

Peter Maxwell Davies (1934-2016)

Farewell to Stromness – Guidelines for Arrangements

Every year, Boosey and Hawkes receives numerous permission requests concerning arrangements of Peter Maxwell Davies' piano piece ***Farewell to Stromness***. That this tiny piano piece had caught on and touched so many people was a source of great happiness to Max and perhaps he had *Farewell* in mind when he wrote in 2000 that:

I have no illusions about being 'important' as composer or person: I am pleased to have the opportunity to write and that the music is played; and I should be happy to be remembered by two tunes and a dictionary footnote.

Periodically, and always with regret, the trustees of Max's musical estate have to turn down permission for the performance of arrangements. In other cases, restrictions are imposed whereby the arrangement can only be played once.

In order to avoid situations like this arising, we are publishing a short set of guidelines to help avoid the issues which cause permission to arrange *Farewell to Stromness* either being limited in scope or denied.

- 1 Apply for permission and submit scores at least 6 months ahead of a performance date or dates. Submissions made at shorter notice will always be considered sympathetically but, if *qualified* permission is given (indicating the arrangement requires some revision) then short notice requests become more problematic for all concerned.
- 2 Ensure that the original piano piece is accurately transcribed. There have been a huge number of arrangements submitted in which Max's music is not accurately transcribed. If an arrangement does not faithfully reproduce the core material it undermines the whole approach in the eyes of the trustees.
- 3 Tonality: D major is a hugely important key in Max's work, but when transcribing *Farewell* for another combination of instruments, a change of key can of course be appropriate. When considering this, arrangers should think about the role of tessitura in the original and how this maps sonically into the new context. Remember that the total range of *Farewell* as a keyboard piece contains no extremes of high and low.
- 4 Always keep in mind the simplicity and dignity of the original work and let your own creative choices be informed by this.