

One Foot in Eden – Ronald Center’s centenary

Dr James Reid Baxter

*...famished field and blackened tree
Bear flowers in Eden never known.
Blossoms of grief and charity
Bloom in these darkened fields alone.*

Edwin Muir (1885-1959)

IN 1980, THE SECOND issue of this journal carried an ‘Introduction’ to Ronald Center (1913-1973) by Derek M. Blyth, newly graduated BMus from Center’s native Aberdeen. Blyth had taken a very active part in presenting a string of first public performances of Center’s music, with notable success, and in 1980, there was every reason to think that Center’s distinctive voice was beginning to make its way in the wider world. Yet the composer’s actual centenary, on 2 April 2013, seems to have gone entirely unmarked even in his native city.²⁹

By the autumn of 2013, however, things were definitely looking up, thanks above all to the vision of Martin Anderson of Toccata Press. The preparation of Christopher Guild’s Toccata Classics CD of seventy minutes of Center’s piano music had rekindled the present writer’s engagement with Center’s music in the most stimulating way, resulting in a sort of ‘mini-festival’ marking Center’s Centenary in Edinburgh between 10 and 22 November. The CD itself had been released on 2 September, and was immediately welcomed in the Financial Times. Also in November, the first complete performances of Center’s Third Quartet (1967) were given in two Aberdeenshire venues. 2014 has started well: the January *International Record Review* gave the new CD a five-star rating, followed by excellent reviews in *Fanfare* and the French journal *Diapason*. Center’s music occupied the second half of a recital in Edinburgh on 18 January; on 27 February, musicologist and singer Sally Garden will give a lecture about the composer at the National Library; on 8 March, some of Center’s songs and choral music would be performed in Huntly. There have been vainly optimistic hopes in the past that Center’s hour had finally struck; if a truly sustained effort is made from now on, perhaps it truly will strike at last. This essay, which is perforce something of a personal memoir, seeks to review the frustrating story that is Center’s life and afterlife, and to identify some of the reasons why it is the public, not the composer, that is being neglected.

Engaging, appealing and accessible, Center’s work both embodies and faces up to the agonising paradox of existence – the simultaneity of Good and Evil, the coexistence of endless warfare and endless longing for peace, and the mystery of a human race capable of creating both the Parthenon and the atom bomb, and of producing both Ghandi and Stalin, Mengele and Mother Teresa. Center chooses to leave this paradox unresolved – he does not even pretend that Art can resolve it. He accepts, with infinite regret, that this world is not Eden. Mankind is not blameless, as were Adam and Eve before the Fall. But since we are capable of recognising good and evil, we have, as it were, ‘one foot in

²⁹ A recital of music for violin and viola, featuring Center’s short ‘Duo’ for those instruments, did take place in the ‘Tin Hut’ at Gartly, near Huntly.

Eden still'. It seems to me that what drove Center's creativity was a constant awareness of this gap between what human life could be and what it is. Hence the quotations from Edwin Muir at the head and conclusion of this essay.

These are large claims to be making for a small body of compositions (often very short) by a virtually unknown composer. None of Center's works is more than thirty minutes long, and many last two or three minutes at the most. I can only urge understandably sceptical readers to listen to the first-rate recordings of various piano works made by Christopher Guild and by Murray McLachlan, and also to the recordings of the Piano Sonata made by Joseph Long and Ronald Stevenson.³⁰ However, Center's piano music is only part of the picture. There are three string quartets, a four movement *Suite for Unaccompanied Cello*, a three-movement *Sonata for Violin and Piano*, four works for string orchestra, a symphony for full orchestra in four concise movements, seven early songs for voice and piano and the mature *Four Songs in Praise of Spring*, as well as a considerable number of short choral pieces, including carols. There is a full-scale *Ceremony of Carols*, a *Requiem*, and the cantata *Dona nobis pacem* for chorus, soli, tympani, side-drum, organ and concertante piano.

Music is living sound, not black notes on white paper, and it needs to be heard and experienced. Center's tragedy – and given that he died unknown to the world a few days after his 60th birthday, the word tragedy is not *mal à propos* – was that the world got virtually no chance to experience the living sound of his music. My own sometimes very serious involvement with efforts to get Center's work performed dates back to 1977, and I apologise in advance for the use of the first-person singular in what follows; I am fully conscious of the fact that any role I may have been lucky enough to play in the story of Center's music has never been any more than that of a facilitator, entirely dependent on the goodwill of all the various musicians who actually played and sang the music. At the same time, historical circumstances, and more than three decades of familiarity with several non-commercial recordings, mean that, uniquely, I have been exposed to the full range of Center's music in varied performance, even including two movements of the Symphony. I also knew his widow Evelyn very well, at least until I left Aberdeen in the summer of 1986, and hence I gathered all sorts of disparate snippets of information from my many conversations with her. Alas, as a young man, I was not prescient enough to write down all the information I acquired, and memory grows faulty with the passage of time. But others have gathered facts and set them in writing, and I gratefully acknowledge my indebtedness to their work.³¹

³⁰ I would recommend the uninitiated listener to start with these recordings; details of commercial recordings of several other pieces can be found in the internet.

³¹ First and foremost, Laura Miller, in her unpublished Aberdeen B.Mus. thesis (1988); Dr Sally Harper <http://www.monsgraupius.org/secret-center.html>; and Maureen Ross, 'The Message Left' in the booklet to the CD *Center of Huntly* (Deveron Arts, 2008).

Ronald Center was born in Aberdeen, the coastal 'Granite City' of northeast Scotland, on 2 April 1913; his music-loving father worked as a stone-cutter at Rubislaw granite quarry, and would die a slow, painful death from silicosis in September 1941, a month after his disillusioned son's discharge from the army on health grounds. Unable to pay for a university education, the Centers had made sure that on leaving school, Ronald studied not only piano with local man Julian Rosetti,³² but also organ and conducting with the remarkable Willan Swainson (1886-1970). The latter was an enormous power for good in the musical life of Aberdeen for over forty years; he founded the Choral and Orchestral Concerts in 1923, the Chamber Music Club in 1926, and the Orchestral Music Club in 1935, and revived the still flourishing Aberdeen Bach Choir in 1930.



Originally from Harrogate, Swainson was organist at Queens Cross Church in Aberdeen from 1915, and head of the university's music department from 1925 to his retirement in 1956. Swainson wrote in a testimonial of 14 September 1937 that Center was:

'sensitive, adaptable and already very capable [and] gives evidence of becoming an organist of unusually advanced attainments. I have a high opinion of Mr Center's general musicianship. In all he undertakes he is ardently enthusiastic and scrupulously thorough. It is evident that he will do fine work and make an enviable reputation for himself in the profession and practice of music'.³³

Ronald Center was apparently entirely self-taught as a composer, though it is hard to imagine that Swainson would not have given him some tuition if he had asked for it. Center certainly worked with Swainson: for example, he was the rehearsal pianist for and organist in the first Aberdeen performances of Vaughan Williams' *Dona nobis pacem* (1936), which took place under Swainson on 23 February 1938 (coupled with *Acis & Galatea*) and 24 May 1939 (preceded by Mozart's *Requiem*). Vaughan Williams's admonitory denunciation of war made a deep impression on the young composer, and in the late 1950s, Center made his own selection from the texts assembled by Vaughan Williams to create his own very different *Dona nobis pacem*. The great English composer would remain an influence throughout the Scottish composer's career – the *Tallis Fantasia*, for example, is quoted in the first movement of the late string orchestra triptych *Lacrimae*.

Various 'testimonials' provide us with specific dates in Center's early life: on 5 June 1935 the minister of the Gallowgate Church in Aberdeen confirmed that Center had been 'Organist and Choirmaster and Leader of the Orchestra' there for the past 18 months, and was 'a gifted pianist and organist and has shown himself a very efficient choirmaster ... [who has] brought the choir to a high standard'. He then seems to have moved to High Hilton kirk, where he was commended for his work in a letter of April 1939. The

³² The sole information the internet currently provides about this man is the fact that he taught Ronald Center!

³³ NLS MS Accession 11671, item 10

chronology of Center's *oeuvre*, unlike that of his life, is extremely difficult to establish with certainty, because he dated very few of the scores, and attached no opus numbers. Handwriting, types of signature, paper used for sketches and pen-types all offer clues.³⁴ The earliest surviving works would seem to be two piano pieces dated 1940 and 1942, and seven songs dated 1940, 1942. In spring 1941 Center first met (and accompanied the singing of) the soprano Evelyn Morrison, originally from the riverside village of Rothiemay in upper Banffshire. They married in 1943 and moved out to Huntly, no distance from Rothiemay. Center's compositional activity must have been greatly encouraged by the 23 January 1944 performance of a symphonic poem *The Coming of Cuchullin*, by the Scottish Orchestra under Warwick Braithwaite in Greens Playhouse, Glasgow. A reviewer wrote that Center 'for some reason, chooses to bring the Irish hero with music from the east of Europe', indicating that Center was already employing the 'Bartokian' sounds that are so clearly audible in the later *Divertimento for String Orchestra* (1951) and the First String Quartet (c.1955).

An earlier, if less spiky manifestation of this language is found in the energetic *Danse Rustique* for cello and piano (1947). This work was the result of an international friendship that the Centers struck up late in the war. When out for a walk, they were astonished to hear a Bach cello suite emanating from an outhouse; on investigating, they found that the player was Kasimierz Lydzinski, a young man in the uniform of the 2nd Battalion of the Free Polish Army. Also stationed in Huntly was the violinist Witold Nowacki; both had been players in Polish symphony orchestras. The Centers became close friends of these two young exiles, and gave wartime recitals with them, at least two of which (in Banff and Huntly) included a violin and piano *Romance* (now lost) that Center wrote specially for Nowacki. *Danse Rustique* was to have been played by Kasimierz Lydzinski – the manuscript of the cello part still bears his pencil markings. But there came a parting of the ways with the dissolution of the Free Polish Army, and Nowacki returned to Poland. He kept in touch up to 1951, but eventually no more was heard. Lydzinski, whose enthusiasm for Scotland had led him to learn to play the bagpipes, disappeared in the opposite geographical direction, to the USA. On 29 December 1947, the 2nd Battalion awarded Center the Battalion's badge 'in appreciation of your close cooperation with the Battalion during our stay in Huntly *sic* and afterwards';³⁵ the Lt. Col went on to write that he hoped 'this will always remind you of the days when we worked together so harmoniously': Evelyn Center always said that these were the happiest days of her husband's life, and the five-movement *Suite for Solo Cello* (1963-64) presumably carried memories of Lydzinski's playing, just as the *Violin Sonata* must of Nowacki's.

After the war, Center taught music at Huntly's Gordon Schools until 1949, when he moved over to private piano teaching. In that year he also applied, unsuccessfully, for the post of assistant conductor of the BBC Scottish Orchestra. Whatever the longer-term implications of this failure, in terms of his relative isolation from a stimulating musical scene such as he would have found in Glasgow and Edinburgh, at the time it did not dull his creativity: much of his music, both extant and lost, was composed during this period. He also secured a number of professional performances, the most striking being those that resulted from his 1951 encounter with the conductor Walter Susskind after the conductor had addressed the Rotary Club in Aberdeen. Susskind, who described Center

³⁴ A heroic, systematic attempt to date the works, at least approximately, was carried out by Laura Miller (1988). Her datings are used here.

³⁵ Letters in National Library of Scotland, MS 22194.

as ‘the most modest composer I’ve ever met’, insisted on seeing some of Center’s music, and as a result, Center’s three movement *Divertimento for String Orchestra* featured in the SNO’s 1951-52 season. This is a glorious work, with fiercely rhythmic, fast outer movements and a slow movement that made one modern listener think of the standing stones in the bleakly beautiful landscape of Grassic Gibbon’s *Sunset Song*. Heard in Edinburgh on Friday 1st February, in Glasgow the following evening, and then repeated in Aberdeen on 12th, it must have contrasted sharply with the other works on the programmes.³⁶ The numerous, generally highly favourable press-notices noted the ovations that Center received. However, that self-effacing composer’s own response, at least in Aberdeen, was modest to the point of churlishness: Evelyn Center wrote in 1979 that ‘one lady told me that she had attended the [1952] performance of the *Divertimento* when it was played in the Music Hall, and remarked that Ronald was so dry he would scarcely get up to acknowledge the applause. How typical!’³⁷

The *Divertimento* would be revived for a Scottish Home Service concert BBC Scottish Orchestra broadcast at 7.30 on May 19 1955, conducted by Gerald Gentry, one of an as yet unascertained number of pieces that secured professional performances on the Scottish Home Service, mostly in the decidedly intermittent series ‘Modern Scottish Composers’.³⁸ Broadcasts included Mary Firth playing the *Fifth Bagatelle, Prelude, Aria and Finale* and *Violin Sonata* (with Joan Spencer) on Sunday 18 December 1955 and the *Sonatine* on 25 January 1960.³⁹ Evelyn broadcast Center’s arrangement of ‘Wullie Wastle’ on 8 November 1957, accompanied by Andrew Bryson, one of BBC Scotland’s house pianists.⁴⁰ In the 1950s, Center must have felt poised for a major breakthrough, and much of his surviving music stems from this period. A dateable work would be the *Nocturne to the Memory of Dylan Thomas*, who died in 1953, although it was only in summer 1958 that Ronald and Evelyn visited Thomas’s birthplace and met his mother, ‘who insisted that they visit the “Boat” House, overlooking the “heron-priested shore” where Dylan did most of his work. The inn which Dylan frequented was also a “must”, and there they met Ivy Brown, whose husband was often called upon to act as Dylan’s chauffeur’.⁴¹ The still-un-premiered four movement *Symphony*, Center’s only surviving complete score for full orchestra, also dates from the mid-1950s.

The early 1960s must still have seemed hopeful, for 1963 saw two thrilling broadcast performances – first of the *Divertimento* by the BBC Scottish Orchestra under Bernard Keefe, and then of the *1st Quartet* by the excellent Lyra String Quartet; their dark, eldritch and ferociously rhythmic reading presumably well reflects the composer’s intentions, since Evelyn assured me that Ronald had attended the quartet’s rehearsals. It would be the only work of Center’s to see publication in his lifetime, when it was brought out by Novello in 1964. The broadcast of No.1 must have played a role in the

³⁶ See Appendix

³⁷ Letter to the present writer, 3 May 1979, after the Scottish Baroque Ensemble performance of *Lacrimae* in Aberdeen.

³⁸ A study of this series, which in any given year never achieved more than nine broadcasts, and frequently four or fewer, would be a worthwhile postgraduate research project, although the fact that the Radio Times did not even always specify which of the named composers’ works were being played is less than helpful.

³⁹ Firth, the wife of the head of the Arts Council in Scotland, would later voice her support for the authenticity the ‘musical medium’ Rosemary Brown; was this a bond with Evelyn Center, who at least in later life attended a spiritualist church?

⁴⁰ Evelyn would later broadcast ‘I’m ower young to marry yet’ and ‘The deil’s awa’ wi’ th’ exciseman’ on Thursday 22 December 1960 at 3 pm, accompanied by Barbara Laing.

⁴¹ Evelyn Center, MS ‘Notes for Article in Leopard Magazine’ in NLS MS Accession 11671, item 10.

composition of the *2nd Quartet* at this time. The *Suite for Solo Cello* also dates from the mid-1960s, as does another work for strings – the now lost *Elegy for Joan Eardley*. The great painter died, aged just 42, on 16 August 1963. Center and his wife had visited Eardley in her studio at Catterline on the Kincardineshire coast, and ‘for the meagre sum of £30 he *could* have acquired one of her now famous pictures’, but did not.⁴² It is easy to see why Eardley’s work appealed so deeply to Center: her paintings are like visual correlatives of his music, filled on the one hand with humanity and compassion, when depicting Glasgow street children, or indeed Catterline village, and on the other with terrifying, impersonal violence in many of the seascapes painted at Catterline. The granitic harmonies of the crushing finale of the *3rd Quartet*, for example, or the wild energy of the scherzo and finale of the *1st Quartet*, are like a musical embodiment of e.g. *January Flow Tide*, or *The Sea, Winter III*.

But Center’s hoped-for breakthrough never happened. Murray McLachlan, who in 1990 described Center as ‘arguably the most remarkable and distinguished composer of his generation in Scotland’ suggests that ‘Center was, quite simply, a casualty of the post-war reaction against British music in general’, noting that he ‘lacked the confidence necessary to respond to rejection and the influential friends who could fight for his “cause” in Scotland and in London’.⁴³ Center was woefully ill-equipped to promote his music, being painfully shy and suffering very badly from stage fright and nerves. He was happy enough to play the organ in kirk (provided the pews around him were kept clear), and to stand with his back to the audience when conducting the Huntly Choral Society and other choirs. But though he did sometimes accompany his singer-wife, he could never develop a solo career. As a result, the public heard nothing of his sizeable corpus of beautifully-crafted, concise works for piano. Given how positively pianists, audiences and critics invariably respond to the *Piano Sonata*, it is particularly regrettable that this work – his own favourite, according to Evelyn – was not heard until January 1979 when Ronald Stevenson premièred it in Aberdeen.⁴⁴

In the considerable build-up to that 1979 première, Center’s widow told the Aberdeen journalist Andrew Clark that ‘after so many setbacks in the '50s and '60s, he lost heart. About three years before he died, he decided after finishing his third string quartet that he wouldn’t write another piece of music. I think that’s because he felt his life’s work was done’.⁴⁵ But the later 1960s seem to have been quite productive, for example the beautiful three-movement *Lacrimae*, the first movement whereof was originally entitled ‘Requiem for an artist’, the second ‘Cortège’ and the third ‘Lacrimae’. There is also a still-unperformed *Sinfonietta for Strings*, and it seems that the dodecaphonic *Third Quartet* (in seven movements) was by no means Center’s last composition; Evelyn Center had been quite unaware that her husband had written a Requiem Mass. And there are other late religious choral pieces and a handful of very short, haunting piano pieces, of which the *Andante* speaks the same elegiac language as the *Lacrimae* and the *Requiem*.

It is important to bear in mind just how little of any of Center’s music was known outside the music-room in the Old Manse in Huntly, where Evelyn was an audience of one. Scottish composers have had a tough time of it in their native land ever since the

⁴² *Ibid.*

⁴³ *Piano Music from Scotland*, booklet (1990); it is only fair to acknowledge that this predates McLachlan’s exploration of the remarkable work of Erik Chisholm (1904-65)

⁴⁴ Laura Miller dates it to 1958, on the basis of a sketch on paper bearing that date. An undated, unsourced press cutting from late summer 1951 mentions a piano sonata, presumably an earlier work, now lost.

⁴⁵ *Evening Express*, Friday January 18th 1979

Calvinist Reformation of 1560. In the 1950s and 1960s, the very occasional broadcast on the Scottish Home Service could not hope to create a composer's reputation and win him (or her) a following, and the BBC Scottish Orchestra was not the major touring and recording band that it is today. The Scottish National Orchestra, for its part, has never regularly programmed works by Scottish composers, while the Edinburgh International Festival, from its inception, seemed to take pride in not featuring Scottish composers – no doubt all in the name of 'not wanting Edinburgh to look parochial', though it's difficult to imagine the Prague Spring Festival without Czech music.

But up in Huntly, Center, shy or not, was highly active in local music-making. He had given up teaching music at the Gordon Schools in 1949, but for the rest of his life he taught private piano pupils, famously including the broadcaster James Naughtie and, perhaps less famously, Huntly-born and bred George Donald, the pianist of the celebrated comic trio *Scotland the What?* Center was not only an organist – first in Strathbogie Church, and then, after the minister called a Bach cantata that Center had directed 'a piece of papistry', in Huntly Parish Kirk – but he also conducted the Huntly Choral Society, and then his own church choir, in a great range of choral works. What he inexplicably did not perform with his own singers was *Dona nobis pacem*. In fact, it is unknown at present which, if any, of his numerous shorter choral works he did perform in Huntly. These mostly date from the 1960s and early 1970s, and are settings of religious and indeed liturgical texts (Center was a practising Christian). The corpus includes a number of Christmas carols, in a style eminently suitable for amateur singers. The well-known choral conductor Alan Tavener, founder of Cappella Nova, recently commented to me that 'As a carol composer, to me Center seems to hit just the right "note" between simplicity and elegance/sophistication'. Yet only once is Center actually known to have performed one of these works – the *Ceremony of Carols*, in which, as with *Dona nobis pacem*, he made his own very different setting of texts assembled by an English composer, in this case Benjamin Britten. Evelyn Center told me that her husband's dream would have been to be a cathedral organist in a small English city, with a first-rate choir available to him. The existence of Center's last composition, an affectingly simple and expressive setting of the *Requiem Mass*, came as a complete surprise to his widow when I found it amongst Center's papers in 1978. The 'clean copy' of the score lacks the *Agnus Dei* and *Lux aeterna*, which survive only in two (fully worked out) sketches, strongly suggesting that Center's work on the piece was interrupted by his unexpected death. It has never yet been sung in Scotland, though it has been frequently sung in Colombia where it was premiered in 1979. In its limpid approach to the text, *Requiem* works well as part of the liturgy, and was sung as such in Bogotá in 1979.

Almost thirty years to the day after moving to Huntly, Center had an apparently mild heart attack on 17th April, a fortnight after his 60th birthday. He was hospitalised in Huntly, and died of a second massive thrombosis at 3.30 a.m. on 18 April. His sudden death haunted Evelyn, who for the next thirty years would yearn above all for reunion with 'Ronnie', attending a spiritualist church – but all the while making great efforts to secure recognition in this world for her beloved husband's beautiful music. For four years after April 1973, those efforts bore no tangible fruit, other than a newspaper article about 'The Forgotten Carols' by the young James Naughtie. But that changed on 14 October 1977, when Center's *Sonatine* (c.1954) was first heard in a concert hall, along with the world première of the shattering *Three Movements for Piano* (c.1968), played by Ian Maxwell, editor of this Journal.

Those performances came about as a result of my own Havergal-Brian-fired interest in 'neglected music' of the British Isles. Despite the fact that I had grown up not twenty-five miles from Huntly, home-town of my own music teacher at Banff Academy, Center's existence was unknown to me until the end of 1976. His name was first mentioned to me by William Wordsworth (1908-88), another splendid composer who, while slightly less neglected than Center, has also hardly been given his due. In the autumn of 1976, Wordsworth was invited to give a lecture at Aberdeen University – not by the Music Department, but by the student-based 'Aberdeen University Havergal Brian and British Music Society' (hereinafter AUHBBS), a local outgrowth of my co-founding of the international Havergal Brian Society in 1974. Wordsworth was a shy and very private man, and we were honoured indeed that he had accepted our invitation to talk to us on 12th November. He began by saying that he believed that music should speak for itself, and if it didn't, then the composer had failed in his task. Wordsworth's talk was therefore heavily illustrated by recordings. It was followed by an evening recital featuring several of his works; the pianist was Ian Maxwell, a very committed member of AUHBBS. After the recital, Wordsworth and his wife Frieda stayed overnight in my comfortable digs at 195 Great Western Road. At supper, my landlady's husband, a thoroughly good man, asked Wordsworth 'And what is it you do, Mr Wordsworth?' On receiving the mild, smiling reply 'I'm a composer, I write music', my landlord responded, also with a smile, 'Aye, I know that. But what d'ye really do?'

At that same supper table, Wordsworth told me that the widow of an Aberdeenshire composer had written to him about trying to get her husband's music performed. This, it seemed to him, was exactly the kind of thing that our 'Havergal Brian and British Music Society' should be looking to do; did I want to be put in touch with the lady? From that typically kind gesture in remembering Evelyn Center's request to him stemmed the 'first rediscovery' of the music of Ronald Center. Between October 1977 and January 1981, there would be several well-publicised premières in Aberdeen and – in 1979 - at least three premières in Bogotá, the Colombian capital, which were also well publicised in Scotland. Aberdeen would even see an LP recording made in 1985, and a plaque went up on the house where Center was born. And yet, for all that, Center's centenary on 2 April 2013 passed entirely unmarked in the Granite City, where, evidently, to be a composer is not really to 'do' anything deserving of recognition.

Following Wordsworth's visit to Aberdeen, I was duly contacted on 19 November 1976 by Evelyn Center, née Morrison. At this point, Evelyn was still resident in Huntly, where she and her late husband had lived and worked since 1943. On 10th February I met this delightful retired soprano and music teacher at a restaurant on central Aberdeen's Union Street, Evelyn armed with a pile of manuscript scores. Thus began several years of very close collaboration. The very neatly-written music in Center's scores looked harmonically interesting and rhythmically exciting, but I am no great score-reader, to put it mildly. I rushed back to the mediaeval precincts of King's College, Old Aberdeen, and got hold of Ian Maxwell, a brilliant sight-reader, and dragged him off to a practice room. He was distinctly wary of my enthusiasm for Scottish composers, after I had failed to convince him that the Edinburgh music teacher and Ivan Knorr pupil William B. Moonie (d.1961) was a cause worth promoting (Ronald Stevenson shared his reservations on that front). Ian's reaction to Center, however, was completely different. This was music the Society was going to push, and push it we did. On 14 October 1977, the Aberdeen University Havergal Brian & British Music Society's third season began with a piano recital in which Ian premiered Center's *Sonatine* and *Three Movements for Piano* on the Tovey Bösendorfer in the neo-Gothic splendour of the Mitchell Hall in

Marischal College. To all intents and purposes, this was the first time any of Center's music for his own instrument had been heard in public.⁴⁶ And the public was impressed. In those distant days, the *Aberdeen Press and Journal* and the *Evening Express* were unrecognisably different from their modern namesakes. Back then, these papers (like most) took their journalistic remit seriously, and employed good music critics: our concerts, held on university premises, were always given advance publicity and received critical coverage, and attracted sizeable audiences that were never confined to members of the university.

The local press-critics, especially British Music Society member Geoffrey Atkinson, the organist at Queen's Cross Church (and hence a successor to Willan Swainson), simply loved Center's music. Between 1977 and January 1979, a whole string of subsequent Center premieres would feature in the Society's recital programme (see the list in the appendix). In addition to the *Sonatine* and *Three Movements*, Ian Maxwell would premiere the second *Etude*, and others would premiere *Bagatelles* nos. 1, 4, 3 and 6, *Pantomime, Suite for Piano, Toccata*. There were two major high points. The first was a March 1978 concert before a packed house in the mediaeval splendour of King's College Chapel (completed in 1505) which included the first performances of Center's heart-tugging, three-movement *Lacrimae for Strings* and his cantata *Dona nobis pacem* for SATB chorus, STB soli, organ, concertante piano, side-drum and tympani, in a performing edition made by AUHBBS members Gordon Tocher and Derek Blyth. The latter also conducted the programme, which included Britten's *Rejoice in the Lamb*, Warlock's *Capriol Suite* and, more than fittingly, Wordsworth's short and moving Francis Thomson setting, *In no strange land*, for chorus, piano and strings. Happily, these performances were captured on a small portable tape-recorder. Derek Blyth, who can only have been aged about 20, really got the measure of Center's idiom, and his insightful direction plumbed expressive depths that have not yet been equalled.

The second high-point of this main phase of the Aberdeen-based drive to put Center on the map came on 20 January 1979, when Ronald Stevenson premiered the *Piano Sonata* – 'the finest written by a Scottish composer', he said during a Grampian Television interview preceding the recital. The première was given on the Tovey Bösendorfer before a very large audience, as the closing work in a characteristically sumptuous Stevensonian programme entitled *Sonatas and Phantasmagorias*. It included Beethoven's *Moonlight* sonata and music by Isidore Philippe, Maurice Emmanuel, Busoni, John Foulds and even Havergal Brian's parody of programme music, *Three Illuminations*, done at Stevenson's request as a music-hall-style magic lantern show narrated by myself, illustrations specially made by Society member (and performer) James Ross, and real theatricality from Stevenson.

The larger-than-life Stevenson makes quite a contrast with the pathologically shy Center, but there are some striking biographical parallels between the two very different Ronalds. Both were born to working-class parents who recognised and fostered their sons' musical gifts and piano-playing, and both composers would by the age of thirty be based in small Scottish country towns. And both had wide interests in music, literature and Scottish history. Stevenson, famously, is a pacifist, and Center's *Dona nobis pacem* is a viscerally moving protest against war. It was almost inevitable that Stevenson would respond very strongly to the northeast composer's music. He became a champion of the *Piano Sonata*, broadcasting it (to an entirely favourable *Scotsman* review by Conrad

⁴⁶ The two and half minute long *Bagatelle no.5* had once been broadcast by the BBC Scottish Home Service, 18 December 1955, played by Mary Firth.

Wilson), performing it in Manchester and Germany and recording it on the same LP in which he played the *concertante* piano part of *Dona nobis pacem*.⁴⁷ Equally important for the long-term future was Stevenson's successful urging of the young Murray McLachlan to take up Center's music in 1988. This led to a close friendship between the Dundee-born Aberdonian pianist and the by then ailing Evelyn Center, and to the CD *Piano Music from Scotland* in 1990, featuring a Center's Sonata, *Six Bagatelles*, and *Children at Play*.⁴⁸ Much later, the 2006 Stevenson Summer Symposium on the island of Great Cumbrae made a feature of Center's music, with the northeast pianist Joseph Long playing the sonata. He repeated the work on 11 April 2008 at the cornucopious 80th birthday festival that Murray McLachlan organised for Stevenson at St Johns Smith Square. In a magisterially concise overview of the Stevenson Festival, Robert Matthew-Walker wrote of Center's sonata that 'it is an exceptionally fine piece, the language of which certainly betokens its mid-century date, and which held the attention throughout'.⁴⁹ Uniquely for Center, the sonata that has now been commercially recorded no fewer than four times.

Immediately after Stevenson's premiere of the Piano Sonata on 20 January 1979, I left for a year of PhD research in Bogotá, Colombia, funded by the Rotary Club. The oddest part of the 'Center story' ensued. Having a direct personal link with a member of the *Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil de Colombia* (OSJC), I quickly found myself co-opted onto that body's *junta directiva*, with a view to trying to get the OSJC to Aberdeen for the International Festival of Youth Orchestras, which for quite a number of years was such an invigorating feature of summer in the Granite City. Since I had brought the score of Center's *Requiem* with me, maestro Ernesto Diaz advised me to speak to the conductor of a choir that rehearsed in the same building, since the conductor had 'some sort of Scottish connection'. Juan Alejandro Lanz Kennedy did indeed: his maternal grandfather, recently deceased, was one John Alexander (or perhaps originally Iain Alasdair?) Kennedy, of Inverness.

The deadly breath of the self-contemptuous 'Scottish Cringe' that has blighted Scotland's cultural life in general, and music most particularly, had never infected the air of Bogotá, and so Center's music found a very ready welcome. The *Requiem* was premiered, with good newspaper coverage, in the Sala XX on 17 August by the *Coral de Scuba*, and would be performed another eight times (including at a memorial mass for a relative of a choir member) by 9th December (at the *Concurso Polifónico Internacional* in Ibagué, capital of the department of Tolima). Indeed, Santiago Lanz Kennedy, Juan Alejandro's younger brother, continues to perform the work regularly, and an excerpt from a 2011 performance can be seen and heard on "YouTube". On a wider front, I went as far as to organise an entire *Festival Escocés* with ten concerts in November, all featuring Center's music. Various venues were used, but the Festival was only feasible thanks to the kind and generous collaboration of the *Centro Colombo-Americano* in the heart of Bogotá, with its exhibition space (duly filled with splendid tourist posters of Scotland) and its *Sala Tairona*, an excellent chamber music auditorium/cinema.

Alas, the hoped-for generous Colombian sponsorship I thought I could raise from Rotary clubs was not forthcoming. But a lot of people heard a lot of Center, and had my own attempts at copying orchestral parts not been so amateurish and disorganised, they would have heard the *Symphony*. To date, I am the only person in Europe who has heard

⁴⁷ Altarus LP AIR 2-9100.

⁴⁸ Originally released by Olympia OCD264. Re-released in 2006 by Regis Records, RRC 1246

⁴⁹ http://www.classicalsource.com/db_control/db_features.php?id=5736

any of this work, namely the 1st and 3rd movements, which went into rehearsal, and made thrilling listening. But the planned premiere on 25 November was scuppered by my having mislaid some woodwind parts. Maestro Diaz was a short-tempered man of enormous efficiency, who abhorred wasting time, and instead, the orchestra repeated *Lacrimae*, which they had given in the *Sala Luis Arango* of the *Biblioteca Nacional* on 7th November. Details of the other concerts are given in the Appendix; they included *Dona nobis pacem*, the *Requiem*, five of the seven movements of the Third Quartet, the *Four Songs in Praise of Spring*, the Violin Sonata and much piano music.

The reasons for taking on so much work entirely unrelated to my academic research and writing was threefold: to be an ambassador for my country, as per the Rotary fellowship's remit; to help the Colombian youth orchestra; and above all, to create a critical mass of press coverage in the UK so as to stimulate interest in Center. This third scheme started off splendidly, with a grand article in the Scotsman by James Naughtie, but it was completely scuppered by Evelyn Center, who never grasped the link between the need for sustained publicity and the promotion of her husband's music. She suffered from a typically Scottish abhorrence of 'drawing attention to yourself' – and, extremely protective of Ronald's memory, she treasured and fretted over his music exactly as if it were a small, vulnerable child. She was appalled by the amount of press coverage I had started to generate from Bogotá, and ordered me to stop publicising the Festival – in case it all came to nothing. She just could not see that what mattered was getting Center's name out into the world. I had no choice but to obey her request; and the grand scheme's failure was guaranteed.

I returned to Scotland in late December, but before leaving Bogotá I got to know the pianist Richard Deering, then on a South America tour – and in 1980, as the Appendix shows, further Center performances took place, including one by Deering. Something I was able to do for Evelyn was to track down the cellist Kasimierz Lydzinski, now living in Oklahoma (and calling himself Kazimierz), and put Evelyn Center in touch with him once again. He had enjoyed a long career with the St Louis orchestra, for which he composed several works involving the Highland pipes, taking the solo part himself. Lydzinski was delighted to premiere both the *Danse Rustique* of 1946, and the *Cello Suite*, at a recital in Oklahoma City early in September 1980. Evelyn Center got a notice into the Aberdeen paper on 12th September, and wrote me that 'both works were very well received by both critics and audience alike', commenting that the programme leaflet was 'a work of art. Printed on beautiful parchment-like paper', headed 'In Memory of Ronald Center', featuring 'an excellent biographical note' by Lydzinski. 'No one is being allowed to handle it; I really feel that I want to frame it, it means so much to me'.⁵⁰ She later travelled out to meet 'Kasik', and to a surprise proposal of marriage! Which was declined. I never learned whether Evelyn thought the Polish cellist had been carrying a torch for the wife of his Scottish composer-friend all those decades.⁵¹ 1980

⁵⁰ Letter of 2 November 1980. This 'work of art' appears to have been lost by the NLS, along with an unknown number of other programmes, including that of the 1946 Banff recital with the Poles; bureaucratic guidelines were interpreted to mean that this material originally belonging to MS ACC.11671 belong to the category of 'print', not 'manuscript' (unlike photos and printed press cuttings, bizarrely), and it was handed over to 'the Department of Printed Books', with no listing of what the items were and no indication of how they are now to be located by interested parties. Misfortune continues to plague Center, decades after his death.

⁵¹ The year of the postmark on the card she sent me is extremely difficult to read, but I cannot imagine she travelled out in June 1980, rather than attending the premiere, and I think the year must be 1983, although this seems late.

also witnessed a happy spin-off from Center's exposure in Colombia; a university choir from Bogotá visiting Europe sang two short choral pieces not only at the Aberdeen Youth Festival, but also in Paris and even in Huntly itself. Surely, one would have thought, Center was on the road to recognition.

But student life, with all its idealism and enthusiasm, comes to an end. With the graduation and departure of essential student performers, Aberdeen University Havergal Brian & British Music Society ceased to exist at the end of session 1981. Fittingly enough, the last recital it sponsored featured Vaughan Williams' *Ten Blake Songs* and Center's *Four Songs in Praise of Spring*. As the Appendix shows, there were occasional performances thereafter, but the sustained effort that the AUHBBMS had made possible was at an end. In June 1986, Evelyn Center asked me to give a lecture on *Dona nobis pacem* at the concert launching the Altarus LP. The disc was well enough received, but nobody further afield showed any interest in taking up the music. The same would prove true of Murray McLachlan's glorious CD *Piano Music of Scotland*, which won a Penguin CD Guide rosette. Murray has regularly included Center in his recitals ever since.

Between 1987 and 2008, my own involvement with promoting Center's music would be in abeyance. In summer 1986, I had left Aberdeen, and in January 1987 I moved to Luxembourg, where I would be based until May 2012. I had quite a lot of photocopied scores of Center in my luggage with me, but the Grand Duchy's musical circles proved entirely different from those of Aberdeen University or Bogotá. People either expected to be paid for performing, or were simply not interested in a Scottish composer they had (*par définition*, I am tempted to say) never heard of. As the years went by, my life developed in other directions. But I spoke about Center at the afore-mentioned 2006 Ronald Stevenson Society Summer Symposium, one of whose threads was the Aberdonian's music; performances included one by Arnold Bax's grandson Jeremy Limb. In May 2008 I was invited to speak about Center again, to introduce a two-day Festival organised by Deveron Arts in Huntly, as part of an admirable project about which much information can be found on the internet, but which sadly did not lead to any revival of Center's fortunes.

If Center's work is finally about to be discovered at last, the credit must in large part go to Martin Anderson of Toccata Classics. He never forgot the thrilling impact of the old BBC recordings of the *1st Quartet* and the *Divertimento for Strings* which I played him in his London kitchen, on a cassette recorder, longer ago than either of us would care to remember. In 2012, it was Martin who was conscious of the impending centenary, and persuaded Christopher Guild to record the 'centenary CD' that is currently winning such golden plaudits. And when I was writing the booklet in June 2103, it was listening – over and over and over – to the 'rushes' of Christopher's playing of the pieces that brought home to me, after years of forgetfulness, just how very much this music has to tell us about the human condition. It was a kind of Damascene revelation to me – namely that we had been right, all those years ago at Aberdeen University, to be so excited. Aberdeen really had produced a unique composer.

I was unable to attend the première of the (complete) *Quartet no.3* up in Aberdeenshire on 16 and 17 November 2013, organised by David Ward and 'Music Central', the two performances quite coincidentally clashed with two of the four Edinburgh centenary concerts. These north-east recitals managed to secure press coverage, and James Naughtie told me they were great occasions. Details are available on the internet. In Edinburgh, despite the all too predictable utter silence of the press, audiences did show up and respond to the mastery, range and beauty of the piano music,

the exquisite detailing and melodic lines of the songs, the emotional depths plumbed by the *Violin Sonata* and its daemonic *allegro feroce* finale, and above all, to the sheer range of passions and questions stirred up by *Dona nobis pacem*. All four Edinburgh concerts elicited the same response: 'How can it be that we don't know this music?' The clear-eyed sorrow of the unresolved ending of the achingly beautiful *Agnus Dei* that concludes Center's *Dona nobis pacem*, when heard at evensong on Remembrance Sunday (as it was), makes a stronger case for peace than the most eloquent tract or speech.

From 2014 to 2018, there will be many events and exhibitions commemorating the indescribable horror that was the First World War, and – one hopes! – many performances of Britten's *War Requiem* to remind the world just how dreadful a curse war is. Those performances will take place in major urban centres capable of coping with the logistical demands of Britten's masterpiece. Ronald Center's *Dona nobis pacem* is incomparably less expensive to mount, and less demanding to sing. It can be performed by any good local choir in a church that has an organ and a piano. Britten chose to end his interrogation of the evil of war with a kind of answer: the sublime 'Let us sleep now...' and the final *Requiescant in pace, amen* can (not 'must') be heard as a plea to let bygones be bygones – in every sense. Britten's ending certainly marks a closing of the circle. But Center's closing *Agnus Dei* leaves all the questions he has raised quite unresolved. The effect is disturbing, and forces listeners to face the questions for themselves. Center would also have a real potential to speak to listeners not only here in Europe but also directly address a war-weary USA by virtue of the cantata's Whitman settings. There can be no question that if *Dona nobis pacem* could secure a foothold in the repertory, it would open to the door to performances and recordings of the rest of Center's works. For the cantata is but the most explicit of the shy Aberdonian's many different statements of the dark paradox at the heart of human consciousness:

*One foot in Eden still, I stand
And look across the other land.
The world's great day is growing late,
Yet strange these fields that we have planted
So long with crops of love and hate.
Time's handiworks by time are haunted,
And nothing now can separate
The corn and tares compactly grown.
The armorial weed in stillness bound
About the stalk; these are our own.
Evil and good stand thick around
In fields of charity and sin
Where we shall lead our harvest in.*

Dr James Reid Baxter

Performances of Center's music 1944-2014

- 23 January 1944 Greens Playhouse, Scottish National Orchestra directed by Warwick Braithwaite – *The Coming of Cuchullin*
- 21 November 1945 (Huntly) Witold Rowacki, *Romance for Violin and Piano*
- 8 January 1946 (Banff) Witold Rowacki, *Romance for Violin and Piano*
- 1 February 1952 (Usher Hall) SNO, directed by Walter Susskind - *Divertimento*
- 2 February 1952 (City Halls Glasgow) SNO, directed by Walter Susskind - *Divertimento*
- 12 February 1952 (Music Hall, Aberdeen) SNO, directed by Walter Susskind - *Divertimento*
- 19 May 1955 Scottish Home Service - BBC Scottish Orchestra cond Gerald Gentry *Divertimento*
- 21 June 1955 8.45 Scottish Home Service - *Wullie Wastle ??*
- 18 December 1955 - 6.15 Scottish Home Service, 'Modern Scottish Composers' – Joan Spencer and Mary Firth: *Violin Sonata, Prelude Aria and Finale, Bagatelle no 5*
- 8 November 1957 Scottish Home Service 10.15 pm 'Modern Scottish Composers' - Evelyn Center, Charles Rigg, acc Charles Bryson: *Wullie Wastle*
- 25 January 1960, Scottish Home Service 7 pm Modern Scottish Composers, Mary Firth with Charles Forbes baritone: *Sonatine*
- 22 December 1960 Scottish Home Service 3 pm Evelyn Center acc. Barbara Laing: *I'm ower young... The deils awaa*
- 1 February 1963, Scottish Home Service, 7 pm. Modern Scottish Composers - *First Quartet* Lyra SQ ("the quartet is recorded")
- 24 June, 1963 Scottish Home Service 7.30 BBC Scottish Orchestra dir. Bernard Keffe – *Divertimento*
- c.1970 (Huntly) *Ceremony of Carols*
- 14 October 1977 (Mitchell Hall): Ian Maxwell, *Sonatine, Three Movements for Piano*
- 30 November 1977 (Mitchell Hall); Andrew Cheyne, *Pantomime & Suite for Piano*
- 3 February 1978 (Mitchell Hall); Ian Maxwell *Three Movements, Sarabande & Air, Etude no.3*
- 24 February 1978 (Mitchell Hall): Andrew Cheyne, Eleanor Forbes; three of the *Four Songs in Praise of Spring, Bagatelles Nos.1, 4, 3 & 6, Toccata*
- 10 March 1978 (King's College Chapel): various performers, cond. Derek Blyth; *Lacrimae, Dona Nobis Pacem*
- 6 August 1978 (St Andrew's Cathedral, Inverness) Gordon Tocher, *Sarabande and Air, Children at Play*
- 3 November 1978 (Queen's Cross Church): Ian Maxwell, *Sonatine for Piano*
- 12 November 1978 (Queens Cross Church – part of Remembrance Day Service), various performers cond. Derek Blyth; *Dona Nobis Pacem*
- 30 November 1978 (Mitchell Hall) Andrew Cheyne, *Pantomime and Suite for Piano*
- 20 January 1979 (Mitchell Hall): Ronald Stevenson; *Piano Sonata*
- 16 April 1979, BBC Scotland broadcast of Ronald Stevenson, *Piano Sonata*
- 1 May 1979 (Mitchell Hall): Scottish Baroque Ensemble, *Lacrimae*
- 18 May, 1979, Thurso Choral Society, *Dona nobis pacem*
- 16 August 1979 (Main Hall, Gimnasio Moderno, Bogotá) Coral de Suba directed by Juan Alejandro Lanz Kennedy *Requiem* public dress rehearsal

17 August 1979 (Sala XX, Bogotá) Coral de Suba directed by Juan Alejandro Lanz Kennedy *Requiem* world première

22 August (Chapel of the Gimnasio Moderno, Bogotá) *Requiem* sung at a funeral

c.12 October 1979 (British Council, Bogotá) *Requiem*

5 November 1979 (Iglesia de la Porciúncula, Bogotá) Coro Juventus, dir. Sergio Bernal *Dona nobis pacem*

7 November 1979 (Biblioteca Nacional, Bogotá), Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil de Colombia, directed by Ernesto Diaz *Lacrimae for Strings*

9 November 1979 (Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá) Mariana Posada *Piano Sonata*

12 November 1979 (Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá): Ernesto Diaz Mendoza and Helvia Mendoza, *Violin Sonata*

14 November 1979 (Universidad de los Andes) Julia Ballesteros de Martínez, Beatriz Acosta de Aconcha, *Four songs in Praise of Spring*

16 November 1979 (Centro Colombo-Americano, Bogotá): Cuarteto Arcos, *String Quartet no.3 (movts 1, 3, 4, 6 & 7)*

21 November 1979 (Museo Colonial, Bogotá) Claudia Calderón *piano works*

23 November 1979 (Iglesia de San Ignacio, Bogotá) Coral de Suba, dir J-A Lanz Kennedy, *Requiem*

25 November 1979 (Teatro Colón, Bogotá) Orquesta Sinfónica Juvenil de Colombia dir. Ernesto Diaz, *Lacrimae*

9 December 1979 (Ibagué): Coral de Suba, *Requiem* (ninth performance)

16 March 1980 (Leeds College of Music) Ronald Stevenson *Piano Sonata*

25 April 1980 (Mitchell Hall): Richard Deering, *Piano Sonata*

15 July 1980, Iglesia de Cristo Rey, Bogotá: Coro de la Universidad de los Andes, *Kyrie and Sanctus dominus Deus*

26 July 1980, Eglise St Séverin, Paris: los Andes, *Kyrie and Sanctus dominus Deus*

6 August 1980 (Mitchell Hall): Coro de la Universidad de los Andes, *Kyrie and Sanctus dominus Deus*

9 August 1980 (Huntly): Coro de la Universidad de los Andes, *Kyrie and Sanctus dominus*

c. 12 September 1980, Oklahoma: Kasimierz Lydzinski, *Danse rustique, Cello Suite*

24 January 1981 (Mitchell Hall): Gordon Tocher, *Larghetto*

21 February 1981 (Mitchell Hall): Elspeth Attwood, *Suite for Unaccompanied Cello* European première

8 March 1981 (Queens Cross Church) Martin Speller (tenor), Geoffrey Atkinson (piano), *Four Songs in Praise of Spring*

24 April 1981 (Mitchell Hall): Irene Drummond (mezzo), Archie McLellan (piano), *Four Songs in Praise of Spring*

8 December 1982 (Aberdeen College of Education Theatre) cond. Ian Milne, *Three Nativity Carols*

13 November 1983 (Queens Cross) Remembrance Sunday *Dona nobis pacem*, directed Geoffrey Atkinson

9 June 1984 (Cowdray Hall) St Machar Chamber Orchestra, directed by Bryan Dargie *Nocturne to the Memory of Dylan Thomas* première

25 June 1986 (Cowdray Hall) Queens Cross Chamber Choir, soli, Ronald Stevenson, directed by Geoffrey Atkinson, *Dona nobis pacem*.

2 April 1988 Radio Scotland, 9.15 BBC recordings of *Piano Sonata* and *Lacrimae* broadcast to mark 75th anniversary

27 January 1989 (Cowdray Hall) Aberdeen Sinfonietta, Bryan Dargie *Nocturne to Memory of Dylan Thomas*

15 October 1990 (?Mitchell Hall) AU Chamber Orchestra dir Roger B Williams *Lacrimae*

25 January 1992 (Cowdray Hall) Murray McLachlan *Children at Play*

9th March 1993 (Elphinstone Hall) Murray McLachlan *Piano Sonata*

29 July 2006 (Cathedral of the Isles, Great Cumbrae) Jeremy Limb (piano) *Prelude, Aria and Finale*; Joseph Long *Piano Sonata*

30 July 2006 (Cathedral of the Isles) Katharine Jones, Alasdair Chisholm *Four Songs in Praise of Spring*; Michael Jones *Giglot and Toccata*

11 April 2008 (St Johns Smith Square London): Joseph Long, *Piano Sonata*

2 May 2008 (Castle Hotel, Huntly) Joseph Long *Sonata*,

3 May 2008 (Stewarts Hall, Huntly) Sally Garden & Donald Hawksworth *Complete Art Songs* and a short selection of *Scots Song Arrangements*;

-- (Strathbogie Kirk) Isla Quartet *Second Quartet*, a movement from *Lacrimae*

May 2011 (Catedral de Sal, Zipaquirà, Colombia) Coro Fundación Coral Cantabile and the Colegio Reyes Católicos directed by Santiago Lanz Kennedy *Requiem Mass*

23 August 2012 (Chetham's Summer School) Murray McLachlan *Piano Sonata*

December 2012 (Yehudi Menuhin School - hosting the Malaysian Winter Piano Academy) Murray McLachlan *Piano Sonata*

1 March 2013 (Queens University, Kingston Ontario) Murray McLachlan *Piano Sonata*

14 February 2013 (Cowdray Hall, lunchtime) Sally Garden, Drew Tulloch *Four Scots Songs Arrangements*

2 April 2013 (Tin Hut, Gartly) *Duo for Violin and Cello*

10 November 2013 (St John the Evangelist, Princes St Edinburgh) Chris Guild, Choir of St Johns directed Stephen Doughty *Dona nobis pacem*

16 November 2013 (Edinburgh Society of Musicians) Chris Guild *Sonatine, Six Bagatelles, Piano Sonata*

-- (Tin Hut, Gartly) *Third String Quartet* (complete, but its seven movements interspersed with newly written verse)

17 November 2013 (Edinburgh Society of Musicians) Hector Scott violin, Katharine Jones (soprano), Anna Mavromatidi (piano) – *Suite for Piano, Larghetto, Air; Sonata for Violin & Piano; Evensong, The Angel and the Child, Spring Sorrow; Four Songs in Praise of Spring*

-- (Woodend Barn, Banchory) *Third String Quartet* (ut supra)

22 November 2013 (St John the Evangelist, Edinburgh) Chris Guild, Choir of St Johns directed Stephen Doughty *Third Bagatelle, Sarabande & Air, Dona nobis pacem*

11 December 2013 (St Aloysius Church, Glasgow) Strathclyde University Chamber Choir, dir. Alan Tavener, *Of a Rose singe we, There is no Rose*

18 January 2014 (Edinburgh Society of Musicians) Hector Scott (violin), Katharine Jones (soprano), Anna Mavromatidi (piano) – *Larghetto, Air; Four Songs in Praise of Spring; Sonata for Violin & Piano*

8 March 2014 (Stewart's Hall, Huntly) Ella Fontaine (mezzo), Lauren Hibberd (piano), the Aurora Singers - *Evensong, The Angel and the Child; Four Songs in Praise of Spring*; choral pieces including *Agnus Dei* from *Dona nobis pacem*.