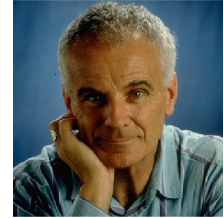


# biography



## SIR PETER MAXWELL DAVIES

Universally acknowledged as one of the foremost composers of our time, Sir Peter Maxwell Davies has made a significant contribution to musical history through his wide-ranging and prolific output. He lives in the Orkney Islands off the north coast of Scotland, where he writes most of his music. In a worklist that spans more than five decades, he has written across a broad range of styles, yet his music always communicates directly and powerfully, whether in his profoundly argued symphonic works, his music-theatre works or witty light orchestral works.

Maxwell Davies' major dramatic works include the operas *Taverner*, *Resurrection*, *The Lighthouse* and *The Doctor of Myddfai*; full-length ballets *Salome* and *Caroline Mathilde*, and music-theatre works *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and *Miss Donnithorne's Maggot*. His huge output of orchestral work comprises eight symphonies - hailed by *The Times* as "the most important symphonic cycle since Shostakovich" - as well as numerous concerti and light orchestral works including *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise* and *Mavis in Las Vegas*, and five large-scale works for chorus including the oratorio *Job*. His most recent series is the landmark cycle of ten string quartets, the *Naxos Quartets*, described in the *Financial Times* as "one of the most impressive musical statements of our time".

Also internationally active as a conductor, Maxwell Davies has held the position of Composer/Conductor with both the Royal Philharmonic and BBC Philharmonic Orchestras. He has guest-conducted orchestras including the Cleveland Orchestra, Boston Symphony Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra, Russian National Orchestra, Oslo Philharmonic and Philharmonia Orchestra. He retains close links with the St. Magnus Festival, Orkney's annual arts festival which he founded in 1977, and is Composer Laureate of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. Maxwell Davies was knighted in 1987 and appointed Master of the Queen's Music in 2004, in which role he seeks to raise the profile of music in Great Britain, as well as writing many works for Her Majesty the Queen and for royal occasions.

As part of his 75<sup>th</sup> birthday celebrations in 2009, Maxwell Davies has written a violin concerto for the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and Daniel Hope. He conducts the world premiere of this work in Leipzig, followed by the UK premiere at the BBC Proms with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, as part of a day-long celebration of his music at the Royal Albert Hall. His music is also the focus of a weekend at the Southbank Centre, with the first presentation of the complete Naxos Quartet cycle by the Park Lane Group, followed by a further fortnight of events in devoted to his music in Glasgow. In addition to performances by the Scottish Chamber Orchestra, Hebrides Ensemble, Scottish Ensemble, and students from the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama, the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra give the world premiere of a new work by Maxwell Davies - *Overture, St. Francis of Assisi* - under Ilan Volkov, and later perform his seminal opera *Taverner*, conducted by Martyn Brabbins.

Other recent and upcoming commissions include an orchestral work on the theme of climate change for the Camerata Salzburg, a piano concerto for the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and Angela Hewitt, and an opera for the Royal Academy of Music and Juilliard School of Music. As a conductor, Maxwell Davies has worked recently with the Leipzig Gewandhaus and Hamburg Philharmonic, and this season his conducting engagements include the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Camerata Salzburg, Royal Flemish Philharmonic and Netherlands Radio Chamber Philharmonic.

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