



MUSICAL *Opinion*

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MUSICAL *Opinion*

QUARTERLY

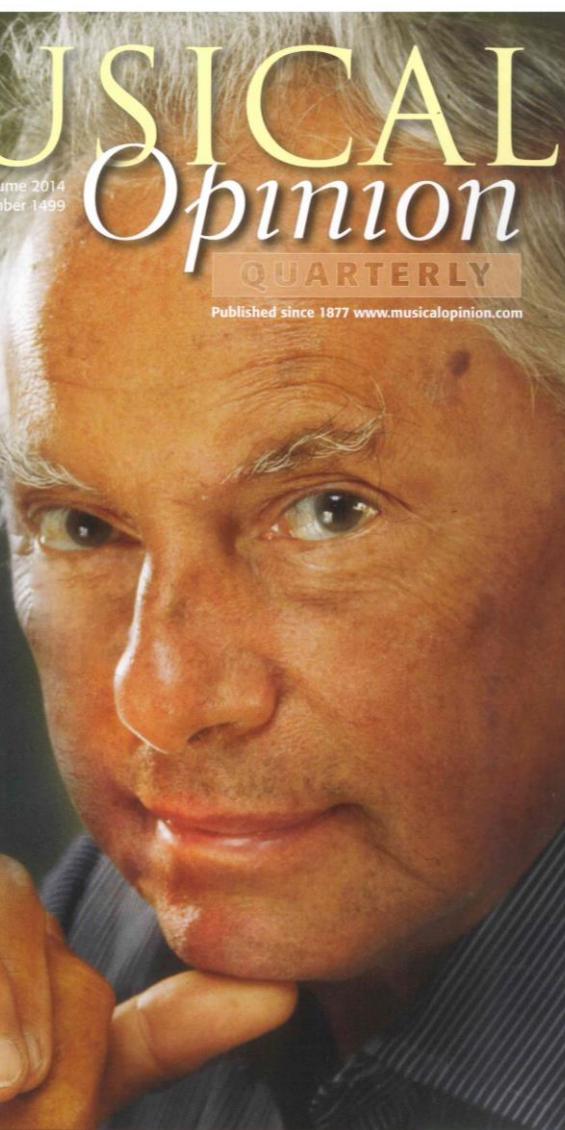
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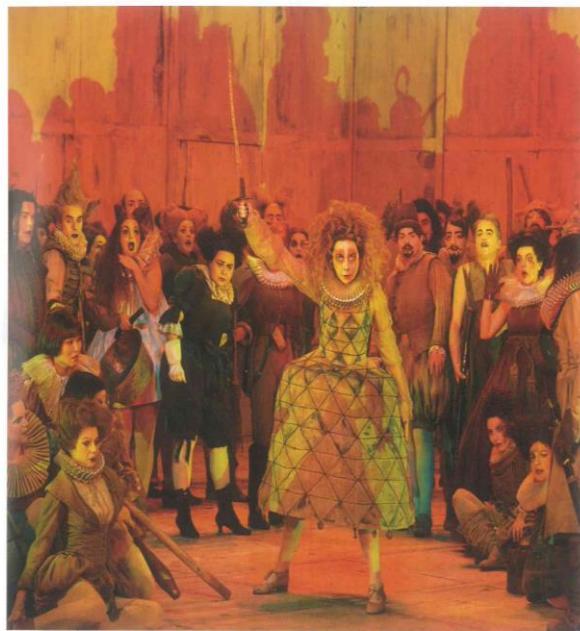
Sir Andrzej Panufnik Centenary:

- Camilla Panufnik on his life
- David Wordsworth on his music
- Robert Thompson and Tony Barlow on Panufnik's Bassoon Concerto
- William Featherby QC and Matthew Boyden on Richard Strauss at 150 - I
- Lindsay Kemp on 30 years of the Lufthansa Festival
- Jonathan Del Mar on editing Beethoven's music
- Timothy Henty on a new Shostakovich ballet
- Lewis Foreman remembers Leslie Head
- Cindy Bylander on Wojtek Blecharz
- Mark Doran: Music Matters

PLUS All the latest news, views, reviews and previews

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Opera reviews, starts page 38

IN THE JULY-SEPTEMBER 2014 ISSUE

Including: John McLeod: a greatly-distinguished Scottish Composer • Richard Beattie Davis on Henselt, Balakirev and the Piano - I • The Proms 2014 • Music in the Great War • Richard Strauss at 150 - 2 • CDs, Books, Music – Quarterly Retrospective

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In the last issue, Jan-March 2014:

- Strauss's Voice
- The Berliner Philharmoniker Digital Concert Hall Expands
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- Bax's Symphony in F major (1907) heard for the first time
- The Man of Steel (Machines)
- A Tallinn Diary – Dance of Life
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Contents

April - June 2014

Number 1499 • Volume 137

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Editorial	2
Coming attractions	3
Classical Music Mastermind – 29	17

Features

Sir Andrzej Panufnik: A life dogged by politics <i>Camilla Panufnik</i>	4
--	---

Panufnik: Impulse and Design <i>David Wordsworth</i>	8
---	---

An Historic Reissue <i>Tony Barlow and Robert Thompson</i>	12
---	----

Richard Strauss at 150 <i>William Featherby QC & Matthew Boyden</i>	14
--	----

Thoughts from the Ivory Tower <i>Jonathan Del Mar</i>	18
--	----

A Giant of London's Musical Fringe: Leslie Head (1922-2013) <i>Lewis Foreman</i>	20
--	----

London International Players	23
------------------------------	----

Music Matters <i>Mark Doran</i>	24
------------------------------------	----

A New Shostakovich Ballet <i>Timothy Henty</i>	30
---	----

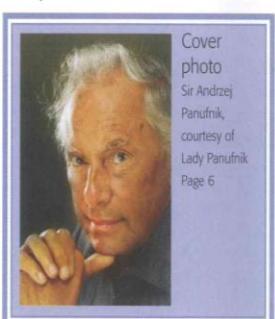
Lufthansa Festival of Baroque Music <i>Lindsay Kemp</i>	31
--	----

Disorientation at the Warsaw Opera <i>Cindy Bylander</i>	34
---	----

Rehabilitating Salieri	36
------------------------	----

Reviews

Opera	38
Concerts	47
Festivals	49
First Performances	54
Recitals	56
Orchestral	61
Compact Comments	64



Cover photo
Sir Andrzej Panufnik,
courtesy of
Lady Panufnik
Page 6

Editorial

Art and Politics

How far is an artist justified in standing apart from the common struggle of mankind? We posed that question in an Editorial almost five years ago, but it has arisen again as a consequence of recent events in Ukraine, events which have impinged upon art – and upon musicians in particular. A consequence of those recent happenings is that a spectre in the world of classical music we thought had disappeared has returned to haunt us: at the very least, it does when expressed in a letter signed by leading Russian artists, including musicians, amongst whom are Yuri Bashmet, Vladimir Spivakov, Denis Matsuev and Valery Gergiev – the last two recently seen performing at the opening ceremony of the Winter Olympics at Sochi – for their joint letter, which ends 'we firmly declare support of the position of the President of the Russian Federation across Ukraine and Crimea'.

In the United Kingdom, perhaps not since the premiership of Margaret Thatcher have musicians allied themselves publicly either for or against political decisions, but as the universality of music, combined with modern air travel, has enabled artists to pursue global careers, actions taken in one part of the world can now often have repercussions elsewhere. As a consequence of Maestro Gergiev appending his signature to the letter, his recent appointment as Music Director of the Munich Philharmonic (taking effect from 2015) has led to calls for him to be summoned to the Bavarian capital to explain his support for President Putin's actions, amid fears that concert-goers who have bought tickets for Barbican concerts with Gergiev and the London Symphony Orchestra (of which orchestra he is Principal Conductor) may consider returning them.

Although as Stravinsky (Russian-born, of course) said, 'Music is incapable of expressing anything other than itself' – in response to those who implied extra-musical associations to works of art – equally, if (in part) 'man does not live by bread alone', it is difficult for any artist to ignore events when their homeland and the actions of their leaders are involved.

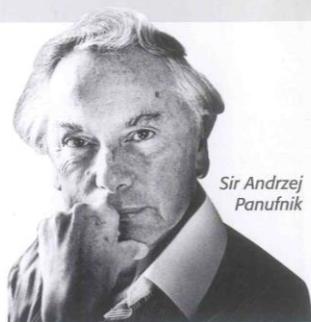
This would appear to have precious little to do with the understanding and performance of music, yet 2014 sees the centenary of the outbreak of World War I and the 75th

anniversary of the start of World War II – events which played defining parts in the evolution of our modern world, the consequences of which we are obliged, almost on a daily basis, to face. In considering the actions of musicians at the time of those events, the great German conductor Wilhelm Furtwängler stayed in Berlin as music director of the Berlin Philharmonic during the whole of the Nazi era: as a result, he underwent immediate post-war investigation in the American Zone of occupied Berlin in 1946 – the 'de-Nazification process' as it was called – an experience portrayed in Ronald Harwood's excellent play 'Taking Sides' (Daniel Massey brilliantly taking the part of the conductor; in the film, Harvey Keitel played Furtwängler) – before being cleared the following year. As Furtwängler said in his (at the time, unpublished) Diaries – 'Germany was never a Nazi country: it was a country that for twelve years was ruled by the Nazis'. Whilst that may be true as an observation, the consequences of those twelve years saw the destruction of a once-great culture and the murder of many of the country's most gifted artists, alongside millions of their fellow-citizens, leading in the immediate post-war period to the rise of another totalitarian system that brooked no dissent.

In this issue, we mark the lives of two great musicians – Richard Strauss and Andrzej Panufnik – both 'composer-conductors', who were directly affected by such events. Whilst we may,

as human beings, sympathise with and react to their personal circumstances, it is surely through their music *qua* music that we find their artistic responses to 'the common struggle of mankind' – in so far as they chose to reveal them.

It may be difficult for us today, following decades of relative peace in Europe, to imagine what it must be like to live under a totalitarian regime where, as creative artists, composers are judged not on the artistic quality of their work but whether it conforms to politically-driven and publicly-acceptable mores. Yet has the



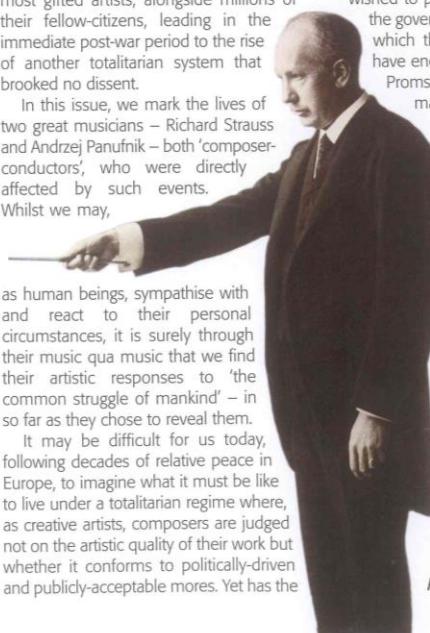
Sir Andrzej Panufnik

pendulum swung too much the other way – in that new music which reaches a wide concert-going audience is criticised in certain quarters for that very quality?

Nor is this a question of 'either-or': Benjamin Britten claimed more than once that he wanted his music to be 'useful'. In other words, that people should want to play or sing or listen to it, for the effect it had on them. In his 'War Requiem', which – because of its subject-matter – we may be sure to hear more performances of this year than in others, he was able to engage with 'the common struggle of mankind', his justification residing in the results of his creative genius, and not through signing public letters (though he did that too, on occasion).

In the latter half of the twentieth-century, in Europe and the United States, we saw concerts by visiting orchestras, conductors and soloists interrupted by those who wished to protest against the policies of the governments of the countries from which they came, and recently we have endured similar events during a Proms season. At any one time, we

may always have a choice: concert-goers may decide to attend a concert or not, but such a decision should be made on musical expectations rather than political ones. In attending a future Gergiev concert or Matsuev recital, does our attendance give tacit approval of, or express agreement with, the artist's support for President Putin's actions in Crimea? Or does it not?



Richard Strauss

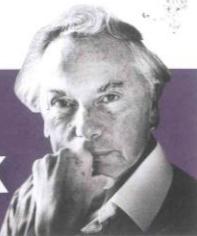
JANUARY-MARCH 2014 MUSICAL OPINION QUARTERLY

Sir Andrzej Panufnik: a life dogged by politics

Camilla Panufnik

Centenary : I

Andrzej Panufnik



On the occasion of the centenary of the greatly-distinguished Polish-born composer and conductor's birth, his widow - a famous photographer in her own right - pays tribute to her late husband's ultimate triumph against the forces of political and artistic oppression.

This year marks the centenary of Andrzej Panufnik, Polish refugee from communism, British knight, whose lifespan, from 1914 to 1991, ran closely in parallel to every major upheaval of 20th-century Europe, often with devastating results for his musical achievements. Born in Warsaw right at the beginning of World War One, he experienced first-hand Nazi then Soviet domination of his country. As Poland's leading composer in the post-war years he was bullied and manipulated by the Stalinists until he could no longer compose. He escaped eventually to Britain, after which his music was banned in Poland for almost quarter of a century and he officially "ceased to exist". He lived just long enough to see his beloved country rediscovering freedom and democracy, and to be welcomed back with a triumphant return, just a year before his death.

Panufnik's politically induced problems started at birth, in 1914, when his father, a violin maker by desire but a water engineer by profession, was forcibly drafted into the Russian Army and disappeared for more than five years, leaving his mother, Matylda, and their two sons without knowledge of his whereabouts and with pathetically little income. Andrzej's physically delicate mother, a brilliant violinist who was not allowed to perform in public as it was not *comme il faut* for married ladies, comforted herself by playing all and every day the solo parts of most of the classical concertos. Andrzej, even as a newborn, was involuntarily immersed in the sound of superb violin playing, which

in the long run perhaps was more useful to him than sufficient food or motherly affection.

His composing ambition grew from watching his mother's lessons in writing down her piano improvisations, though surprisingly he later had to fight his music-oriented parents to be allowed to study at the Warsaw Conservatoire. Eventually he was able to enter as a percussion student owing to his exceptional sense of rhythm; as fast as possible he transferred his studies to composition and conducting. He graduated with distinction in half the usual time, despite having doubled up his studies. In his last year, he shared the laureate's concert with equally talented contemporaries, both life-long friends, the 2 Witolds, the future great composer Lutoslawski and the famous Chopin performer Małzużyński, both of whom on this occasion performed on piano while the young Panufnik conducted his own Symphonic Variations. His only political problem at that stage was the threats of thuggish, fascistic students (influenced by Poland's rightwing government of that period) who objected to the number of his Jewish friends.

As soon as he had graduated, he started getting superb reviews for his early compositions "We have a new composer for Poland" etc. However, aware of the need to heighten his skills and gain deeper knowledge of the orchestra, he managed to get to the Vienna Academy to study conducting with the great Felix Weingartner, who responded warmly to his new pupil's outstanding talent. This

was where political upheavals started to devastate the young Andrzej's life. His blissful Vienna studies, sharing Weingartner's musical wisdom with only two other pupils, brought him close to Brahms, to Beethoven, also to Mozart, a life-long love. If in his sessions he dared to argue a phrase, Weingartner would say, "Well Brahms told me to conduct it this way".

However this challenging and stunning musical experience was painfully interrupted by the arrival of Adolf Hitler, parading his tanks through Vienna and declaring Anschluss. Weingartner, infuriated by the subsequent sacking and ill-treatment of the superb Jewish performers in his Vienna Philharmonic, left his post as Chief Conductor, so was then sacked as professor at the Vienna Academy. Andrzej followed him to Paris. When they met again in London, war was becoming inevitable, and Weingartner begged him not to return home. However Andrzej felt he must return to Poland to care for his ageing parents, which landed him for the whole of World War II in Nazi-occupied Warsaw.

War was declared and soon the Nazi powers began to bite. Any kind of gathering became banned, so public concerts were impossible; however the Poles, struggling to find enough to eat, needed more than ever their sustenance from culture. Resourceful Polish café owners employed musicians providing a variety of musical styles and instruments. The friends from the Warsaw Conservatoire, Lutoslawski and Panufnik, became quite famous for their two-piano duo. In 3½ years they made more than 200 pianistic and fiendishly difficult arrangements of orchestral works.

In Warsaw, the Nazis banned not only the music of Jewish composers but also all Polish music, especially works by Chopin whose music did (and still does) bring out the most powerful Polish patriotic feelings. Of course the two young composer-pianists joyously slipped in forbidden works by Mendelssohn, Gershwin and other banned composers - and they improvised their own dazzling jazz improvisations. (Only Chopin could not be

played together because it was impossible to improve on his music by re-arranging it for two pianos). Fortunately their illicit performances were not noticed, as otherwise they would simply have been shot. Life in Warsaw was especially dangerous not only for Jewish people but for all young men considered to be of fighting age as well as all intellectuals. Having a job in a café not only enabled the two young men to earn enough money to buy food for their elderly relatives but also provided them with work permits, which went part of the way towards not being casually shot on sight or loaded on to lorries and taken to their deaths.

Inevitably in Warsaw things deteriorated further. Andrzej was all too well-informed of the worst horrors through his elder brother, the brave Mirek, who smuggled food and weapons into the ghetto and was wireless operator for the home army, AK. The fatal 1943 Ghetto Uprising was followed by the 1944 Warsaw Uprising. Andrzej was approached by the AK to compose resistance music for people to sing their defiance on the streets. His four songs with words by the poet Dobrowolski were much used, much needed. Even today his famous Warsaw Children (Warszawskie Dzieci) is sung by all children in Warsaw Schools.

The Warsaw Uprising was a disaster. The German forces destroyed and burnt Warsaw almost entirely to the ground. Everyone had to escape, on foot, as well as they could, leaving even their most precious possessions behind. Andrzej first and foremost had to care for his very ill mother. Witold had only a handcart, he told me, on which he could stash very few possessions. With pain, he left behind all their 200 brilliant piano reductions of the classics. Andrzej, desperately worried about his sick mother, also left behind every note of music he had ever written: his first two symphonies, his Tragic Overture, as well as the much-praised works of his graduate years. Every note of music he had composed up to the age of 30 was consumed by flames.

After the war he started to reconstruct his symphonies. His first symphony was actually performed, but he felt his memory had failed him and he destroyed it. The only works that he did reconstruct and keep were his Tragic Overture, dedicated to his brother who had died in the uprising, his Five Polish Peasant Songs and



Aged 8 or 9



As a young man



Aged 2

his Piano Trio, for which he had sentiment as his first youthful success. Feeling that there was no point in looking backwards, he started to compose fresh new works. Indeed after the war he made a tremendous impression throughout international contemporary music circles with his mysterious Lullaby, with Nocturne, Tragic Overture, the Peasant Songs, and later his Circle of Fifths and Sinfonia Rustica, a gentle work expressing his love of Polish peasant music and art. Several musicologists today look upon Andrzej as the father of the Polish School of Composition and suggest that the exciting sonorities that came later in compositions by Lutoslawski, even in the early works by the much younger Penderecki and others, could not have occurred without their youthful initiation into Panufnik's sound world.

Andrzej always admitted he was naive at the beginning of the post-war period. Having been rather left-wing before WW2, he imagined, once the practical post-war problems had been cleared up, life might be better under the communists, rather than the pre-war fascists he detested.

On top of that, a passionate idealist, he wanted to help Polish people to experience classical music again, and plunged into efforts to restore musical activities,

with no notion that this would become a political matter. Probably in recognition of the impression he made when he conducted some charity concerts allowed by the Nazis in 1944, he was asked to re-establish the Kraków orchestra, and given the title of Chief Conductor, and was momentarily happy to have the opportunity to make use of his pre-war conducting studies. The Kraków Orchestra, at first frowned upon because it had regularly played for the Nazis, was at least able to perform some desirable concerts. Only the leader and a few main players were punished for their collaboration with the invaders.

Andrzej got permission to go to Paris to replace orchestral scores, most of which had disappeared in the chaos of the war. While there he was asked to conduct a concert of his own music. Because then he only had one reconstructed work, his Tragic Overture, he also conducted works by his compatriots living in poverty in Paris, Spisak and Szalowski. He was strongly attacked on his return by the Ministry of Culture for supporting "fascist composers" who lived abroad. He replied that no-one could be accused of fascism because they chose not to live in a "socialist paradise."

Within a year Andrzej found himself ▶

appointed Music Director and Chief Conductor of the still broken-apart Warsaw Philharmonic; but reassembling Poland's leading orchestra was a harder task. Kraków had survived the war almost intact; the musicians already had homes. Warsaw, however, was still mostly rubble, a grey mass of charred, bullet-holed, half buildings, and the Philharmonic's musicians were scattered all over Poland. He initially got permission to use a still-standing cinema for concerts and was promised accommodation for his players – but what accommodation? Most buildings if not flattened were roofless. The promises from the authorities continued, the reality never emerged, then the cinema permission was needed for other purposes. Very little music making was possible and sadly he had to resign because, betrayed by the authorities, he could not fulfil his promise of homes for his musicians.

Because he had written highly successful film music in his postgraduate year, he was begged by his pre-war film-making colleagues to become music director for their work, and, naive as ever, also needing money to support his father and niece, he rashly ignored their name, the "Army Film Unit". None of them was interested in making any military movies. They attempted mostly to make art films, for instance the beautiful "The Hands of Children". Andrzej himself then directed another film, about the immense carved-wood triptych in Krakow's Cathedral created by the famous 15th Century sculptor, Wit Stwosz. For this he composed a trumpet concerto, Concerto in Modo Antico, with instrumentation inspired partly by the historic trumpet call which even today sounds hourly from the cathedral tower. He then wrote music for one of Edgar Allan Poe's macabre stories, which became even more macabre when the lead actor had a fatal heart attack while performing the death scene. Then the timpanist dropped dead during the recording.

The third piece of bad luck was that film was banned due to gloomy subject matter. About then Stalin's 'cultural' henchman, Khrennikov, arrived in Poland to spread the devastating doctrine of Socialist Realism (sorealism), the concept that all the arts and architecture must carry "uplifting" political messages, giving optimistic colour to the image of commu-

When Andrzej, after a compulsory, dreary visit to Russian Music Schools, was accidentally tripped into saying he would compose a Symphony of Peace, when eventually he got cornered into writing it, it was severely criticised for "praying for peace" rather than "fighting for peace."

nism by producing art "for the people". The next film was a jolly processional film, the ultimate sorealism horror, which Andrzej was unable to avoid.

The doctrine of Socialist Realism, somewhat related to 1930s Nazi Third Reich arts policy, was devastating to serious and talented creative artists, composers, architects. In music all composers were expected to produce cheery mass songs with brain-curdling words. Lutoslawski composed ten such horrors before he found a way of escaping the pressure. Andrzej Panufnik, equally dismayed, composed only four and held out against any further such impositions, but many other Polish composers were pushed into producing literally dozens.

In addition, existing contemporary compositions were condemned if the harmonies or emotional content did not fall in line with Moscow's C-major mentality. 'Formalistic', 'decadent', 'bourgeois', and other such newly invented and laughable condemnations were applied to any composer's work which included the slightest discord or lacked "optimistic" content. For instance Andrzej's innocent and charming Sinfonia Rustica, inspired by Polish folk music and the fascinating symmetries of Polish paper cuts, a work which won a major award in 1949, the following year was declared by a rival to be "alien to the great socialist era" and was immediately pronounced by the Minister of Culture as having "ceased to exist".

After 1948, Andrzej suffered bitterly

from this ongoing control. Longing more than anything to compose, available time was heavily reduced because his fellow composers, impressed by his efforts on behalf of the Warsaw Philharmonic, had begged him to accept the post of Vice-President of the new Composers' Union. He was at first glad to do this because he still cared passionately about building musical opportunities in Poland. Indeed he worked hard on behalf of his fellow composers, though his efforts were not always acknowledged or appreciated. However he soon regretted his idealistic intentions.

All he really wanted was to have time, peace and no worries in order to be able to compose to his fullest abilities, to make up for the music he lost in the war. With the new restrictions and pressure on his time, with his worries about his father and his niece, however, he ceased to compose new works of high value after 1948. All his output was silenced. Though his Heroic Overture was selected to represent Poland at the 1952 Helsinki Olympics, to show the west how "free and progressive" Polish composers could be, this was not a new work – he first sketched it out at the beginning of WW2 when everyone believed that the Polish army could hold back the Germans – in the event the heroic Polish cavalry tragically galloped against German tanks with spears!). Despite international praise, Heroic Overture was declared "unfit for the great Socialist Era" and banned from performance in Poland.

When Andrzej, after a compulsory, dreary visit to Russian Music Schools, was accidentally tripped into saying he would compose a Symphony of Peace, when eventually he got cornered into writing it, it was severely criticised for "praying for peace" rather than "fighting for peace".

Peace Panufnik did not have. In 1954 he could no longer compose. He was steeped in depression after the death of his adored 8-month daughter. He was not interested in prestigious appointments or in large financial gains. His only desire was to live somewhere quiet where he could restore his creative abilities.

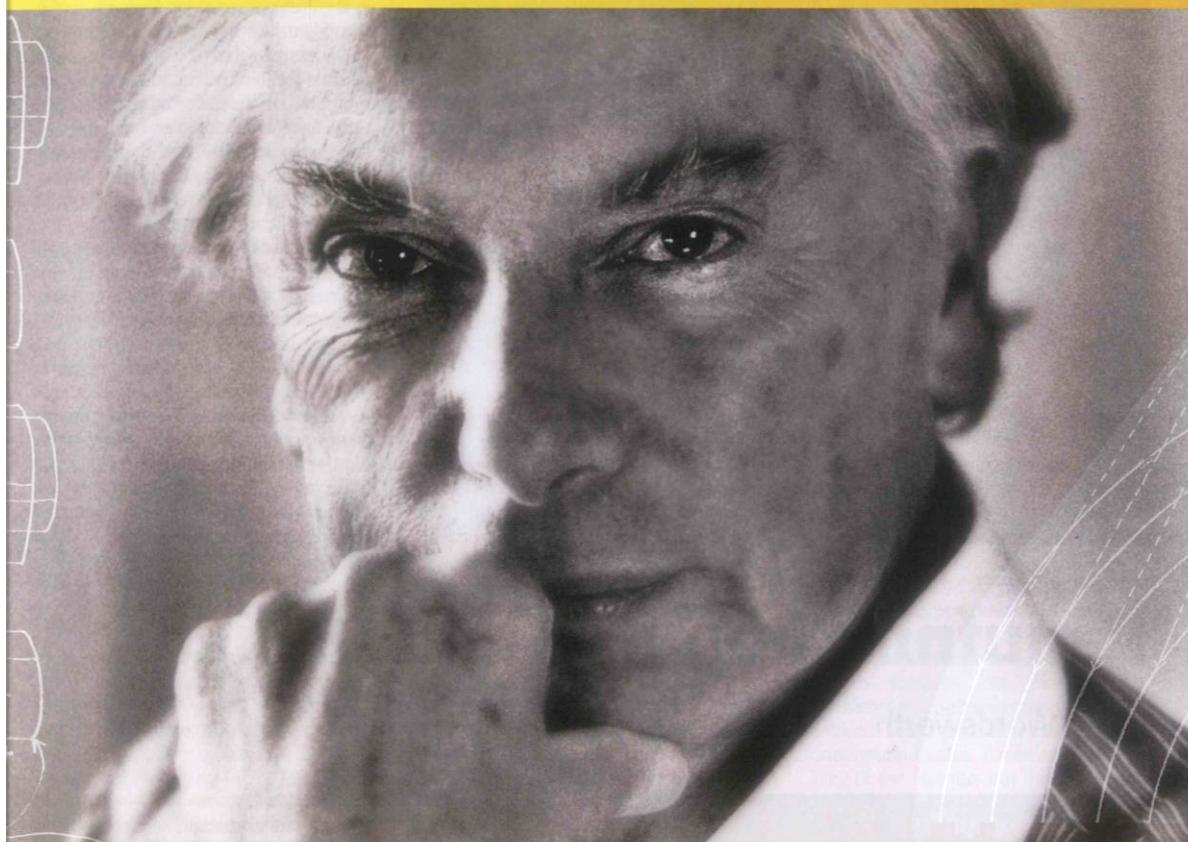
He had lost his naivety and understood all too well the true message of the Peace Movement. In Poland "peace" was the great Soviet bluff to get Western intellectuals on-side. The Peace trap convinced myriads of intellectuals in Britain and ▶

PANUFNIK 100

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featuring the Brodsky Quartet, Jacqui Dankworth & Friends

Sunday, 30 November 2014



An all-day celebration of the life and works of Polish-British composer Sir Andrzej Panufnik

Love Song

2.30pm

Selection of songs and piano pieces by Andrzej & Roxanna Panufnik.
Heather Shipp, mezzo-soprano
Clare Hammond, piano
Members of the Brodsky Quartet

'My Father, The Iron Curtain & Me'

4pm

A film about Panufnik's life in Poland and his dramatic escape to Britain + Q&A: The Panufnik Family
in conversation with Norman Lebrecht.

O vos omnes (To you all)

6.30pm

String Quartets, Sextet and other works by Andrzej & Roxanna Panufnik.
Brodsky Quartet & Friends
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Popular Polish songs from the 1930s, with period café ambiance, by A & R Panufnik, Lutoslawski & Gershwin.
Jacqui Dankworth, singer
Charlie Wood & Clare Hammond, piano
Brodsky Quartet

All day

Photographic Exhibition

Photographs of Andrzej by his wife, Lady Camilla Jessel Panufnik FRPS.

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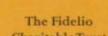
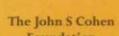
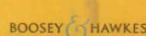
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Portrait of A Panufnik © Camilla Jessel Panufnik FRPS



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other Western countries that Stalin wanted world peace. They had not yet recognised that Peace was the short form for World Peace under the benevolent rule of Moscow.

Then suddenly he found himself faced with a worse problem. Because of the warmth towards him and his recognition as a great musician in the free countries of Europe, the Polish authorities ordered him to sign dozens of personal letters to leading Western intellectuals, personally asking them to join the Peace Movement. This was the final straw and he could not agree. At that point he started seriously to weigh the alternative of suicide or else escape to England, the land of some of his ancestors.

When, as Poland's "Composer Number One" he did escape, and explain to the newspapers and radio stations of the world that he had left in protest against the Stalinist interference with the work of all creative artists, when he expressed his rebuttal of the communist system, the resulting fury of his government was

boundless. Filthy propaganda was expounded against him, of great complexity and cunning. He was accused of stealing, even stealing his own collection of violins, (which alack he left behind to be stolen by others). As happened to any enemy of communism at that time, all sorts of other unpleasant suggestions were promoted, completely massacring his reputation so that even his friends were put against him, even his family. After the manufactured dirt flew everywhere in Poland, it was cunningly placed to destroy his golden reputation in England's musical world.

After the propaganda attack, Andrzej became a non-person, he officially "ceased to exist". Not only his music, but also his name was banned for almost quarter of a century and he was written out of Polish musical history. Only now do people understand the Polishness of some of the seminal works he composed in exile, his Sinfonia Sacra in celebration of Poland's Millennium of Christianity and Statehood, (religion being an anathema to the Communist government); his Epitaph

for the Victims of Katyn in memory of the fifteen thousand Polish intellectuals and young men murdered on Stalin's orders in the Katyn Forest; his Sinfonia Votiva, composed to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa, the religious icon of the Solidarity strikers; his Bassoon Concerto in memory of Father Popieluszko (the Solidarity priest tortured and murdered by the secret police) – and there were so many more works with a Polish flavour. His fatherland was never far from his mind.

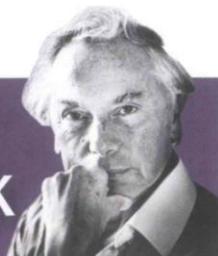
These and many other works emerged from his pen when he could at last achieve his dream of absolute peace to compose in his final decades in England. Chopin, and many other exiles from unkind régimes, have written words or music to express their anguish for their native lands. Andrzej Panufnik, his life overturned in so many ways by politics, did the same. Only he was fortunate at least to live just long enough to see political change and democracy restored to his beloved Poland. ■

Panufnik: Impulse and Design

David Wordsworth

Centenary : II

Andrzej Panufnik



The author, a student of Sir Andrzej Panufnik, offers a centenary tribute to the Polish-born master.

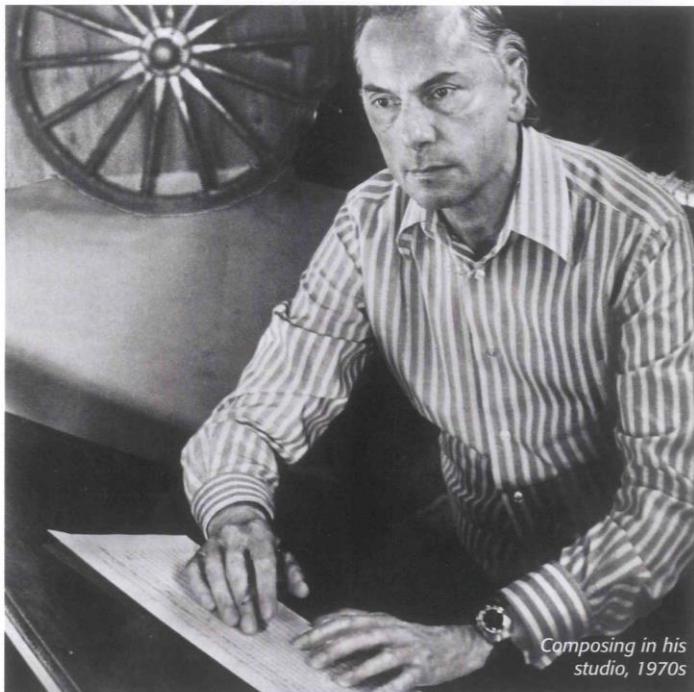
Even compared to the sometimes hectic and unpredictable life of many creative artists, Andrzej Panufnik's journey to both artistic and personal fulfilment is a remarkable one. The first forty years of his life saw many rejections, disappointments and tragedies, the rise of the Nazis, the horror of the Warsaw ghetto and the Stalinist purges. For this to transform into a blissfully happy family life in a quiet, rambling house by the river in Twickenham seems the sort of story that might be

more the subject a not terribly believable novel, rather than the life of a major composer.

Andrzej Panufnik was born in Warsaw on September 24th 1914. His father was a respected violin maker (his instruments admired and used by Hubermann, Neveu and Oistrakh amongst others) and his mother a talented violinist who studied with Carl Flesch. Despite the view of his father that music was 'not a profession for a gentleman', a young professor from the

Warsaw Conservatoire was hired and the young Panufnik made enough progress to compose a Piano Sonatina at the age of 9. Later he was admitted to the Conservatoire Junior Department but this was no guarantee of admission to the main institution as Panufnik later found out, a failed audition bringing forth the suggestion that the should 'Shut the piano for ever!' as he had not talent!

Not for the last time Panufnik's grit, determination and a belief in his own ability saw a different turn of events develop. Despite the setback, the desperate financial position of his family, a brush with life threatening illness and the precarious state of Poland in the 1920s, Panufnik's own studies covered perhaps a far wider range than might have been the case at the Conservatoire. Alongside study of standard classical repertoire he developed a love of theatre music and the jazz inspired works of Gershwin and Ellington,



Composing in his studio, 1970s

which in turn inspired a series of foxtrots and popular songs, with such alluring titles as 'Ach, Pardon' and 'I want no more' which became very successful in their own right. A surprising qualification perhaps for entry into a major Conservatoire, but Panufnik's hard work along with his keen ear and secure sense of rhythm finally ensured his entry into the Warsaw Conservatoire, not as a composer or pianist but to study percussion and musical theory in the autumn of 1932.

Much as he found playing percussion instruments interesting (it clearly benefited him later life not least in the test piece he wrote for the Shell/LSO Competition almost half a century later – the Concertino for Timpani, Percussion & Strings), Panufnik later admitted that he used this as an excuse to begin studying composition at the Conservatoire. Eventually this was permitted and Panufnik began to have lessons with the now forgotten Eugeniusz Morawski (who had little time for early twentieth century musical developments of any kind) and Kazimerz Sikorski, who although rather more sympathetic found himself stretched by his progressive young student when presented with the score of a set of Symphonic Variations, written in for keys simultaneously and a Psalm setting for soloists, chorus and vast orchestra! The only surviving work from this period and still the composer's official op1 is a rather flamboyant Piano Trio (1934), thankfully revived in recent years. In 1935 Panufnik was granted an audience with the greatest Polish composer of the day, Karol Szymanowski – the music of the by then ailing, chain-smoking, almost destitute composer remained a great love throughout Panufnik's life.

The later 1930s brought a period abroad, first to Vienna to study conducting with Felix Weingartner (those of us who remember Panufnik's concise and elegant conducting of his own music will regret that in later years he did not return often to conduct the music of his 'God' – Mozart), studies with Philippe Gaubert in Paris and even a brief trip to London. However, in 1939 Europe had rather more pressing events on its mind and when despite the pleading of Weingartner, Panufnik returned to be with his family in Warsaw, life became more chaotic and dangerous than he perhaps could have ever imagined. For some years mere

survival became rather more important than writing music but the war years did bring both a memory of happier times in the 'Five Polish Peasant Songs' (1940), a charming set of songs for unison high voices and a rustic folk-band of flutes, clarinets and bass clarinet and also one of Panufnik's most powerful works, the 'Tragic Overture' (1942). Although Panufnik would always insist that his works were abstract, it is almost impossible not to hear in the 'Tragic Overture' not only the despair of war but surely also the sound of guns, falling bombs and wailing aeroplanes that over the space of seven minutes or so build to a final cataclysmic climax. Although a short work and composed under near impossible conditions 'Tragic Overture' shows an extraordinary confidence both in the handling of the orchestra and is already a kind of stencil for the musical language that Panufnik would develop for the next half century, built as it is on a single thematic idea that is augmented, transposed and inverted in every possible way.

These difficult years also saw the development of one of twentieth century music's most iconic partnerships, the two piano team that Panufnik formed with fellow composer Witold Lutosławski. Both young composers made countless arrangements and transcriptions of music by Bach, Mozart, Beethoven, Schubert and much other standard repertoire. These arrangements alongside even more courageous ventures into the work of blacklisted and banned composers, Polish patriotic songs and anthems played in underground cafés, risked not only the lives of the listeners but the performers too. How frustrating but not entirely surprising it is that none of these pieces (apart from Lutosławski's well-known *Paganini Variations*) survived – all were destroyed in the Warsaw Uprising. Panufnik always dismissed his own abilities as a pianist saying that they always ensured his slightly older contemporary had the more difficult part, but together their roles in war-torn Warsaw had a profound effect on the moral of their long suffering compatriots.

The German occupation, the Warsaw Uprising, death of his brother and the loss of every note he had written up to that time made the last years of the war the sternest of tests. Along with many of his compatriots Panufnik might have expected being 'liberated' by the Russians to herald a change of fortune, but of course nothing could be further from the truth. Panufnik had become almost by default THE prominent figure in Polish music, ►



Conducting a charity concert in Warsaw during the War, permitted by the Nazis, conducting his Tragic Overture

Panufnik took the momentous decision to leave Poland and in an escape worthy of anything invented by John Le Carré, dodging his minders, he fled to London whilst on a conducting trip to Switzerland.

As Panufnik put it succinctly himself, his arrival in London transformed him from number one to no one! The Polish government immediately took action denouncing Panufnik as a traitor and imposing a ban on his music that lasted for almost a quarter of a century. Panufnik's name was effectively removed from all musical texts and he became a 'non-person' as far as Poland and the Eastern Bloc was concerned. Free from government control, interference and political pressure (to the end of his days Panufnik hated giving public interviews and talking on the telephone!), Panufnik found himself pretty much unknown as both conductor and composer in his new home. Now faced with the very real difficulty of earning a living, he was offered a small number of guest conducting engagements and this lead to a short period as Music Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra. This at least provided a little financial security but was not an entirely happy experience for an essentially shy man with a poor command of English who wanted more than anything wanted to devote his time to composition. Once again new works were slow to appear – a further rather nostalgic work based on traditional Polish music 'Polonia' (1959), the two movement Piano Concerto (1962) and the reflective 'Autumn Music' (1962) with its ominously tolling piano and dark orchestration of flutes, clarinets, piano, harp, percussion and low strings.

Around the same time Panufnik found a perhaps unexpected and enthusiastic champion in Leopold Stokowski who conducted the premiere Sinfonia Elegiaca (1957) (a revised version of the earlier and withdrawn 'Symphony of Peace'). In later years Stokowski conducted the premieres of the moving tribute to the brutal mass murder of Polish prisoners of war, Katyn Epitaph (1967/8) and the immensely powerful but rarely heard choral work 'Universal Prayer' (1968/9). In 1963 Panufnik married the writer and photographer Camilla Jessel and in the same year Sinfonia Sacra, still his most performed work, won first prize in the first Prince Rainier Competition in Monaco.

but any hope he might have had of making up for lost time and the loss of almost twenty years work proved fruitless. He became Music Director of the Krakow Philharmonic Orchestra and later the Warsaw Philharmonic, was expected to play a leading role in setting up a new music publishing house and found himself being forced to write music for Soviet controlled films. With no time for original composition Panufnik applied himself to the task of reconstructing at least some of the works that been lost – the Piano Trio, the Polish Peasant Songs and Tragic Overture. More slowly, new works began to appear – the 'Twelve Miniature Studies' for piano (1947), perhaps a kind of homage to another great Polish composer?; the impressive 'Nocturne' for orchestra (1947) – a great shimmering arch of sound, cloudy harmonies and the almost inaudible rustle of a side-drum building to a huge climax before dissolving back to nothing again, the beginnings of the kind of structural plan that became so important to Panufnik in later years. Perhaps the most important work from this period is the 'Lullaby for 29 solo strings and two harps' – inspired by the movements of the River Thames on a brief conducting tour to London. The 'Lullaby' in its use of quarter-tones, multi-divided strings, dense yet always transparent textures and even in its notation, pre-empting many of the experiments of what became known as the 'Polish School' and others by several years.

Panufnik's high profile meant that the

pressures of government control became intolerable – made to serve on ridiculous committees of one sort or another (some connected with music such as the Composers' Union, some not, such as the grandly named Polish Committee of the Defence of Peace!) and even forced to head a cultural delegation to China were he found himself shaking hands with Mao. Having lost two earlier symphonies Panufnik resolved to give any future symphony a title rather than a number, a procedure he followed until the 10th and last some forty years later. That such an upbeat, positive and tuneful work as 'Sinfonia Rustica' (1948) could be composed at such a dreadful time is remarkable. Despite quoting fragments of Polish folk tunes and managing to win the State influenced Chopin Competition the work was denounced as 'alien to the Socialist era' and Panufnik was told that 'Sinfonia Rustica had ceased to exist'. It doesn't come as any surprise to learn that in order to divert any political pressure, most of the works written few years focus on Polish music from earlier periods – the beautiful 'Hommage à Chopin' (1949) for soprano & piano (later arranged for flute & strings); Old Polish Suite for string orchestra (1950) and Concerto in modo antico for trumpet & strings (1951) – perfectly respectable pieces and each recognisably Panufnik, but hardly the work of a constantly curious and self-critical artist. Eventually, realising that remaining in Poland would mean the end of any meaningful and productive musical life,

Despite the beginnings of a change of fortune, having spent a good deal of his life being censored it must have been odd not to say worrying for Panufnik to find himself the victim of an unofficial censorship in his adopted homeland. Much has been written about the 'Glock Years' at the BBC, but with even 'Sinfonia Sacra', one of Panufnik's most approachable works enjoying performances the world over being rejected by the BBC as being 'unsuitable for broadcast', there cannot be any doubt that Panufnik along with a good many others, were side-lined in favour of those that were seen as more progressive and therefore more worthwhile. As energy and personal happiness were beginning to be restored to Panufnik's life, if not long awaited recognition, he became worried that he was becoming obsessed with 'Polish inspired works' and so began the search for the compositional language that would serve him for the rest of his creative life.

Panufnik always resisted talking about his music. Indeed the argument might be made that he did himself considerable harm by refusing invitations to lecture, give interviews, take up residencies and the like. As he often put it 'notes rather than words are my metier' and in any case he regarded his creative work, when locked away in his studio to be a very private matter. Nonetheless it was a particularly long period of intense study during 1967/8 that brought his 'Eureka' moment – the resulting work 'Reflections' for piano (1968) is built upon the manipulation of a three note cell and their various reflections, transpositions both horizontally and vertically, so paving the way for the combination of what Panufnik called 'heart and brain' and something that he developed and used for the rest of his compositional career. Melodic and harmonic cells were more often than not stimulated by geometrical shapes and patterns – the triangle in the case of a work called 'Triangles' for 3 flutes & 3 'cellos' (1972); a pattern of 'Sinfonia Mistica' or a framework of spheres in 'Sinfonia di Sfere'. Sometimes these geometrical patterns extended to influence the arrangement of performers, again in 'Sinfonia di Sfere' percussionists (playing spherical drums) are placed around the main body of the orchestra. All as Panufnik was at pains to point out, a means to an end, in his own words, 'an aid to exp-

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ression, not a limitation of it... an attempt to achieve a true balance between feeling and intellect' After the completion of what on paper might be seen as a relatively unimportant work, in Panufnik's own words 'music flowed from his pen' – a Violin Concerto for Yehudi Menuhin (1971), the 1st String Quartet (1976) and no fewer than four symphonies – Sinfonia Concertante (1973), Sinfonia di Sfere (1974/5), Sinfonia Mistica (1977) and the Organ Concerto – Metasinfonia (1978), each work inspired by its own geometrical plan.

Having created a new musical language for himself Panufnik felt more comfortable returning to inspiration from his native land, creating music that often reflected his love, longing and memories of his beloved Poland – String Quartet no2 'Messages' (1980), inspired by a childhood experience of listening to sounds produced by the vibrating wires on telegraph poles; the Bassoon Concerto (1985) – a heartfelt and touching Requiem for Father Jerzy Popieluszko, murdered by the Polish secret police; the String Sextet 'Trains of Thought' (1987), the relentless almost minimalist rhythms inspired by train journeys of his youth and the concise 3rd String Quartet 'Wycinanki' (1990) inspired by Polish folk art. All of these fine works warrant serious consideration and revival as we celebrate Panufnik's centenary.

For a composer who often worried about repeating himself, the last three symphonies could not be more strikingly different. Sinfonia Votiva (1981) is a virtuoso Concerto for Orchestra, written for Seiji Ozawa and the Boston Symphony and is both an offering to the Black Madonna of Czestochowa (a hugely important and symbolic icon to the Polish people)

and a musical show of solidarity to Solidarity itself – the work was written during the rise of the Solidarity movement in the Gdansk shipyards. The shattering Panufnikian clangorous climax (the composer used to be amused at the assumption that this was the sound of the shipyard!) is left hanging in the air, a kind of 'Unanswered Question', perfectly fitting at that time. Interestingly the revised version of the 9th Symphony (Sinfonia della Speranza) (1986/7), another huge arch of seemingly never ending melody (itself constructed around twelve smaller arcs) puts the subtitle after the number 9! The Royal Philharmonic Society who commissioned the work also of course commissioned Beethoven's 9th and with this in mind they helpfully (?) suggested that Panufnik might like to make his symphony a choral symphony too. Setting texts to music never came easily to Panufnik however and he found that he couldn't or as he put it 'perhaps wouldn't' include a choral element. Nevertheless, the 9th has a fittingly epic feel in its duration (at almost 40 minutes, the longest single span of music in the composer's catalogue) and shows a striking new confidence in the handling of the orchestra, overwhelming melodic and rhythmic unisons contrasting with finely tuned chamber music textures – including a prominent part for a harpsichord. One might perhaps not have been too surprised if following in an all too familiar tradition this was the end of the Panufnik symphonic cycle, however, a request from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in 1988 brought the most concise and in some ways austere of the set, austere that is until the almost unbearably touching closing bars. Lasting less than twenty minutes it is by far the shortest of Panufnik's symphonies and called simply Symphony No 10, a departure from the habit of over forty years. The present writer recalls conversations with the composer about a lack of a title – Sinfonia Ultima? – far too pretentious he probably correctly decided! Whether or not Panufnik intended this to be the culmination of the cycle or not there can't be any doubt that this Symphony No 10, together with the tone poem 'Harmony' he wrote the following year for the New York Chamber Symphony was taking him in new directions even as he entered his late 70s.

September 1990 brought Panufnik's return to Poland after an absence of 36 years. The triumphant visit to the Warsaw Autumn to conduct his own works, most importantly with the Warsaw Philharmonic, 'his' own orchestra, came after much thought and a very long wait. The ban on his music actually came to an end in 1977, when 'Universal Prayer' was performed at the Warsaw Autumn, followed by 'Sinfonia Sacra' (the Scottish National Orchestra conducted by Sir Alexander Gibson!) in 1978, but Panufnik always maintained he would not return until 'Poland was free'. The monumental changes that took place in Eastern Europe in the late 1980s and beyond meant the relaxation of martial law in Poland and finally Panufnik accepted the invitation he had so many times rejected. This trip became even more poignant as it became clear that Panufnik's health was already precarious and this longed for trip to his beloved Poland

would also be his last, but nobody can be in any doubt of the importance of this trip and the deep emotional effect it had on the composer.

Once back in the UK Panufnik undertook one last recording, a blistering account of the 9th Symphony coupled with the Piano Concerto, performed by the LSO, always one of his most loyal supporters, who at the same time had commissioned a new Cello Concerto for Mstislav Rostropovich. Like the Piano Concerto in two contrasting movements, characteristically structured around another geometrical plan (a mandorla, a palindromic figure in the centre of two overlapping circles) the work exploits the big singing tone that Rostropovich had at the top of his instrument in the first movement and his rhythmic dexterity in the second. The composition of the Cello Concerto was clearly a struggle, indeed the programme note is dated just over a

month before Panufnik's death on October 27th 1991 and yet, how fitting that the note is dated 19th September 1991, something that was have certainly appealed to Panufnik's gentle sense of humour.

Bernard Jacobson, a close personal friend of the composer describes the magic of Panufnik as follows – 'There are composer-conductors whose music always 'sounds' whose music usually means something. To enshrine deep spiritual meanings and fresh, incalculable poetic inspirations in sound-structures of unfailing clarity and compelling resonance may be accounted as Panufnik's distinctive achievement'. It is hardly unusual for a composer's reputation to sink after their death, perhaps even more so if that composer happens to be a significant and remarkable conductor of their own works, but it is surely now time to re-examine the work of this modest and remarkable man. ■

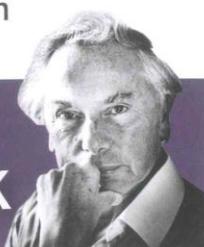
An Historic Reissue

Panufnik conducts his Ninth Symphony and Bassoon Concerto

Tony Barlow and Robert Thompson

Centenary : III

Andrzej Panufnik



The authors trace the background to the reissue this quarter of legendary recordings of two of Panufnik's major works, conducted by the composer, in honour of the centenary of his birth. This fine CD will be reviewed in our next issue.

This year will mark the centenary of the great Polish composer Sir Andrzej Panufnik and there will be many celebrations worldwide, but especially perhaps in the UK where he worked and made his home and where his widow, Lady Camilla, still lives.

To mark this event, Heritage Records will be issuing an historic CD (HTGCD 263) of the premiere of his masterpiece, the Bassoon concerto, which was com-

missioned by Robert Thompson, who performed the concerto with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in a live broadcast on Radio 3 in 1987, with the composer conducting, which gives it a special authenticity. The concert also included the composer's Ninth Symphony – *Sinfonia di Speranza* – commissioned by The Royal Philharmonic Society and the Robert Thompson and Andrzej Panufnik concert was introduced by Sir Andrzej talking

about his inspiration for each piece, which adds to the historical interest of this CD. The issue of this CD has been enormously facilitated by Roger Wright, who was then the Producer on the concert and to whom thanks are due.

Thompson's recording was widely praised by the international music press at the time and it is very important, therefore, that this very special CD is made available to a new generation of listeners to contribute to the historical archive of one of the twentieth century's great composers.

The Polish Cultural Institute in London have also given their full co-operation and financial backing to honour one of their country's leading composers and to whom equal thanks. Finally, a great debt is owed to Lady Camilla Panufnik, who throughout has offered her whole-hearted backing for this valuable archive recording to be issued as a CD and whose support

has been much appreciated. Her words on this project are very apposite:

"These recordings, conducted by my husband from the BBC Music Archive show the importance of that historic collection, which contains musical truths about performers as well as composers leading us far back into the BBC's beginnings. The truths on this particular CD encompass the extraordinary warmth of timbre and expression of the outstanding USA Bassoonist Robert Thompson and the rich instrumental colours with precision of performance of the BBC Symphony Orchestra. It also demonstrates that the composer's unique musical personality was as strong in his conducting as it was in his spiritual and vivid compositions. The remarkable quality of sound in this recording also bears witness to the skill and musicianship of its BBC producer, Roger Wright."

Robert Thompson recalls:

At the time Maestro Panufnik completed writing his Bassoon concerto in 1985 and

had passed the score on to me, I was bedevilled with doubts about the work. Some concerns were over technique but mostly they were do with the structural pacing of the quasi operatic elements.

Indeed, my performance wouldn't be any good if I had simply performed every note flawlessly but had missed the inner drama and changes of musical character of the work. Maestro Panufnik, sitting at the keyboard through approximately four rehearsals prior to each of the several performances, coached me firmly and relentlessly on the precise expressive style he desired. The first recitative, which related to a prayer of Father Jerzy Popieluszko, the murdered priest whose death had inspired the composer, was exceptionally difficult to bring off, as a monologue is always very exposed and a prayer stated on the bassoon needed clarity.

In the second recitative, the torture and death of Father Popieluszko was alluded to by the whiplash chords from the strings and the increasingly high pitched and ever more frequent and strained response

from the bassoon. The pacing the composer wanted was slower than I wanted and we compromised on an in-between acceleration.

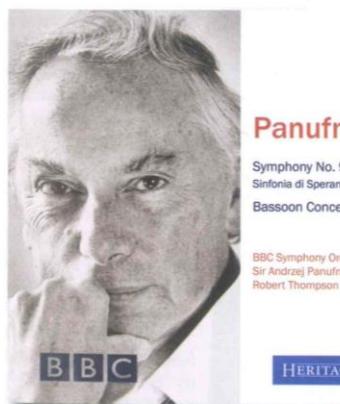
Most importantly, in the long and expressive Adagio in the fourth movement, he was very forceful in wanting it "as slowly as the bassoon can play" and *molto espressivo* in the swell of the melodic line.

At that time I realised, as I gradually achieved his objective of intensity, that I was not on a pleasure trip, but responsible for expressing directly the whole grief of Andrzej Panufnik and his Polish counterparts, towards the continuing misery in that country.

When after several performances, we got closer to our goal, I asked him respectfully, who amongst the many great performers who had played his music, had been the best model for us to take for the future. He looked me in the eye and said "You, Robert; you are the model." I will always wonder if he was being diplomatic! ■

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A composer-conducted performance, from the BBC archive, of Panufnik's Symphony No. 9 'Sinfonia di Speranza' and Bassoon Concerto. The concerto is performed by Robert Thompson, for whom it was written. The recording includes explanatory introductions of both works by the composer.

Symphony No. 9, Sinfonia di Speranza, is Panufnik's musical interpretation of the ideal of hope: a spiritual message, an expression of faith in mankind and a longing for racial and religious tolerance.

The **Bassoon Concerto** was composed as a memorial to martyrdom inspired by the persecution, at the hands of the Polish secret police, of Father Jerzy Popieluszko.