

## THE ROYAL ACADEMY OF MUSIC

The first strong connection to the Royal Academy of Music came in January 2001. The trumpeter John Wallace made the suggestion that his brass ensemble, The Wallace Collection, should make a CD of recordings of all the works for brass which Sir Peter Maxwell Davies (hereinafter called Max) had written encompassing a brass quintet. John's idea was that the Wallace Collection should rehearse all the works at the Royal Academy of Music, where he was professor, and that Max would be present at these rehearsals, and give his assistance, and that the students would be allowed to attend the rehearsals. Then, once everything was rehearsed, the musicians and their producer would transfer across the road to St. Mary's Parish Church, where there was a much better acoustic and, where the recordings would be made. The producer of these recordings was to be Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, himself a trumpet player, and vice-principal and director of studies of The Royal Academy. All of this happened exactly as John had wanted it, and the recordings, and Max's presence in front of the students duly took place

In April 2005, [Amelia Freedman](#), the Artistic Director of the South Bank Centre, put on a large, belated seventieth birthday festival, which was called 'Max, a Musician of Our Time'. The festival had many elements, including performances by orchestras, choirs and children, and several by students of the Royal Academy. Max attended these rehearsals, and I made recordings of the actual performances at the Royal Academy for the on-line website Max-Opus, CDs and Downloads of Max's music were sold.

The day after the end of the festival, I received a call from [Jonathan Freeman-Attwood](#), deputy principal, , asking me if Max would consider becoming a Visiting Professor of the Academy. I was not at all sure that Max would accept, because, as always, Max was very reluctant to accept anything which would mean that he devoted time away from his composition. But he had had very positive reactions to everything that he had done under the auspices of the Academy and so his response was positive. Another possible inducement was the fact that he was offered the use of a flat which the Academy owned during the periods when he would be teaching.

The agreement was that Max would attend the Royal Academy three times each year. That he would spend two days during the first two terms, and three days in the last, the summer, term. In addition to his fee, his return air fare from Orkney to London would be paid, and that the flat at the Academy would be made available to him for the duration of his stay in London. As well as the sessions with the composers, he would also give lectures to the general public, including of course the students, on subjects not related to composition, such as specific works from the classical repertoire.

Shortly after Max commenced his visits to the Royal Academy, he was invited to a lunch with Curtis Price, the Principal, and again with Jonathan Freeman-Attwood, and they asked whether he would consider writing a work for them. It would be a co-commission between the Royal Academy and the Juilliard School of Music in New York, with whom the Academy had a close relationship. The work that was requested was to be an opera to be performed by the students at both places.

I had thought that Max might not accept this offer, as he had declared very publically in 2000 that he would not write any more theatrical works. However, time had passed and, the constrictions from which he had suffered at that period had passed. And so he accepted the offer.

Michael, my husband, negotiated the financial terms, both with the Academy and with Juilliard. Max suggested that David Pountney should be asked to be the director. Max had worked very successfully previously with David, both as director and as the librettist, on *The Doctor of Myddfai* and *Mr. Emmet Takes a Walk*, and Max felt comfortable with him. The project moved forward, and the opera was performed in London and New York.