

Martin Anderson

I write for a variety of publications, including *The Independent*, *International Record Review*, and *Tempo* in the U.K., *Klassisk* in Norway, and *Finnish Music Quarterly*: Nordic and Baltic composers feature prominently in my writings. I was born in 1955 in Perth, Scotland, and grew up in a small Scottish town at the foot of the Highlands with little musical activity, but at eight or nine was alerted to the joys of music by an LP of Brahms (still my favourite composer). I then had to make my own way into the subject and thus largely escaped received ideas of what was great and glorious and what was not. My curiosity received its first real boost when my grandfather gave me a little transistor radio I could listen to under the covers when I was supposed to be asleep—that's how I discovered Skalkottas, Schmidt, Tubin, and the call-sign of Radio Tirana. Those nocturnal peregrinations lie, I guess, behind my interest in less-well-known repertoire, which was further stimulated by later friendships with such musical giants as Robert Simpson, Hans Keller, Harold Truscott, and Hans Gál. I also publish books on music as Toccata Press, which I founded because I got fed up waiting for other publishers to bring out some of the books I wanted to read, and I realised I was going to have to do it myself.

Before plunging into the choppy waters of freelance writing, I worked in economics for 20 years, at the free-market Institute of Economic Affairs in London and then the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development in Paris (on the improbable basis of a degree in mediaeval French and German, from St. Andrews University on the east coast of Scotland). After generally fruitless attempts to inseminate other CD labels with suggestions of works I thought deserved to be recorded, it became clear that, as with Toccata Press, I was going to have to do it myself, and so in 2005 I launched Toccata Classics (www.toccatoclassics.com), which pointedly specialises in neglected repertoire. That takes up most of my time these days: in its first two-and-a-half years it has released almost 30 CDs. The range of music on Toccata Classics naturally reflects my own enthusiasms, but I take the wider view that good music is good music, no matter where, when, or in what style it is written—an attitude that, I hope, also infects my prose.

I still write booklet texts for other labels, and as a regular obituarist for *The Independent*, I aim to give dead composers a dignified send-off when I can. I'm a committee member of a number of composer societies and play an active role on the committee of the International Centre for Suppressed Music, which looks at composers working under, exiled from, or murdered by totalitarian regimes. BBC Radio recently ran a competition in which listeners were asked to draft their autobiographies in no more than six words; the entry I considered submitting, "Music made me happy; women, too," ruefully omitted mention of chilled Chablis.