

THE  
*Aldburgh*  
C O N N E C T I O N

## The Lyre of Orpheus

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Walter Hall, Sunday, October 21, 2012, 2:30 pm



We wish to thank, most sincerely,  
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\*

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We are performing on  
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Today's appearance of Geoffrey Sirett has been generously supported by



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# The Lyre of Orpheus

Music in the life and work of Robertson Davies (1913-95)

**Walter Hall, Sunday, October 21, 2012, 2:30 pm**

Miriam Khalil, soprano

Allyson McHardy, mezzo

Geoffrey Sirett, baritone

Stephen Ralls and Bruce Ubukata, piano

The lyre of Orpheus opens the door of the underworld.

(E. T. A. Hoffmann)

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Music always had tremendous significance for Robertson Davies, starting from childhood days in Thamesville and Renfrew. It was 'in the air', as his biographer, Judith Skelton Grant, puts it. His parents sang, his mother played the piano, his father directed the church choir. The tradition of music in the home was continued in Davies's own family, as well as in the wider family of Massey College, Toronto (where he was the first Master). Throughout all his writings, the theme of music recurs again and again, and he was attracted by the related disciplines of opera and oratorio.

We first performed a version of this programme in 1999, the year which saw the COC's premiere of *The Golden Ass*, Randolph Peters's opera to Davies's libretto. We revive it now as an early celebration of the centenary of his birth. The attempt to summarise such an important aspect of the work of Canada's greatest man of letters was reckless, but we were helped along the way by members of the Davies family, as well as by other friends in Canada and Britain. We have had the good fortune to get to know and love the Welsh border country which was Davies's ancestral homeland and with which he felt strong ties. Both of us had the pleasure of involvement in the music at Massey and we count it an honour to present this mosaic: "music in a life".

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## MUSIC IN THE AIR

**The Lark in the Clear Air** Irish folksong, arr. Phyllis Tate (1911-87)  
(*Samuel Ferguson*) (mezzo)

This song, well-known to Davies in his childhood, was a favourite of his later on, when he heard it sung by Dora Herbert-Jones.

**Let's all go down the Strand** (baritone) Harry Castling and C. W. Murphy

Music-hall songs and ballads were regular musical fare in the Davies household in the 1910s and '20s.

**I met him in the far away** (Leo, the Royal Cadet) Oscar Telgmann (1853-1945)  
(*George Frederick Cameron*) (soprano)

Written by the German-born founder of the Kingston Conservatory of Music, this “entirely new and original Canadian military opera” received some 150 performances beginning in 1892.

Davies and his parents lived in Kingston from 1925 to 1935.

## HOME FROM HOME

**Der Doppelgänger** (*Heinrich Heine*, Franz Schubert (1797-1828)  
*trans. John Todhunter*) (baritone)

Davies was introduced to the songs of Schubert by Richard Tattersall, his music master at Upper Canada College. Later, as a young man in Kingston, he was deeply impressed by the singing of *Doppelgänger* by the baritone, James Campbell McInnes, who used this translation by the Irish poet and playwright, John Todhunter:

### The Ghostly Double

Still is the night, the streets never waken,  
Here dwelt my sweetheart in days of yore;  
Long since hath she the town forsaken,  
Though the house still stands where it stood before.

There stands a man, aloft stark staring,  
And wrings his hands, a woe-begone wretch;  
I shudder, seeing his face despairing,  
The moonlight shows me my own pale fetch.\*

Thou white-faced fellow, my phantom double,  
 Why apest thou my love's despair,  
 That wrung my heart in that same spot,  
 So many a night, in years that were?

(\* in Irish folklore, a supernatural double)

Two songs from “**A Shropshire Lad**” Arthur Somervell (1863-1937)  
 (A. E. Housman) (baritone)

**When I was one-and –twenty**

**Into my heart an air that kills**

The music of Somervell was much loved by Davies. These songs, in particular, evoke his favourite countryside of the Welsh/English border, “those blue remember'd hills”.

**Hiraeth** (*Ceiriog Hughes*) Welsh folksong, arr. David Jenkins (1848-1915)  
 (soprano)

On a visit to Wales with his father in 1932, Davies went to the amazing country house Gregynog, with its famous printing-press. There, he met for the first time Dora Herbert-Jones, “a very dear friend of mine who was a great Welsh folk-singer; I heard her sing it [*Hiraeth*] many, many times and played the piano for her when she sang it. Part of my life.”

*Longing for Home: Distant memories of home are my chief pleasure - my mother sitting beside the hearth, myself childishly playing while she span.*

*Like a swallow from far away, I shall return. Even in adversity, I remember that place of rest, under a sun which smiles on us.*

## A MIXTURE OF FRAILTIES

Two songs (mezzo) Peter Warlock (1894-1930)

**The bayly berith the bell away** (*anon.*)

**Pretty ring time** (*William Shakespeare*)

The character of Giles Revelstoke in Davies's *A Mixture of Frailties* is broadly based on the tragic figure of Warlock, who had committed suicide a few years previously. Davies was very fond of his music. Furthermore, Warlock's mother and step-father, the Buckley-Joneses, were neighbours of Davies's father in Wales.

**Water parted from the sea** (Artaxerxes) Thomas Arne (1710-78)  
*(after Metastasio)* (mezzo)

*Artaxerxes* (1762) was the first opera to be composed in English “but after the Italian manner”. This song, one of the most popular in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, was sung by Monica Gall at the memorial recital for her mother in *A Mixture of Frailties*.

**Variations on a melody by Doctor Arne,** Derek Holman (b. 1931)  
 for two pianos

Derek Holman collaborated many times with Robertson Davies in the composition of incidental music, in entertainments performed at Massey College, in a children’s opera *Doctor Canon’s Cure* and in the oratorio *Jezebel*. These variations were commissioned by the Aldeburgh Connection, through a grant from the Ontario Arts Council, in 1999.

Theme:	Water parted
Variation 1:	Flourishes
Variation 2:	Mirror
Variation 3:	Broderie
Variation 4:	Scherzo
Variation 5:	Erinnerungen

**Goodbye!** (*G. J. Whyte-Melville*) (soprano) Paolo Tosti (1846-1916)

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## INTERMISSION

during which tea will be served in the  
 Boyd Neel Room, with the kind assistance of students  
 of the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto

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## PATERFAMILIAS

**Shepherd, leave decoying** (King Arthur)      Henry Purcell (1659-95), realised  
(*John Dryden*) (soprano/mezzo)                      by Benjamin Britten (1913-76)

Davies got to know Purcell's duets in the Victorian edition of Alfred Moffatt. However, we feel he would have preferred these unbowdlerized lyrics, had they been available to him, together with Britten's sprightly realisation.

**Tell me, lovely shepherd** (Solomon)                      William Boyce (1710-90)  
(*Edward Moore*) (soprano)

**Twilight Fancies** (*Björnstjerne Björnson*,                      Frederick Delius (1862-1934)  
*trans. F. S. Copeland*) (mezzo)

These two songs were the first to be given to his daughter, Miranda, when she began to study singing.

## WORLD OF WONDERS

**Overture** (*A Midsummer Night's Dream*)                      Felix Mendelssohn (1809-47)  
(piano-duet)

It was while stage-managing Tyrone Guthrie's production of this play at London's Old Vic Theatre in 1939 that Brenda Newbold met her future husband, Robertson Davies, who was cast as Snout. Every evening, he came to her corner to help count the 48 bars for raising the curtain in the overture.

**The Nightmare Song** (*Iolanthe*)                      Arthur Sullivan (1842-1900)  
(*W. S. Gilbert*) (baritone)

Performing in his teens at Upper Canada College, "W. R. Davies as the Lord Chancellor was as good as the best Toronto has seen for many a day . . . The 'nightmare' song showed you how volubility could be made eloquent and how rhythm could link nonsense with wisdom when she cared." (*Evening Telegram*)

## THE LYRE OF ORPHEUS

**Never weatherbeaten sail** (*Campion*) (trio)      Thomas Campian (1567-1620)

**Bei Männern** (Die Zauberflöte)      Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)  
(*Emanuel Schikaneder*) (soprano/mezzo)

Pamina and Papageno sing of the virtues of love.

*Men who feel the call of love are not lacking in a gentle heart. Love sweetens every torment and all creatures pay it homage. Its supreme goal is clear: nothing is nobler than man and wife.*

**Finale** (Sir John in Love)      Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)  
(*Campion*) (trio)

Premiered in 1929, Vaughan Williams's opera on the Falstaff story uses texts from various Elizabethan writers, as well as Shakespeare.

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### The final season

Those who are regular subscribers to the Aldeburgh Connection will already know that this is to be the last season of our regular concerts - and we offer our warm thanks to so many who have expressed their appreciation and good wishes. We assure you that we have the good health to pursue a number of projects, among them the ordering and possible future uses of our archives. Meanwhile, please do join us as often as possible through our final season and help us to make it the best ever!

Our Sunday Series continues on December 2, here in Walter Hall, with *Madame Bizet*, the intriguing story of the wife of the composer who, in her widowhood, made a second life for herself as a Parisian artistic hostess and became a close friend of Marcel Proust. Soprano NATHALIE PAULIN and baritone BRETT POLEGATO perform songs by Bizet, Gounod, Debussy, Poulenc, Stravinsky and others; actors FIONA REID and MIKE SHARA read from the correspondence and diaries of Geneviève Bizet, Georges Bizet and Marcel Proust. Call our box office, 416.735.7982, or visit our website:

[www.aldeburghconnection.org](http://www.aldeburghconnection.org).

After *Valse des fleurs*, a Russian programme, on January 27 and our annual Greta Kraus Schubertiad, *Love among the Ruins*, on March 10, our season concludes with:

#### *A Britten Festival of Song*

Two recitals in the Glenn Gould Studio (April 26 and May 7) and our final concert in Walter Hall, *A Time There Was* (May 26), present a galaxy of Canadian vocal talent, including sopranos VIRGINIA HATFIELD and SHANNON MERCER, mezzo SUSAN PLATTS, countertenors SCOTT BELLUZ and DANIEL TAYLOR, tenors COLIN AINSWORTH and BENJAMIN BUTTERFIELD, baritone ALEXANDER DOBSON and the Canadian Children's Opera Company. A rich array of the music of our signature composer, BENJAMIN BRITTEN, whose centenary we celebrate in 2013, will bring our concerts to a fitting conclusion. Visit our website, [www.aldeburghconnection.org](http://www.aldeburghconnection.org), for full details.

*A Britten Festival of Song* is generously sponsored by BMO Financial Group.

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Copies of our CDs are available during the intermission or through our website:  
[www.aldeburghconnection.org](http://www.aldeburghconnection.org)

Watch for *A Quatre Mains*, a selection of our favourite music for piano-duet and two pianos, in preparation and available in December.

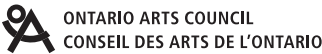
\*\*Very suitable for seasonal gifts!\*\*

Box office revenues cover only a portion of our operating budget; grants, corporate funding and individual donations are needed for the balance. Please consider joining one of our supporting categories: Benefactor (\$1,000 or more), Champion (\$500 or more), Patron (\$200 or more), Supporter (\$100 or more) and Friend (\$50 or more). Donations may be made by cheque, VISA or MasterCard, and may be made in instalments. You will receive information about our activities and all donations will be acknowledged by a receipt for income tax purposes. Donors may act as sponsors for a concert, an artist or a special commission. Suggestions for corporate sponsorship are also very welcome.

Your support is vital to the continuation of these concerts! Please reach us at 416-735-7982 or through our website: [www.aldeburghconnection.org](http://www.aldeburghconnection.org)

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We gratefully acknowledge the assistance of the following in the presentation of *The Lyre of Orpheus*:



**RBC Foundation**

Brenda Davies  
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 Ken and Carol Anderson  
 John B. Lawson

THE ALDEBURGH CONNECTION is also supported by a large group of individuals, including the following, whom we gratefully acknowledge (donations received January 1 to September 24, 2012):

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 Eleanor Wright

**Aldeburgh** is the small town on the east coast of England where Benjamin Britten, Peter Pears and Eric Crozier founded the Festival of Music which flourishes to this day. Artistic Directors **Stephen Ralls** and **Bruce Ubukata** visited and worked there for many summers, and a large number of the singers who appear with the Aldeburgh Connection has a similar link.

**Miriam Khalil**, Lebanese-Canadian soprano, is proving herself one of Canada's rising young sopranos. Highlights for the 2010-11 season included Mahler's *Rückert Lieder* and Canadian composer Omar Daniels' *Neruda Canciones* with the Hamilton Philharmonic Orchestra. She also sang the role of Carolina in Toronto Operetta Theatre's Canadian premier of the zarzuela *Luisa Fernanda* and made her debut with the Sudbury Symphony Orchestra as well as with Edmonton Opera in the role of Musetta in *La bohème*. As the highlight of that season, Khalil made her official debut at Glyndebourne Festival Opera as Almirena in Robert Carsen's new production of *Rinaldo* under the baton of Maestro Ottavio Dantone. In May 2012, Khalil made her stage debut with Against the Grain Theatre singing Mimi in *La bohème* and the Governess in their intimate production of Britten's *The Turn of the Screw*. Other highlights of last season included her debut with Pacific Opera Victoria, her debut with the Thunder Bay Symphony Orchestra and a recital in Moncton with L'Été musical de l'Église historique Barachois. Recent successes include Ms. Khalil's return to Opera Hamilton to sing the role of Mimi in *La bohème*, Susanna in *Le nozze di Figaro* with Opera Lyra, Ottawa, Elizabeth D'Aulnières in Charles Wilson's world premier of *Kamouraska* with Opera in Concert, Toronto, and Brahms' *German Requiem* with the Windsor Symphony.

A past cover engagement at Glyndebourne Festival in the role of Cleopatra in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* became a great success when Miriam was unexpectedly called to appear in the role. She returned the following summer to cover the role of Zerlina in a new production of *Don Giovanni*. As a previous member of the prestigious Canadian Opera Company Ensemble Studio, she sang such roles as Leah in James Rolfe's world premier of *Swoon*, Laura in *Luisa Miller* and Pamina in *The Magic Flute*. She is also acclaimed for her interpretations of Micaela in *Carmen*, Dido in *Dido and Aeneas* and Rosalinda in *Die Fledermaus*. Ms. Khalil is a graduate of the Glenn Gould School of the Royal Conservatory of Music where she holds an Artist Diploma in Voice. She also has a Bachelor's Degree in vocal performance from Ottawa University. She has been a member both of the Steans Institute for Young Artists (Ravinia) and of the Britten-Pears Young Artist Programme (Aldeburgh).

**Allyson McHardy**, mezzo-soprano, has been described as having a radiant, dusky, incandescent and sumptuous voice; her presence on stages in Canada, the United States and France have drawn comments such as noble, spellbinding, charming and seductive. Allyson's varied operatic repertoire encompasses roles from Handel, Caldara, Mozart and Rossini to Bizet and Verdi. Her orchestral repertoire includes

Mahler's *Das Lied von der Erde*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bach's *Magnificat*, Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis* and Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, among many other works. The 2012-2013 season offers Allyson a challenging balance of opera, concerts and a collaboration with ballet. Following summer performances at New Brunswick's Lamèque Festival in Pergolesi's *Stabat Mater* and Vancouver's Early Music Festival in Handel's *Orlando*, she appears as Cornelia in Handel's *Giulio Cesare* with the Michigan Opera Theatre in Detroit. Performances in her home city of Toronto include Handel's *Messiah* with Tafelmusik Baroque Orchestra at Koerner Hall in December and Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with the Toronto Symphony conducted by Jiri Belohlavek at Roy Thomson Hall in February. In March and April, Allyson takes on an innovative collaboration with the Alberta Ballet, performing *Requiem*, choreographed by Jean Grand-Maître and set to the music of Mozart's *Requiem*. May sees her in Halifax for Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9* with Symphony Nova Scotia and in Montreal for her debut in the role of St. Catherine in Honegger's *Jeanne d'Arc au bûcher* with the Montreal Symphony Orchestra.

Recent appearances included a national tribute to Maureen Forrester at Stratford Summer Music and debuts as Annio in the Opéra national de Paris production of Mozart's *La clemenza di Tito* and as Arcabonne in J.C. Bach's *Amadis de Gaule* at the Opéra Comique in Paris and at the Château de Versailles. Performances as Dejanira in Handel's *Hercules* with Tafelmusik in Toronto, her debut in the title role of *Carmen* with Pacific Opera Victoria, in Mozart's *Requiem* with l'Orchestre symphonique de Québec and appearances as Juno in Handel's *Semele* with the Canadian Opera Company completed her season. In March 2011, Allyson released Caldara's *La conversione di Clodoveo* (ATMA) in which she sang the title role, having previously performed it in Berlin, Montreal and Vancouver with Le Nouvel Opéra. She has also recorded Bellini's *Norma* (Philharmonia Narodowa) with the Warsaw Philharmonic, two works by Harry Somers - *Seriette* and *A Midwinter Night's Dream* (Centrediscs) - and is featured on the Musica Leopoldis label in Ukrainian music by composer Mykola Lysenko.

**Geoffrey Sirett**, baritone, has performed leading roles in Mozart's *Don Giovanni* and *Così fan tutte*, Humperdinck's *Hansel and Gretel*, Donizetti's *Lucia di Lammermoor*, Bernstein's *Candide*, Haydn's *Il mondo della luna*, Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*, Lehar's *The Merry Widow*, Ullmann's *Der Kaiser von Atlantis*, Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi*, and Britten's *Albert Herring*. In 2010 Geoffrey sang the role of the Count in Mozart's *Le nozze di Figaro* as a fellowship student of the Aspen Opera Theater Center, studying under Dr. Stephen King. In 2011 he returned to perform Snug in Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Diesel in Bernstein's *West Side Story*, and in 2012 performed the lead role of Nick Carraway in Harbison's *The Great Gatsby*, a production which was broadcast live on American public radio. A recent success was in the new opera *From the House of Mirth*, based on the novel by Edith Wharton, with music by Rodney Sharman, directed and choreographed by James Kudelka. This will be revived in Toronto performances early in 2013 and also across the USA.

On the concert stage, Geoffrey has performed a wide variety of oratorio and concert works, including most recently Handel's *Messiah* and Bach's *Weihnachts-Oratorium* with the Kingston Symphony, Fauré's *Requiem* and Vaughan Williams's *Dona Nobis Pacem* with the Buffalo Philharmonic, Bach cantatas with the Kingston and Chautauqua Symphonies, and Eötvös's *Snatches of a Conversation* with the Aspen Contemporary Orchestra. Geoffrey has appeared in recital across Canada and the U.S., including performances with the Aldeburgh Connection and Bayfield Festival of Song, the Van Cliburn Foundation with composer/pianist Ricky Ian Gordon, and the Chautauqua Institution with pianists Craig Rutenberg and Mikael Eliassen. As winner of the 2010 Jim and Charlotte Norcop Song Prize, Geoffrey presented a recital with pianist Martin Katz. Geoffrey's debut album, *Vagabond*, with pianist Stephen Ralls, was released in December 2011. The CD includes Vaughan Williams' *Songs of Travel*, Butterworth's *Six Songs from 'A Shropshire Lad'*, and Britten's *Folksong Arrangements*, as well as premiere recordings of two Canadian compositions by Jocelyn Morlock and Ivan Barbotin.

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Cover picture: A cartoon of Robertson Davies by S. Mogenson