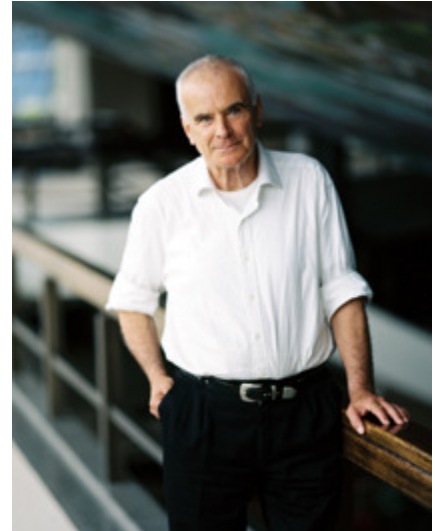


Peter Maxwell Davies
Born 1934

Sir Peter Maxwell Davies is universally acknowledged as one of the foremost composers of our time. His charismatic and versatile musical personality, coupled with the world-wide spread of performances has meant that he reaches an unusually large and varied public. As the critic in the Wiener Zeitung wrote following a concert of all Maxwell Davies works at the Musikverein in Vienna “A great and significant occasion on the Vienna concert scene and the public took full advantage of it: the Musikverein was almost fully booked and scarcely anyone left in the interval. I know of no other living composer who could bring that off with a programme consisting entirely of his own works.” His theatrical works include his operas *Taverner*, *Resurrection* and *The Doctor of Myddfai*, chamber operas *The Lighthouse* (which has received over 100 different productions world-wide since its premiere in 1980) and *The Martyrdom of St. Magnus*, his full-length ballets *Salome* and *Caroline Mathilde*, and five music-theatre works including *Eight Songs for a Mad King* and *Miss Donnithorne’s Maggot* which have both become contemporary classics. His orchestral works include eight symphonies, which The Times has called “the most important symphonic cycle since Shostakovich”, the last of which being the *Antarctic Symphony*, for which he visited the Antarctic in 1997. He has written concertos for violin, trumpet, piano, horn and piccolo, and the ten *Strathclyde Concertos* (written for the principal players of the Scottish Chamber Orchestra), as well as some lighter orchestral works, such as *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise* (“the most performed piece of contemporary music”) *Mavis in Las Vegas* and *Swinton Jig*. Major works for chorus, soloists and orchestra include *The Three Kings*, *Job* and *The Jacobite Rising*. Maxwell Davies is also active as a conductor and has recently finished ten years as Composer/Conductor of both the BBC Philharmonic and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras, and is Composer Laureate with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra. He has also conducted many orchestras in Europe and North America, including the Cleveland Orchestra, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, the San Francisco Symphony, the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Russian National Orchestra, the Oslo Philharmonic and the Philharmonia Orchestra. Maxwell Davies has been recently concentrating his compositional efforts on chamber music, including the cycle of ten string quartets which were commissioned by the CD company Naxos and are called the *Naxos Quartets*. These were performed in their entirety at the Wigmore Hall in London by the Maggini Quartet over a period of five years between 2002 and 2007, and have all been recorded for release on Naxos. Sir Peter Maxwell Davies was appointed Master of the Queen's Music in March 2004.



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Career Highlights

- 1953-8** Studies in Manchester and Rome
- 1967** Together with Harrison Birtwistle, founded the contemporary music touring ensemble the Pierrot Players (later renamed The Fires of London)
- 1971** Moves to Hoy in the Orkney Islands
- 1981** Awarded a CBE (Commander of the Most Excellent Order of the British Empire)
- 1987-96** Writes the ten *Strathclyde Concertos* for the Scottish Chamber Orchestra
- 1987** Knighted for services to music
- 2002-7** Completed cycle of ten string quartets, commissioned by Naxos
- 2004** Appointed Master of the Queen's Music
- 2006** BBC Proms world premiere of *A Little Birthday Music*, written to celebrate the Queen's 80th birthday, and set to a poem by the then Poet Laureate, Andrew Motion
- 2009** BBC Proms UK premiere of *Fiddler on the Shore* as part of a Proms evening to celebrate the composer's 75th birthday