALCOLM DEDMAN

Malcolm Dedman was born in London, England, on 3 November 1948. Fascinated at an early age by his mother's piano playing, she taught him to play when he was around 5 years of age. Once Malcolm had a basic understanding, he found himself improvising alongside his regular practice. By the age of 12, he realised that he wanted to write some of these ideas down, so this became the starting point to his career as a composer.

During his teens, he listened to a considerable amount of new music and basically taught himself to write, learning from what he heard. For him, writing music was not a choice, it was something he had to do. With minimal input from other musicians, he won two prizes: a setting of the Magnificat (in English) for the "Free Church Choir Union" and a Sonatina for the Brent Music and Dance Festival, a work which was later to form the first movement of his Piano Sonata No. 1 – Restoration.

Despite the urge to write music, his studies lead him to science, and he graduated in 1971 with an Honours Degree in Applied Physics. He earned his living for the next twenty years as an electronic design engineer with various companies in the UK. Shortly after starting work, he studied composition informally with Patric Standford, who was teaching at the time in the Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. This helped him to establish a more personal style and to become more practical in his approach to composition.

Even though Malcolm won other awards and secured performances of his music, it was not until 2004 that he was in a position to pursue a degree in music. To this end, he studied for his Masters in Composing Concert Music at the Thames Valley University in London (now the University of West London), graduating with distinction in 2005.

As he was not born into a family of professional musicians, it has proved difficult for Malcolm to make composition a practical source of income. Having married a South African lady in 2004, he moved to South Africa with his wife in 2007 and he found that he had more time to write new works, revise old ones and to meet professional performers willing to play some of his music. As well as having an on-line presence, performances have been secured in 14 different countries around the world. Much of his music has been received well by audiences with fantastic feedback on-line from listeners not normally associated with new 'art' music.

The inspiration for Malcolm's work is varied: some based on landscape and surroundings and others on social and spiritual concepts. From his early years when learning piano, he has heard music in his mind and much has been begging to be written down. Despite this, it has taken a number of years for him to find his own individual voice. Works written in the mid-80s do reflect individuality and he now considers the works he wrote for his Masters during 2004 and beyond being his true "voice".

Having turned 70 in November of 2018, he is now very active in writing new pieces and promoting works of other composers through NewMusicSA.

Website: <http://www.musiciansgallery.com/start/composers/dedman/malcolm.htm>

Sound files: <http://www.reverbnation.com/malcolmdedman> and

<https://soundcloud.com/misty-mountain>

MAGMAWATER

for Saxophone Quartet

by Natali Frenz

This work was composed for the Sterkfontein Composers' Meeting, 2018. The challenge was to delve into techniques that we had not previously explored, in composing a work for the resident ensemble, the Stockholm Saxophone Quartet.

Most of the variables that I scrutinise in *Magmawater* are built around multiphonic chords, specifically the overlapping of overtones, and how one's awareness of the various partials is affected by the chord's context. For example, if a multiphonic chord containing an F[#] is preceded by a 'normal' F[#], does your ear pick out the F[#] in the harmonic more spontaneously than if it not preceded by an F[#]? If two different multiphonic chords have partials that overlap, do those reinforce one another? How does the delicate tone quality characteristics of multiphonics interact between different instruments? I am fascinated by intricate relationships between variables in an element of sound, and interactions between those elements.

The Stockholm Saxophone Quartet worked with the composer in realising *Magmawater*, and their sensitivity and sincerity is highly appreciated.

Magmawater is an Afrikaans title. Magmatic water comes from primordial water sources far beneath the earth's surface, or from within molten igneous rock. There are multiplex ties between the title and the conceptualisation of the music. This title relates to the tropes in Etienne van Heerden's *Toorberg*, where the earth seems to

withhold life-giving water as punishment for a collective injustice. I have yet to wrestle through all the complexities of that novel, yet I felt the need to reference it due to my socio-political context here in Stellenbosch: a space fraught with severe drought, land debates, and issues of reconciliation and responsibility.

Magmawater does not seek to take a political stance. Rather, it is designed to create an exposed, vulnerable sonic space.

Magmawater

Natali Frenz
1995 -

Pensive
♩ = c.30

Soprano Saxophone
p
slowly exhale on an 's' sound

Alto Saxophone
ss...
n < *p*
slowly exhale on an 's' sound

Tenor Saxophone
ss...
pp
slowly exhale on an 's' sound

Baritone Saxophone
pp
ss...

Sop. Sax.
hum
mp
sing and play

Alto Sax.
n ss...
pp

Ten. Sax.
p *n* *pp*

Bari. Sax.
pp *pp*

*♭ quarter-tone plus an eighth-tone lower

rall. Tempo primo

8

Sop. Sax. subtone *mf* *pp*

Alto Sax. hum *mm...* *mm...* subtone *pp*

Ten. Sax. subtone hum *mm...*

Bari. Sax. sing and play subtone *mp*

12

Sop. Sax. *pp* *sf* normal

Alto Sax. *pp* *p* *f*

Ten. Sax. *pp* *sf*

Bari. Sax. *pp* *sf*

* # three quarter-tones higher ** ♭ quarter-tone lower

17

Sop. Sax. *mf* *pp*

Alto Sax. *p* *pp*

Ten. Sax. *mf* *pp*

Bari. Sax. *pp*

(same fingering)

(same fingering)

20

Sop. Sax. *sf* *mf* *ss...*

Alto Sax. *f*

Ten. Sax. *sf* *mf* *ss...*

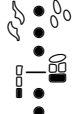
Bari. Sax. *sf* *ss...*

slowly exhale on an 's' sound

(same fingering)

* † quarter-tone higher

** ‡ quarter-tone plus an eighth-tone higher



23

Sop. Sax. *p* *p* sigh (no vowel sound) *h...*

Perc. *ss...* *ss...* *pp*

Ten. Sax. *ss...* *pp*

Bari. Sax. *pp* *pp*

Detailed description: This is a musical score for four instruments: Soprano Saxophone, Percussion, Tenor Saxophone, and Baritone Saxophone. The score is divided into two measures, each with a 3/4 time signature. The first measure is in B-flat major (one flat), and the second measure is in B major (two sharps). The Soprano Saxophone part starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic, playing a half note in the first measure and a half note in the second measure, followed by a 'sigh' (no vowel sound) indicated by a circled 'h...' in the third measure. The Percussion part plays a series of sixteenth notes in the first measure, followed by a rest in the second measure, and then a piano (*pp*) dynamic in the third measure. The Tenor Saxophone part plays a series of sixteenth notes in the first measure, followed by a rest in the second measure, and then a piano (*pp*) dynamic in the third measure. The Baritone Saxophone part plays a series of sixteenth notes in the first measure, followed by a rest in the second measure, and then a piano (*pp*) dynamic in the third measure.

NATALI FRENZ

Natali Frenz was born in Pretoria in 1995. She started learning to play the piano after moving to the Western Cape in 2005, later taking up clarinet under the tuition of Suretha Theron. Completing her schooling in 2013, Natali achieved the highest mark in South Africa for Cambridge AS-Level Music (2012) and distinction for Cambridge A-Level Music (2013). She completed her BMus degree under Hans Roosenchoon at Stellenbosch University (2014-2017). She has been privileged to learn from many influential South African composers, including Jeanne Zaidel-Rudolph, Clare Loveday, Kevin Volans, Michael Blake, Andile Khumalo and Paul Hanmer. Her works have been performed by renowned artists such as the Stockholm Saxophone Quartet, Minette Du Toit-Pearce and Peter Martens. A versatile composer, she has explored genres ranging from film music to total-serialism works. She is continuing her studies under the supervision of Antoni Schonken and Carina Venter, with additional guidance from Arthur Feder.

Website: www.natali.co.za

IT IS EASY

For Tenor and Pianoforte

by François de Villiers

That it is not easy to create anything anew must be obvious from the fact that very few people in fact manage to do so. The comment by a successful author, on being asked a facile question, resonated with this composer. Gene Fowler[#] said: "Writing is easy. All you do is sit staring at a blank sheet of paper until drops of blood form on your forehead." This forms the basis of the song. The idea of contrasting a voluptuous Muse with the solitary struggle of the artist is exploited in this song in alternating tonal and atonal sections. The womanliness theme with which the song opens, occurs in all the songs of the cycle (see below). The atonal sections use a 12 tone row which was randomly derived. In each atonal section the music is a little varied. There is canonical writing between the voice and two hands, which also varies in each of the atonal sections. The black hair theme is also used in other songs of the cycle. This is the fourth in a song cycle of five songs entitled "When will I see you again" describing a love affair, from the instant where the girl/woman is first seen, the first kiss, and the lover driving through the night, anticipating meeting her again. The final song is entitled "On leaving". Neither the song nor the cycle has had its première.

The r* symbol (e.g. in the word *tor*tur*e* (torture)) signifies a hard "r", as in the word "road", which is then rolled harshly. Accidentals apply conventionally, only in the bar in which they are used.

[#]This image has been attributed to various other authors.

It Is Easy

François de Villiers

for the one who said write me another poem

Adagio (♩=72)

6 *Andante* (♩=88)

It takes a long time to fa-shion a po-

11 *falsetto* *tr* *nat.*

- em, To tor* - tur*e the words out on - to the page.

15 *affettuoso*

Write me a po - em she said with her full pale lips, sit-ting cross-legged.

20

It takes time to fashion a poem, It

25

does not spill across the page like overturn'd ink,

29

falsetto

It does not squirt like seed from a hasty lover.

34

lusingando
(nat.)

Write me another poem, she said, tossing her long black hair back

rall.

38

from her forehead. It is not easy to

a tempo

43 *falsetto* *tr* *nat.*
 fa-shion a po - em, To wr*ite and strug - gle and toil, but

47 *legato*
 there is no thing, No flow of a-ware - ness, no stream of words, no

52 *feroce*
 crys - tal - line hu - mour. On - ly the flecks, the specks, the spots, the blots, the wa - sted

57 $\text{♩} = 80$ *piangevole* *amoroso*
 ink. Do you not want to write me a po - em, she said, arch - ing her back, her

62
 full breasts strai - ning at the soft ma - te - ri - al. It is

66 *falsetto* *tr* *nat.*

so ea - sy to fa - shion a po - em. Just star*e at the pa-

71

- per un - til you taste the blood in your mouth, And that

75

won - der - ful cla - ri - ty that comes with loss, Cre - ates the words in your

affettuoso

82 $\text{♩} = 63$

mind. The beau - ti - ful muse will on - ly stay while pla - ca - ted

89 *tr*

with words.

pp
(ca. 3' 50'')

FRANÇOIS DE VILLIERS

François de Villiers realised, during a Music Appreciation course, when he was 48 years of age, that he wanted to compose music. His first attempt, writing an ostinato pattern, sounded dreary; he decided that he had to study music. So he tackled the Royal Schools Graded Examinations in Music Theory, and entirely self-taught, progressed to grade 8. As he at least wanted to attain the level of a Licentiate in Music, he embarked on the UNISA examinations. To that end he studied harmony with Marianne Feenstra and counterpoint with John Coulter, and obtained a Licentiate in Harmony and Theory of Music (UTLM) (UNISA).

He also studied percussion with Jon Wishnuff and orchestration with Prof Walter Mony. He had individual composition lessons (briefly) with Martijn Padding, Theo Loevendie, Robert Rollins and Kevin Volans. The latter advised him never to put pen to paper unless it is for a work that has already been commissioned.

He has composed sporadically since 1998. His works include two song cycles ("When will I see you again", and "Tales from Mpondoland"), four works for piano, a sonata for marimba and viola, two orchestral works and several other works for chamber instruments. His orchestral work "Something Naughtical" was performed by Carpe Musicam, the community orchestra in George, and three of the songs from "Tales from Mpondoland" was performed at the NewMusicSA Indaba in 2017. He composes in a meta-classical style i.e. attempting to maintain the qualities of clarity, simplicity, moderation and balance, with a reliance on melody and harmony. He does occasionally use atonal and other modern techniques.

He has retired from his day job, having been a medical missionary, a paediatrician, a paediatric endocrinologist, an academic, and finally, Professor and Head of Department at the Medical School, MEDUNSA in Pretoria. He and his wife Mariana now live on a wonderful rural property in Plettenberg Bay.