

MUSIC- BY GAD!

The General Anxiety of being a Composer

Emeritus Professor Edward Cowie

Put an internationally renowned composer (ex physicist, painter and natural scientist) together with a famous violinist in a commission for that solo instrument and what do you get? Well usually a work for solo violin of course. But this commission turned-out to be something different. Shortly after starting work, Cowie entered a period of intense GAD symptoms and states. He had two choices: stop work and wait for the symptoms to abate or work **through** and **during** the episodes. The result is one of the most extraordinary pieces ever written for the solo violin- a work that the commissioning soloist Peter Sheppard Skaeved describes as '**one of the most harrowing, beautiful and transformative musical journeys I have ever been almost totally overwhelmed by**'.

Edward describes the work as *astonishingly revelatory and therapeutic*. In a note for the impending new CD of 3 of his string quartets and this GAD solo work (Metier Label), he writes:

'GAD can produce extraordinary shifts in perception and perspectives on rationality. It's almost like being transported into another mind and body- one vulnerable; afraid; lonely; threatened and close to be totally overwhelmed. But in this state I discovered beautiful if sometimes terrifying forms, textures and musical colours'.

Already intensely interested in the idea of **music and sound** as analytical, diagnostic and therapeutic tools in some forms of mental health: anxiety and depression especially, Cowie wonders if we shouldn't re-open a passage to what Koestler described as '*Old Brain Consciousness*'- rewild the human brain and test the possibility that new pathways and treatments may yet await research via an acoustically-charged and directed set of investigations.

He has just begun preliminary work on a new **violin concerto** in which he intends to go much further in an exploration of how sound and music can reflect on and into humanm consciousness and behaviour.

His approach to music (he has recently been described as *the greatest living composer directly inspired by the natural world*), is based on **six** axioms, namely that:-

- Music is a biological phenomenon and thus a form of 'behaviour';
- Music is just **one** part of a vast interconnecting formal and cosmic dynamic;
- Music is and expression and manifestation of both conscious and unconscious sensitivities to **sound**;
- He is more inspired by **natural** history than **musical** history;
- Sound, colour, order, disorder, shape, pattern, **form** are all connected in a kind of **grand unification**;

- **Seeing before hearing- drawing before composing-** helps him to find a more personal and highly-charged vista on sound and music.

This seminar will focus on GAD by Edward Cowie but also look forward-and-across to implications of new methods and approaches to an understanding of what Cowie describes as **the textures, forms and structural environments for General Anxiety Disorders and Depression.**

References

Edward Cowie

www.edwardcowie.com

GAD and other major works in sound and film on You-Tube.

Use of the **image option** in Google for Edward Cowie