

## MANAGEMENT

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Although my job description was that of manager, and it was the one by which I was always known and described as, the reality was that I performed several other functions at the same, and all these jobs were rolled into one. It is impossible to separate these functions neatly out into categories, because they always over-lapped, one with the other. The great advantage of being a one-man show is that the problems of communication between one department and another simply did not exist. Everything that needed to be done, by whichever hat I might be wearing, was all in my own head.

However, when I began my job, I saw that what Peter Maxwell Davies (hereinafter called Max) and The Fires of London urgently needed was work, work and more work, and that in order to obtain work one has to have an agent. And so I appointed myself as an agent. An agent has to promote his artists. Promotion means travel.

### **Agent - Promotion**

I had been assured, both by Max and by Stephen Pruslin, the pianist of The Fires,, that there would be no trouble in obtaining work, as it just rolled in of its own accord. However, when I looked in the so-called diary (for there was no diary), I found that the cupboard was bare. There were no dates. I had to start from scratch.

The time that I had spent during the nineteen-sixties as personal assistant to the Polish born British pianist and composer [André Tchaikowsky](#), had shown me the scope of the world of classical music that I would have to make it my business to tackle. This divided, roughly into:

North America, including Canada,

Western Europe

United Kingdom

Soviet Block

Latin America, Australia and New Zealand

China and south-eastern Asia were out of the question politically

India never paid any royalties.

Japan would have been an excellent potential market to explore, this was also out of the question, because Max did not like the food, and did not want to go there

I would have to start with the home territory of the UK, and my own home city of London, generally acknowledged to be the capital of the musical world, was certainly an advantageous starting point, but if I were going to spread the word, and, more

significantly persuade people to invite The Fires of London, and to programme and play Max's music, I would have to move around as widely as I could.

Whenever I made an approach to have a meeting, with whoever it was, whether the director of a festival, or the Intendant or Dramaturg of an opera house or the conductor of an orchestra, or the manager or artistic director of an orchestra, I would always do it in Max's name. The Fires of London was an excellent ready-made promotional tool to further Max's interests. To get an orchestra to programme Max's orchestral music, it was invariably the conductors who made the decisions as to what works they would like to have in their concerts.

To get an appointment to see the conductors was extremely difficult. They were, quite rightly, always extremely well protected by their secretaries and personal assistants, whose job it was to see that the conductors were not bothered by people, well, like me, who might prove a nuisance. So the way to get round this and to leap over the secretaries, was to approach the conductors themselves after a concert, and having got their approval, I would then be able to phone the secretaries, telling them that the particular conductor had told me to phone them to make the precious appointment.

Living in London, as I did, this method should prove relatively easy, as most conductors would, at some point, give a concert in London, and it was the centre of the musical world, and all conductors would deem it necessary and desirable to make their mark there. But I was reluctant to make my approach to a conductor in London, as the backstage was always full of many friends and admirers, and other people who were perhaps looking for the same sort of thing as I was, and so I did not feel that this was the best moment to put my request. No, I would be much better of going backstage to a concert which was not in London, and where the crush was very considerably less. And so I would have to travel to as many different towns as I could, and have appointments to meet as many different people from as many different organisations as I was able to pack into my schedule.

“There are not travel problems which either money or time cannot solve.”

This quotation was always apt as far as my own travel was concerned. There was never enough time and there was never enough money. I would always take the cheapest fare on the planes, which invariably meant travelling at very unsocial hours. I would stay at the cheapest acceptable hotels. As a result, every single journey was made under an enormous amount of pressure. Everyone will be familiar with the difficulties of putting a schedule together. Once I made the decision to make a journey, and to spend the money on the travel, which would mean a rail fare or an air fare, then I would try to maximise the number of appointments I could realistically pack into that period of time. The number of days could not be elasticised, because obviously there would be an extra night's accommodation and food to be taken into consideration. If I could make my first appointment at between 8 and 9 am, then I would be able to see five or six people in that day, before moving on to the next town either that night, or first thing the following morning.

Not every town could produce five or six an appointments. The countries which had towns with a very large number of performing organisations were Germany, Austria, Switzerland, France, The Netherlands and Belgium. This was due to the very large

sums of money which their governments put into culture, which made the various organisations which were dependent on these funds able to operate in a liberal way, since they did not have to rely on box office returns. Sponsorship was unknown in these countries.

Austria was the country which, by far, gave the most amount of money pro rata of its population. The result was that, contrary to my own expectations, my promotional efforts in Austria were very successful. I was also greatly assisted in my visits to Austria by the fact that I always used to stay with my friend Iris Brendel, ex-wife of the pianist Alfred Brendel, who lived in Vienna, and thus I was able to save money on hotel bills and make more visits there than I otherwise would have done.

In the United States, money for cultural events given by the Federal Government was virtually non-existent. Any concert or opera had to be funded by sponsorship. It is true that the sponsors had tax relief, but they would naturally give money to already successful and prominent enterprises.

The United Kingdom fell between these two extremes. The money for cultural events came from three sources – government, sponsorship and box office.

In the United States the extent of performances of classical music was restricted, with one or two notable exceptions, to the orchestras which existed in almost all the major towns. The larger towns had wonderful orchestras, some of them repeating each weekly concert as many as four times. Other than that, it was hard to find many other musical organisation which it would be worth my while visiting. The main market would be at the universities, many of which had significant music departments.

In the USA, all travel was by air and taxi, with the exception of The Eastern Seaboard, when I went on the Amtrak train. This covered the towns of Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore and Washington. I would arrive at the airport, and take a taxi to my hotel. This was unusual, because everyone else would hire a self-drive car for the period of their stay. I was not prepared to do this under any circumstances, as I was totally terrified of driving in the USA, and in any case, it would be too difficult to start to find my way around from one place to another. Having parked my bags in the hotel, I would then take a taxi to my first appointment. It was then that the trouble started. In order to get to my next appointment, I needed to get a taxi. I would make the appropriate phone call, and wait for the taxi to arrive. On almost every occasion, the taxi simply did not come. I was told that the reason for this was because everyone has their own vehicle, and that the culture of calling on the phone for a taxi simply does not exist, in spite of the firms which advertise their services.

I had one nightmare after another. At the end of my first appointment, someone would phone for a taxi for me. I would wait patiently, or not so patiently, on the road, and nothing happened. In those days there were no mobile (cell) phones. Once you were out of the office with a land-line, you were on your own. And there was absolutely no public transport which would somehow come to the rescue.

My worst experience was in Cleveland Ohio. My hotel was down-town, and in the evening I went to see a play – *Chekhov in Yalta*. I had taken a taxi to the theatre, planning of course to return in the same way, and I arranged with the firm that had

brought me to collect me afterwards. I phoned several times from the public telephone in the lobby of the theatre, but no taxi arrived. All the theatre-goers had jumped into their cars at the end of the play, and there was not a soul in sight. I was absolutely terrified. There was no way that I was going out into the streets, especially as that theatre was in the area when race riots had taken place. I resolved that I would spend the night in the theatre waiting for help in the morning. Then I heard a sound backstage and I went to investigate. I found the stage manager, who was clearing up after the play. I explained my predicament to him, and to my utmost relief, he volunteered to drive me back to my downtown hotel. He was my knight in shining armour.

This kind of scare made me more than a little nervous in going around, and in the end I found a solution. When I took a taxi from the hotel in the morning, I arranged with that driver to stay with me for the whole day, to drive me from one place to the other. By this method I was able to continue with my promotion. But, to tell the truth, I was always nervous. I remember on one occasion Max was staying at one hotel and I was at another further along up the same road. After we had had supper, I asked him if he would walk me to my hotel, just to be sure. He then replied “yes, but who is going to walk me back to my hotel after that?” at which I laughed of course, but that was how the situation was for those people without cars.

There were no such travel problems in Europe. There were taxis everywhere, and the more often I visited a particular town, the more I was able to go about on public transport as I got used to how to pay for each individual system. In Hungary, the system was so complicated that I never worked out how to pay, and I am afraid to relate that I went on the buses without paying, hoping that I would not get stopped.

When a taxi was necessary, unlike in the USA, it always arrived. My main problem was communication. I needed to phone [Michael, my husband](#), back home to find out what needed to be attended to. I needed to be [able](#) to make contact with my next appointment if any delay had occurred. But there were no mobile phones. I almost always checked out of my hotel first thing in the morning to avoid having to pay for an extra night. This meant that I could not return to my hotel room to make phone calls, which in any case were hugely expensive.

Thus I did not have access to a telephone for any kind of calls. In Germany, the best method was to go into a post office, where you could hire a telephone booth, and make all your calls and then pay up at the end. This method was vastly cheaper than the charges made for calls in the hotel. These post offices were nearly always close to the Haupt Bahnhof – main railway station. .

This brings me to the pivotal point about my travel in Europe, and that is the railway station. It was the centre of all my activities in any town. I always chose my hotel both by price, and for its proximity to the station as I could manage. In one case the hotel in Hamburg Altona was on the platform of the station. That meant that I was not dependant on anything but my own two feet to get me to the station for an early morning departure.

The stations were brilliantly equipped, with marvellous toilet and washing facilities, extensive shops, lifts, escalators and left-luggage cubicles. If, as in some of the

smaller stations, there were no lifts or escalators, the steps would have a moving handrail alongside, onto which you could put your luggage, so you did not have to carry it up and down the steps. The railway stations were a source of a feeling of comfort and security, except after about nine in the evening, when they were deserted, and had a somewhat ominous atmosphere. Certainly as the DB (Deutsche Bahn – German Railway) was concerned, the trains ran on time. If I had made an appointment for 8 or 9 in the morning and I was travelling from another town beforehand, I was absolutely sure it would arrive on time, and that I would not be delayed. Sometimes I would take on two towns in one day, still with the confidence that I would be able to make all my appointments on time. This certainly takes the pressure off the journey.

I had to have appointments with the decision makers. It was hard to find out exactly who these people were. I have mentioned the conductors, but there were also other people involved. Each country had a different system. In Germany, where I directed most of my efforts because it looked like the best market, there was a system of the theatres in each town. Owing to the large amount of government or federal funding, the number of theatres in Germany was simply enormous. Some theatres were as little as twenty miles distant from the one next town, which also had its own theatre. These theatres put on plays, operas, ballets and concerts. The authority which owned and ran the theatre, whether it was the local government, or the town itself, employed everyone that worked in that theatre, including all the musicians.

Three people were in charge as to what happened in the theatre. These were the Intendant (the General Director), the GMD (Generalmusikdirector) and the Dramaturg (artistic Advisor and Director). It was with these three people that I would try to make my appointments. In those days without the internet, it was difficult to find out names and phone numbers. Luckily, in Germany, there was a huge red book which covered the details of all the German theatres, and I would religiously buy the book every year so that I could make my plans.

Getting the appointments was a most frustrating and difficult job. I found it necessary to employ someone to help me make the appointments. Although I would have liked, in my ideal world, that everyone would come to me in my hotel, I never managed to achieve this I always had to go to the offices of the people I wished to see, and then move from one to the other, hoping that I would not be delayed for any reason.

Before setting off on each of my trip, I spent many days assembling all the material that I would take with me to show to the people with whom I had the appointments. This material had to cover a wide range because I would be seeing many people, and you never knew what they might come up with. I would try to reduce the number of pages that I carried to as few as possible, because I did not want to take luggage with me that was too heavy for me to manage in all circumstances. The collation of the material into a comprehensive form to be easily seen at one glance by whoever was looking at it was all important. The approach of the forthcoming trip would cause a great stress, getting everything together and ready, and at the same time leaving my own desk work up to date and in good order. Things would have been in much less of a rush if I only stayed at home, or, indeed, if I only travelled. It was the combination of the two that was difficult.

The people I saw were, on the whole, very cordial, and made nice noises. I would begin by asking what, if anything, they knew about Peter Maxwell Davies. Some would reply that they knew absolutely nothing. Others would start off, somewhat pompously, assuring me that they knew everything, but when I asked them to start talking, they quickly responded to my offer to me talking about Max instead.

By no means had all of my appointments achieved a positive outcome. I always kept a record of who I had seen, and what we had discussed, and what promotional material had been sent following my visit. This follow-up material was sent by the Max's publishers, and I had to ensure that they did not fall down on this, and I asked them to confirm to me that the requested material had been sent. I encountered difficulties with Boosey & Hawkes, who, in the first years, insisted on sending the material through their own firms in Germany and the USA, but this method always took a long time, and the impetus after my visit was lost. By keeping the records, I was able to see what kind of discussion I had had with a particular person, when I went to visit him or her the next time, three or so years later, perhaps at a different position.

When I got home, I was so busy that I did not have time to follow up my meetings. Also, I held off because I did not want to be pushy and make myself a nuisance. I felt that this approach would be counter-productive

One of the exceptions to the cordiality that I mentioned in my previous paragraph was startling. It was at one of the German radio stations, where the man was in charge not only of what went out on his station, but of an annual festival in that town. When I walked into the room, the man with whom I had the interview asked me what I was doing there. Somewhat taken aback, as I knew that all this would have been explained in the initial phone calls, I explained that I was there to talk about the British composer Peter Maxwell Davies. He said that he had never programmed any music by any British composer, and that he never would do so. With a rush of fury, I immediately got up, and walked quickly towards the door, and out into the corridor. He came running after me, calling me back. I was loath to return to someone who had been as rude and offensive to Max and to British composers as a whole, living or dead. But I thought that as I had come all this way, I might as well make the most of this opportunity that was offered.

I talked to him about Max and the Fires. The outcome to this unusual meeting was, that not only did I obtain an invitation for The Fires to have a concert at his festival, but that additionally, he invited Max to suggest another ensemble of Max's own choice, to perform works by British composers. Max nominated the London Sinfonietta for this purpose. I felt this to be my greatest triumph in the face of such blatantly negative opposition and ignorant pre-conceived prejudice

Early on in my promotional days, I once made a wish-list of all the dates I would like to have managed to get for The Fires. I put the list away and totally forgot about it. Many years later, I came across the list by accident, and I found to my amazement, that almost all my wishes had come true.

I would not have been able to do the job of talking directly to people, were it not for the fact that almost everyone I went to see spoke such excellent English. There was

never any question that it would be otherwise. When I started to make visits, I had hoped that my German might improve, and that I would manage to promote in German. I did not improve. In fact it grew worse as time went on. One needs to be fluent in the words that come out of one's mouth. Not everyone spoke good English. In France I struggled in French. In Soviet Block countries, where everyone was obliged to speak Russian, I needed to have a translator with me. [Iris Brendel](#) came with me on several occasions to Germany, and other times [Hilary Bartlett](#) from the British Council in Berlin arranged a translator for me. It is interesting to note that one year following the fall of the wall in Berlin, when I went to Leipzig, Dresden and East Berlin, those administrators who I had seen previously were suddenly speaking extremely good English! I might add that Max himself spoke fluent German and Italian. When he was interviewed on the radio or television, he would always speak in those languages, as he did when the press asked for an interview.

Max was a reluctant conductor. He conducted *The Fires*, but refused all offers to conduct other orchestras. By a chance happening in 1983, he found himself conducting the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, which led in turn to him accepting a run of three sets of concerts, commencing in 1984, which, in turn led in 1985 to his becoming Associate composer/conductor of the orchestra. Thereafter, still reluctant, he agreed to my suggestion that if I was offered an invitation for him to conduct other orchestras, he would accept. My object when visiting the orchestras was, in the first instance, not for Max to conduct himself, but for either its chief conductor, or others which they might invite, to do it. But this proved difficult, or nearly impossible. While the managers of the orchestras were agreeable to programming one of Max's orchestral works, important conductors who the orchestras wanted, were not willing to take on the hard work which it was known that Max's music required. The other, less well-known conductors, who would be happy to do the work, were not ones whom the orchestras wanted to employ. This only left Max himself to do the job.

I always insisted that the programme would contain at least one substantial work by Max. It was totally useless for Max to make the journey somewhere only to perform a token ten minutes of his own music. For the non-Max part of the programme, Max would not, under any circumstances, conduct and Brahms, Richard Strauss, Wagner or Bruckner. He confined himself to the classical repertoire of Mozart, Beethoven and particularly Haydn, who he adored, and to the modern Stravinsky, and Bartok. But, on several occasions, the concert was all-Max. It was possible to do this because of the enormously wide spectrum of his pieces. On the one hand you would have a symphony, which was as so-called serious as it is possible to be. On the other hand, you could have all the high-jinks of *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise*, with possibly a concerto with a soloist drawn from the orchestra in between. These all-Max programmes gave me the ultimate satisfaction.

#### Orchestras which Max has conducted

- Baseler Sinfonietta
- BBC Concert, London
- BBC Philharmonic, Manchester

## *Management*

- BBC Scottish, Glasgow
- BBC Symphony, London
- Beethoven Halle Orchestra, Bonn
- Boston Symphony Orchestra
- Britten Sinfonia
- Bruckner Orchestra, Linz
- Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
- Canadian .Broadcasting. Corporation Orchestra, Vancouver
- Camerata Accademica Salzburg
- Cleveland Orchestra
- Collegium Musicum, Zürich
- Danubia Orchestra, Budapest
- Dresdner Philharmonie
- Düsseldorfer Symphoniker
- Essen Symphoniker
- Glyndebourne
- Helsinki Philharmonic
- Iceland Symphony Orchestra
- Jerusalem Symphony
- Leipzig Gewandhaus
- Malmö Symphony Orchestra
- MDR Orchestra, Leipzig
- Niederweberhaus Symphoniker, Krefeld, Monchengladbach
- Orchestra della Toscana, Florence
- Orchestre de Chamber Lausanne
- Orquesta Sinfonica de R.T.V.E. Madrid
- Oslo Philharmonic
- Philharmonia Orchestra, London
- Philharmonisches Staatsorchester Bremen
- Radio Symphonie Orkest, Hilversum
- Real Filharmonia de Galicia, Spain
- Residentie Orchestra, The Hague
- Rotterdam Philharmonic
- Royal National Scottish, Glasgow
- Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, London
- Rundfunk Sinfonieorchester, Berlin
- Russian National Orchestra, Moscow
- San Francisco Symphony
- Santa Cecilia Orchestra, Rome
- Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Edinburgh
- St. Paul Chamber Orchestra
- Stavanger Symphony Orchestra
- Stuttgart Philharmoniker
- Südwestfunk Orchestra, Freiburg
- Trondheim Symphonie Orchestra
- Vancouver Symphony
- Wiener Symphoniker, Vienna

Other tools were needed for promotion. Over the time I organised many kinds of information documentation. The first of these was a brochure, which brought together, for the first time, and correctly, all of Max's published works. A leaflet which Max's publisher, Boosey & Hawkes had produced, was incomplete and incorrect. This was due to many historical reasons. When Max had a second publisher, which was Chester Music, there was no written material which pulled everything together. This was my first essay into such work. I was greatly helped in all this by Stephen Pruslin, the pianist of The Fires, who was himself an experienced writer, and who wrote the programme notes for The Fires' concerts. I would not have been able to do any of this without his help. It took a long while, and I arranged for distribution of this book to hundreds of libraries throughout the world, so that there was at least something giving some information about Max.

I also made a leaflet for The Fires. This put a photograph of each of Max's music-theatre works into one panel of the leaflet, with a description underneath, and a general blurb explaining what The Fires was. The name, which was thought up by Steve, sounded like a pop group, which was no bad thing, but people, did not know what it was. As one American commented "do you eat it with a fork or a spoon?"

Later on, again in association with Steve, we had what might be called a quarterly newspaper. It was called 'The News of the World of Peter Maxwell Davies'. It was a glossy newspaper in full colour. 'Colour sells' as Max once remarked. Pulling such an item together on a regular basis was a lot of work, and I am not at all sure how much effect it had, but it certainly looked attractive

And then, finally, there was 'on-line' and the internet, which in those days was relatively new. It was in 1993 that I attended an exhibition at Earl's Court, which was just up the road from where I lived. I saw, for the first time, looking at a screen, and there was a blue line underneath some words, and suddenly the screen jumped somewhere else. This was the link. It made a revolution in my mind. Why could I not do the same thing for Max? Why could I not have my own words and images which would be able to come into people's homes, just as I was seeing it in that exhibition? I came home to Michael, my husband, to make my report, and we both came out with exactly the same thought.

I asked our computer guru, [Keith Marlow](#), who had been working with us since I first obtained a computer, if he would be prepared to design a website and he agreed to do so. Keith had a full-time job and was only able to help us occasionally, and so the whole process was going to take a long time. Keith showed me what I had to do at my end, and I set about the task of making a website for Max. In these days when everyone has a website, it does not seem like much of a big business, but in those days, it was monumental, because it was virtually unheard of, other than major organisations, and certainly not for a composer. My site was to be nothing less than hugely ambitious as was necessary for Max and his genius, and the sheer volume of works that he had already composed, and which was always growing, together with the number of performances which were coming in.

The collation of all the material was a long and boring process. The links from one section to another were what proved the most tiresome, owing to the fact that the

software at the time was lagging behind, and everything took so long, which was annoying. Eventually I finished my part. I gave the proof reading to my friend [Ruth Thackeray](#), who had been copy editor of Groves Dictionary of Music (20 volumes) for seventeen years, and who was now freelance. I knew that everything would be absolutely correct, as in a printed book, as the websites which were being put up in those early days were, in general, rather slapdash and thus unconvincing.

Eventually everything was ready, but we needed a name. I was unable to find a suitable name myself, so I asked many people for their suggestions. The ideal name came from [Michael Isador](#), an American pianist friend who was staying with me at the time. He suggested the name of MaxOpus. Max approved the name and MaxOpus was launched.

The response was absolutely amazing. Now, at long, long last, I was able to get to people everywhere. At least, to those people who had computers, for this was all new, and it took a long time before almost everyone had a computer. We were able to see how many hits we had, day by day and week by week, with a run down country by country. It was most encouraging, and worth all the work. I would spend a very considerable amount of time each month on MaxOpus, putting in all the new items, such as what Max was writing, recording that were being made, putting in video and sound clips, and introductions by Max himself to many of his own works. As I did not have Ruth Thackeray as proof reader, I hoped I did not make too many mistakes.

After the closure in 1998 of Collins Classics, the recording company which had released the string of CDS of Max's music, we, that is Michael, Max and I, decided that rather than let these recordings pass into oblivion, it would be best to purchase the copyright of these recordings, and to make use of them in another way. We drew up a plan to make the recordings available on our own MaxOpus site. Again Keith Marlow agreed to take on the job, and over a period of many years, he compiled a brilliantly original site, whereby customers would be able either to purchase a download of each individual work and to make-up their own CD, amounting to seventy-four minutes of music, drawn from the list of available recordings, which I would despatch to them by post. Each CD and down-load would have its own booklet with liner- notes. Between us, Michael and I found out how to be a recording company, and all the intricacies involved. This was my last and probably the most extensive and complicated job. It was yet another kind of promotion.

### **Personal Assistant**

From the start I was Max's personal assistant. As he conducted The Fires, and I managed the Fires in all its aspects, including the schedules which I made for everyone, this included Max. His schedule was different from the other members in that I would put in everything additional to the times and places of the rehearsals and concerts travel arrangements, post concert parties etc. Max had additional calls on his time, connected with interviews with the media, meetings with local composition students and dignitaries.

I was in charge of the diary, fixing what Max had to do and when, and where. As a public figure, there were many calls on his time that were not to do with the job of

composer. Max received numerous honorary doctorates, and was president of a great number organisation, all of which required attention and continuity of contact.

In the early days, when Max lived on Hoy, Max would make his own travel arrangements to get himself from his home in Orkney to his bases, first in London and subsequently in Edinburgh. Once he had his conducting, as opposed to his composing, hat on, I took over. But once Max moved from Hoy to Sanday, when he no longer had a base outside Orkney, I made all the travel arrangements. These were never less than difficult and awkward, before he could even reach some form of transport which would bring him swiftly into the main-stream hub. Even reaching Kirkwall airport would take many hours, and then there was frequent danger of fog bringing a stop to all flights, made the alternative method of onward transportation long and cumbersome, and meant that there could be a likelihood that he might not reach his destination in time. This was not an occasional occurrence. Every time Max left Orkney, there was always this threat.

### **Manager**

The financial aspect of managing was completely done by Michael. When I spoke to Max on the phone to accept the offer of being his manager, Michael also spoke to him, and said that he would help in all financial matters, and this was done the whole way through.

When a date for The Fires would come up, it was Michael who drew up the budgets, and discussed everything with the promoters, and negotiated the contracts. Where Max was to take part in a documentary programme, Michael would arrange all the conditions, including the travel and accommodation, as well as the fees involved.

Michael negotiated all the commission contracts. Michael would chase up when the next instalment of a particular contract was due. He would also keep track of all the royalties which were due from the various sources: from the three publishers, from the MCPS (Mechanical Copyright Protection Society) and the PRS (Performing Right Society).

When anything new was proposed to Max, such as a commission, or a new position, or to be President of a particular organisation, I would discuss it with Max himself to see which way he wanted to go, and Michael would talk to him about the financial aspect. We would both give our advice. Max was invariably compliant with our suggestions, and did not offer any kind of difficulty or opposition.

### **Public Relations**

As a PR, I needed to keep Max's name constantly to the fore everywhere through the various media of press, radio, television. Whenever there was an event of any kind, it was important draw to the attention of the general public. It was one thing to manage to get an date, but equally important is that the public at large should know about it. For The Fires' concerts at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in London, we produced leaflets and posters. Michael used to go round to libraries and universities

distributing the posters and leaflets, while we employed an advertising agency to deliver the posters to the London Underground, for which we paid a large amount of money

This meant arranging for special articles in the newspapers, and interviews on radio and television. Max was always absolutely brilliant with all his interviews and public appearances. He always agreed to take part in whatever it was that I arranged. As far as the UK was concerned, I knew enough people in the national press to alert them as to what might be of particular interest. If the event was a local one, I would contact the promoter to make sure that they would place an article in the local newspaper. . This might sound obvious, but some promoters did not think that a work being performed by a living composer would be of special interest to their local newspaper, and they needed to be convinced that this was not the case, and that the general public would respond, and attend the event. The newspapers would then be in touch with me, and I would be able to give them all the necessary details which would enable them to write an article.

### **Personal Friend**

Another side of my life as Max's manager was that of a friend. Both Michael and I helped Max in as many ways as possible connected with matters that were not connected with his composing. If Max did not have to worry about these things, then his life would be easier, which in turn would help his composing.

Orkney is almost the most northerly place in the British Isles. Consequently, during the summer, the days are very long. In the winter, however, the days are very short, and there is no daylight after, and in some of the months, after 3pm. Max worked very long hours, and after dark it was always, of course, by candle-light.

One day in November 1977, Max was on the phone from the phone box, and this was not at our agreed hour. There was an emergency. It seemed there were not candles to be had anywhere in Orkney, neither in Stromness nor in Kirkwall. I must urgently send him dozens of boxes of candles from London. The boxes must be sent express to Max's friends, Archie and Elizabeth Bevan in Stromness. Any kind of 'special mail' sent to Max in Bunnertoon (Max's croft) just did not work, owing to the somewhat unreliability of deliveries by the postman in his valley.

I dispatched the package, musing to myself in the difference in the way that Max composed by candle-light with his H2 pencil, in contrast to the big musical story of the day. This was the inauguration in Paris of Ircam (Institute for Research and Co-Ordination Acoustic). Ircam was an institute for science about music and sound and avant-garde electro-musical art music. At least Max did not write with a quill.

In 1980 electricity came to Max at his home, and so he was able to have heating for the first time. Max opted for having night storage, which has a much cheaper rate. This would mean that when Max was away from home, sometimes for several weeks at a time, he would be able to leave the heating on the whole time, so that the croft would not be completely frozen when he returned. The trouble with night-storage

heaters is that, in those days, they were fed by blocks of stones, each one of which was extremely heavy. How all these blocks to be were carried the mile or so from the end of the road up to Bunnerton? I arranged with a builder who lived elsewhere on Hoy to round up a gang of helpers, who would of course be paid, and between all of them, the burden of carrying the blocks would be distributed. The blocks arrived on the ferry, and were deposited and left. Alas, at that point, the helpers were nowhere in sight. The builder had completely let Max down. There was nothing for it. Max had to carry each and every one of the blocks up to Bunnerton himself. I don't think that Max's back ever fully recovered from this.

Having the electricity did bring considerably greater comfort, although Max still refused to have a telephone, and he still had to carry everything up the hill, which was now more difficult owing the damage done to his back following the affair with the blocks.

As Max was so prolific, he needed a great deal of manuscript paper. Boosey & Hawkes, his publishers, had been supplying him with the paper, but they started making complaints, as he was using such a lot of it. A year after I became Max's manager, I suggested that a much better idea would be for Max to have his own paper and not be dependent on Booseys. Max didn't like the idea of buying the standard manuscript paper which he did not find suitable for his purposes. So I found the firm of Old Acres which agreed to print the paper. As this paper, along with his pencil, is his main tool of the trade, it had to be exact. Max gave me precise instructions as to how many staves, what size, what weight, what brightness, how white, and always a double folded sheet. It was extravagant but necessary.

The price, as always, depended on how many sheets were printed. The more that were printed, the less expensive it would be. I gave the order. In due time, Old Acres phoned up and said that the order was ready, with the words 'there is an awful lot of manuscript paper'. I reported this to Max, who, in a flash, quipped 'I write a lot of awful music'. The order was delivered to my home in Hogarth Road. Max took some of the paper away to Orkney, and some to the loft in his parents' house in Dorset, but for the most part, the vast amounts remained with me, taking up quantities of space. Max would occasionally remove some of reams of the paper if he knew someone who was going to by car or van to Orkney, so that he could have a supply for himself. This paper lasted for decades, even considering how prolific Max's output was. It was certainly a very good investment.

I would say that my main acts of friendship for Max consisted of looking after the welfare of his parents, [Hilda and Tome Davies](#), who lived in Eccliffe Mill, in Dorset. This house, which was Max's, was where Max had previously lived himself. I was constantly in contact myself with Mr. and Mrs. Davies. It was much easier for me to make frequent phone-calls than it was for Max from his phone-box in Rackwick. I wanted to

see how they were, but also to tell them about what was happening with Max's life. Max himself did not always explain things to his parents, and great chunks were missing in their knowledge, and they were always interested to know what was going on. I also went to stay with them to give fuller accounts, and also to interview them myself, on my own account, and possibly for the future. I wanted to know from them

about Max's childhood, and how it might differ from Max's own perspective. That interview is now in the British Library, along with Max's manuscripts. I asked Mr. Davies if he liked Max's music. He replied ‘

“I like it because it is Max, but for me, I like *Tea for Two*”.

The nearest town to Eccliffe Mill was Gillingham. The house was in the country, with no local bus running near. When Max had lived there himself, he would walk everywhere to his shopping, and to catch the train to London. For a time, Mr. Davies kept his driving licence to be able to get around. But the time came when he was no longer able to drive, and this left the two of them walking into Gillingham, and coming home along frosty, slippery road, clinging onto bushes with their bundles of shopping. Although Max was happy to pay for taxis for them, they were reluctant to do this as they did not want to spend Max's money.

This was an impossible situation. On one of my visits, I suggested that they moved into a flat in one of the nearest towns, either Gillingham or Shaftesbury. They said that they would like to do that, but that they did not want to worry Max with it, as it would be such a big undertaking. I said that I would do it on Max's behalf. In July 1984 I spoke to Max, and he said that I should go ahead to start to see what might be possible.

In August 1984 Mrs. Davies had a severe stroke, and was taken into the hospital in Shaftesbury, leaving Mr. Davies alone, for the first time in his life. In the subsequent months, Michael looked for a suitable place, and found a sheltered home in Shaftesbury. Michael took Max and Mr. Davies to see it, and they both approved, and Michael arranged for the purchase. He also arranged for the sale of Eccliffe Mill, and most of Max's own furniture. The rest of the furniture would go to the new home, and all of Max's manuscripts and manuscript paper came to our own flat. Mrs. Davies was still in the hospital in Shaftesbury, while Mr. Davies found it more and more difficult to manage on his own without his wife.

In November, the purchase of the sheltered home was completed, as was the sale of Eccliffe Mill. The day of move arrived. Mr. Davies would stay in the Mill until all the items from the house were packed into the van, driven to and installed into the sheltered home, and then he would be collected, and driven to the home himself to start living there. Max, Les Walden (Max's uncle) and I were to supervise the whole operation. Everything went according to plan, and Mr. Davies was collected and brought to his new home. He walked through the front door, and collapsed onto the ground. I called to the supervisor who was always in attendance in the home. The ambulance came and Mr. Davies was taken to the very same hospital in which Mrs. Davies was still kept. Mr. Davies died the day before Christmas 1984.

I made all the arrangements for the cremation and the get-together afterwards, contacting all Mr. and Mrs. Davies' relatives.

The sheltered home, which had never been occupied, now had to be sold, and Michael made all the arrangements for that. Mrs. Davies died eighteen months later in June 1986 during the period of the rehearsals for the *Violin Concerto*, which was to have its premiere at the forthcoming St. Magnus Festival. Again, I made all the

arrangements connected to the cremation. Some years later I arranged for the ashes of both Mr. and Mrs. Davies to go to the Ashcroft Cemetery in Salford, where they had lived all their lives until their retirement, and where Max had been born and brought up.

In 1998 I began to make noises to Max along the lines that he might consider the idea of leaving Bunnerton and Rackwick, and finding somewhere else in Orkney to live. I pointed out that carrying everything, including his cases of wine, on his back up the hill for a mile each time was not getting any easier. I also asked him how he would manage if he became ill. I thought I would be greeted with a lot of resistance, but to my surprise, Max did not fight me too much on this topic. He had probably been thinking such things to himself, but had not aired them. Max set about finding a place, and after rejecting a couple which had proved totally unsuitable from a location point of view, he opted for a house on Sanday, one of the most northern islands in Orkney. Sanday is as flat as Hoy is high. This meant that the new house, Airon, was on a road, which meant that Max could go to the local shop and that things would be delivered to the door. This was the ultimate luxury. Although Airon was not the utter ruin which Bunnerton originally had been, it was a shell, and a great deal of work needed to be done before Max would be able to move in. Clearly Max himself would not be able to supervise any work to be done, and Michael arranged everything with builders in Kirkwall, and went several times to insure that things were proceeding correctly. The work started in October 1998, and Max was able to move into Airon in September 1999.

Usually when people move from one place to another, they have a large van into which they put all their possession, and the van drives from the first home to the second. But this was obviously not possible in this case. Again, a large gang was going to have to be employed to carry each and every one of Max's many possessions, including thousands of books, down the hill to the road. I believe that these arrangements were made with the Archie and Elizabeth Bevan.

However, there was one particular possession of Max's which could not be carried in this way. That was his chamber organ. Max did not have a piano at Bunnerton. He did not need a piano to compose. He just wrote everything down straight onto the page, with his H2 pencil. However, he did have a [very small chamber organ](#) which had been specially built for him by John Mander of the firm of Mander Organs, which had been started by John's father Noel in 1936, which specialised in building organs of all sizes and kinds.

In October 1998, As soon as it was clear Max was to move out of Bunnerton and into Airon, I contacted John and asked him whether he would be willing to come to Orkney to dismantle the organ, so that it could be in a state to be carried down the hill and onto a van, and then to travel with it from Hoy, onto the Mainland, and thence onto Sanday and to Max's new home in Airon, and put it together again and to install it and tune it. All of these operations take a long time, and the times of the ferries don't necessarily coincide with one's own timetable. John did not have an endless amount of time to do this operation. We had lengthy phone conversations as to how it would all work, and what was needed to be done by when, to fit in with the ferry time-tables from one island to another, and for him to be able to get to and from Kirkwall airport on his journey up and down from London. John was co-

operative the whole time. In the end everything went smoothly, and Max was able to have his chamber organ from the start in his new home.

Airon was quite a large property with several outhouses which could be converted for different uses, one of which would be Max's studio. This studio was large enough to house a piano, and so for the first time Max would be able to own a piano in Orkney. I arranged for him to pay a visit to David Winston of the Period Piano Company in Ashford in Kent which housed a whole range of period pianos, and he choose a Pleyel baby grand, a famous French brand. It took David Winton several months to bring the piano up to scratch, and he came with it himself to Airon to tune it. This transportation was considerably less tortuous than the one that John Mander had had to make with the chamber organ.

Airon brought several changes in Max's life, not only that of transport. He now had a telephone, and we had a conversation for roughly an hour each day, during which I would tell him everything that had happened, and ask him to approve, or otherwise, of what I proposed to do, and to ask him for answers to the many questions. I didn't have any troubles at all with any of this. Max never tried to hold back on his decisions. The only point where I disapproved was when he didn't give a firm 'no' to the many requests he had for commissions. If he didn't like the idea of what he was asked, he would say 'we'll see'. What that meant in the long run was that he did not write that work. However I felt that this was unfair to all those people who were kept waiting in the hope that he would agree. This in turn meant that they could not go on to ask another composer to write for their particular occasion, which was almost invariably tied to a specific date. So, in the end, I made Max say that if the answer is not 'yes', then it is definitely 'no'. And with that I felt much easier.

There was still the problem of communication for visual things, such as publisher's queries. The best answer would be a fax machine. At one point Max did have a fax machine in the small lobby, but he disliked the noise it made so much, that he hid it away and did not use it. He did, however agree, to the compromise of faxes coming and going to his local shop. I would tell him on the phone in the morning that I would be sending a fax, and he would go and collect it, and make the necessary response. This method made everything so very much easier for me. There was of course no suggestion whatsoever of a computer or any email. Max also had a mobile telephone, but the reception in Airon was of extremely poor quality, and he had to go a long way off to be able to make or receive any calls.

Throughout, Michael fixed everything to do with the buying and selling of his various properties, arranging the mortgages, dealing with the bank and setting up the Trust which would come into operation on Max's death.

None of the matters in which I assisted Max as a friend were connected with his musical career. They were only a part of the whole. For all this work, as friends, we did this gratuitously for no payment.