

## ALEXANDER GOEHR

Composer



### BIOGRAPHY

**Alexander Goehr**, composer and teacher, was born in Berlin on 10 August 1932, son of the conductor Walter Goehr, and was brought to England in 1933. He studied with Richard Hall at the Royal Manchester College of Music, where together with Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies and John Ogdon he formed the New Music Manchester Group, and with Olivier Messiaen and Yvonne Loriod in Paris. In the early '60's he worked for the BBC and formed the Music Theatre Ensemble, the first devoted to what has become an established musical form. From the late '60's onwards he taught at the New England Conservatory Boston, Yale, Leeds and was appointed to the chair of the University of Cambridge in 1975. He has also taught in China and has twice been Composer-in-residence at Tanglewood. He is an honorary member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters and a former Churchill Fellow, and was the Reith Lecturer in 1987.

He has written four operas: *Arden Must Die*, Hamburg 1967; *Behold the Sun*, Deutsche Oper 1985; *Arianna*, lost opera by Monteverdi, Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, 1995 and subsequently recorded for NMC); *Kantan & Damask Drum*, Theater Dortmund September 1999; and a music theatre Triptych.

His orchestral works, including four symphonies, concerti for piano, violin, viola and cello and other orchestral compositions have at various times been performed by Dorati, Boulez, Barenboim, Pritchard, Haitink, Ozawa, Dohnanyi and Rattle, with soloists including Parikian, Ricci, Jaqueline du Pré, Ogdon and Barenboim. Peter Serkin has premièred and recorded several works, and Oliver Knussen regularly conducts his music. The cantata *The Death of Moses* was premièred in Seville Cathedral by the Monteverdi Choir conducted by John Eliot Gardiner; *Schlussgesang* was given its first performance at the 1997 Aldeburgh Festival by Tabea Zimmermann and the BBC Symphony Orchestra with Oliver Knussen. *Idées fixes*, for The London Sinfonietta's 30th Season, received its first performance with Oliver Knussen in December 1997.

Premières in 2001 included two orchestral works, for the Halle Handel Festival and the BBC Proms, and a *Suite* for Pamela Frank and Peter Serkin commissioned by the Harvard Musical Society. This work is now in the repertory of Midori, and featured in her groundbreaking 2005 Contemporary Music Project. *...around Stravinsky*, written for the Nash Ensemble, was premièred in March 2002. His *Piano Quintet*, commissioned by Carnegie Hall for Peter Serkin and the Orion Quartet, was given its first performance at the Aldeburgh Festival in June 2002 by Tom Poster and the Brodsky Quartet, due to the indisposition of Peter Serkin. However, Peter

Serkin and the Orion Quartet presented the US première in the Zankell Hall in September 2003. Its London première is set for November 2005 with Daniel Becker and the Elias Quartet.

In 2003 Alexander Goehr completed a Koussevitsky commission, *Marching to Carcassone*, for Peter Serkin and the London Sinfonietta conducted by Oliver Knussen. A new version for full orchestra was be premiered by Serkin with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra in July 2005.

Recent works include an orchestral piece, *Adagio (Autuporträt)* commissioned by the Musikalischen Akademie des Nationaltheater-Orchesters Mannheim e.V; *Fantasie*, for Paul and Huw Watkins (who also recorded his Cello Sonata); and a series of piano pieces, *Symmetry Disorders Reach*, which also form the basis for lecture recitals Goehr gives with Huw Watkins, and a Clarinet Quintet commissioned by the BBC for the Nash Ensemble, premièred at Wigmore Hall, London.

Alexander Goehr recently was awarded a BBC/BASCA British Composer Award for *Since Brass nor Stone* written for the Pavel Haas String Quartet and the percussionist Colin Currie.

Goehr's current projects are an opera, 'Promised End' based on King Lear.

Alexander Goehr is published by Schott & Co.

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### **In deutsche**

Alexander Goehr wurde am 10. August 1932 als Sohn des Dirigenten Walter Goehr in Berlin geboren, von wo er ein Jahr später nach England gebracht wurde.

Er studierte Komposition bei Richard Hall am Royal Manchester College of Music; dort gründete er zusammen mit Harrison Birtwistle, Peter Maxwell Davies und John Ogdon die New Music Manchester Group. In Paris setzte er von 1955-56 seine Studien bei Olivier Messiaen und Yvonne Loriod fort.

In den frühen 60er Jahren arbeitete er für die BBC und gründete das Music Theatre Ensemble, eines der ersten englischen Ensemble, das sich ausschließlich der Pflege des zeitgenössischen Musiktheaters widmete.

Seit den späten 60er Jahren lehrte er am New England Conservatory in Boston und in Yale; 1971 berief ihn die Universität von Leeds als Professor für Musik und im Jahre 1975 wurde er an die Universität von Cambridge berufen, wo er bis zu seiner Emeritierung im Jahre 1999 als Professor für Musik in Trinity Hall und als Direktor der University Music School wirkte.

Er unterrichtet auch in China und war zweimal Composer-in-Residence in Tanglewood. Er ist Ehrenmitglied der American Academy of Arts and Letters, ehemaliger Churchill-Fellow und hielt im Jahre 1987 die BBC Reith Lectures.

Sein Bühnenwerk umfasst die Opern **Arden Must Die** (Hamburg 1967), **Behold the Sun Die Wiedertäufer** (Düsseldorf 1985), **Arianna, lost Opera by Monteverdi** (London, ROC 1995; jüngst bei NMC auf CD erschienen), den Musiktheaterzyklus **Triptych** mit den Einzelwerken **Naboth's Vineyard** (London 1968), **Shadowplay** (London 1970) und **Sonata about Jerusalem** (Tel Aviv 1971) und die Kammeroper **Kantan & Damask Drum** (Dortmund 1999; und jüngst aufgeführt beim Festival in Aldeburgh und beim Almeida Festival, London).

Sein symphonisches Werk, das neben anderen Orchesterwerken vier Symphonien, sowie Konzerte für Klavier, Violine, Viola und Violoncello aufweist, wurde u.a. von Antal Dorati, Pierre Boulez, Daniel Barenboim, John Pritchard, Bernhard Haitink, Christoph von Dohnanyi und Simon Rattle, gemeinsam mit zahlreichen international renommierten Solisten, aufgeführt. Auch Oliver Knussen ist ein regelmäßiger Interpret seiner Werke.

In 2001 wurden u.a. zwei Orchesterwerke, ***Overture with Handelian Air*** für das Händel-Festival in Halle und ***... second musical offering*** im Rahmen der Proms 2001, sowie ein Klavierquartett für Peter Serkin und das Orion Quartett (Auftragswerk der Carnegie Hall New York) und eine Suite für Pamela Frank und Peter Serkin (Auftragswerk der Harvard Musical Society) uraufgeführt.

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