

During my tenure as *Director Artístico* of the Deià Festival between 1978 and 2008, every year, about the time the concerts were to begin, at least once and often several times, someone from the newspapers, radio, and TV requested an interview. We were always grateful for the resultant publicity, but almost never were the questions asked truly relevant.

One question which almost without fail was asked, for instance: “Isn’t classical music for an elite audience?”

The answer, of course, is yes; at least those who frequent such concerts consider themselves part of an “elite”, as do most of the musicians dedicated to classical music, and they are proud of their support of this vital art form.

Another FAQ: “Do any young people attend the concerts?” The answer here is more complicated – Not as many as I would like, but yes, young people come to the concerts, especially when their friends or young artists are playing.

“Who attends the concerts – tourists from foreign countries?” was another. Again the answer is yes, but the tourists who come do so because it is their custom at home, and they are happy to experience the great composers in the magical surroundings of Son Marroig. Many of the tourists also come from peninsular Spain.

Almost never did the interviewer ask about the composers represented in the concerts. In my view, the programming was the most interesting angle of the Festival. I had several guidelines for choosing the artists – there were always more offers than it was possible to accept, even though the fees were not so great. One such guideline was to insist that the artist should always include at least one composer from his native land. That’s easy for a German or an Austrian, or even a French musician; but a Bulgarian, Pole, Mallorcan, Dutchman, or even a Briton had to make a real effort to come up with something from a compatriot. In this way our programs were already significantly different from the average music festival.

Another method we used to enhance the programs and try to attract a different audience was to watch for promising young musicians, often prize winners just beginning their careers.

A third system was to look for combinations of instruments not so often found in established festivals: piano quintets, wind quintets, septets, octets, nonets, string quintets, for instance.

Of course, you would find the Beethoven Septet from time to time in other venues, or the Spohr Nonet, as well as the ubiquitous Schumann and Brahms piano quintets, and the numerous piano trios by the usual composers: Mozart, Mendelssohn, Brahms, et al.

In fact, if you left it to the visiting artists, you would hear *only* these composers, with maybe the occasional Shostakovitch or Dvorak. And if as the organizer you must attend every concert, 15 or 20 each year, for 30 years, you might, as we did, begin searching for other pieces to mix into the repertoire, and try to convince the players to be a little more adventurous.

And here was the point of pride I always tried to get across to the interviewers, with very little success. Most of these journalists knew very little about the subject. They could have named the celebrities of the film industry, or sports, or pop music, but had little appreciation of the difference between a conventional classical evening in a conservative festival and an evening with composers they had never heard of – often they did not even know Debussy or Shostakovitch.

Little wonder, then, that when we had heard in Deià all the Beethoven cello sonatas and violin sonatas, all the major piano trios and piano quartets and piano quintets, as well as the central repertoire for various combinations of wind instruments, and began searching for alternative proposals for invited artists – little wonder, I repeat, that few of the interviewers picked up on the uniqueness obtaining in Deià. The fact that here you would perhaps hear Romantic works contemporary with the greatly revered composers, and be wonderfully surprised by the discovery of other eloquent voices from the past gave a certain character to the Festival, and word got around.

Members of the public would ask where they could find other music by such composers as Glière, or Ries, or Onslow, and musicians sometimes added works to their repertoire which they would otherwise have overlooked.

This search was intensified in 1992 when I mentioned to an American friend that I would like to include some Romantic composers from the United States, and she sent me an article about the first concert in my native country of the States consisting entirely of American composers. That concert took place in Cleveland, Ohio in 1884, according to the article. I wrote to the Chamber of Commerce in that city, who sent my letter on to Case Hall, the venue of that concert, and they in turn passed the letter on to a librarian who miraculously found a copy of the original program. She sent me a photocopy, and the chase was on. Only one of the pieces was ever published, and here began the next and, for me, most thrilling episode of the Festival. Tracking down the manuscripts of the Gilchrist Piano Trio in G Minor and the J. H. Beck String Quartet, the principal pieces on that day in 1884, required much persistence, but in 1984, one hundred years after that significant concert, we heard those in Son Marroig.

In the process, I learned there were hundreds(?) of unpublished manuscripts held in the Philadelphia Logan Free Library, and made a pilgrimage to have a look for myself. The greatest find was the chamber music and a remarkable cello concerto by Arthur Foote, which I have since published, but more than that, it made me aware that there could be other treasure troves in other libraries, and other countries. Since then we have heard works by Alexis de Castillon, from Paris, Carlos Gomes from Brazil, and – wonder of wonders – a piece for 2 pianos by Franz Liszt, first played by Chopin and Liszt in Paris in 1834. I have since published the Liszt and the Gomes, always for the same reason – to hear them in Deià.

Which leads me to the main point of this interview with myself.

Somewhere around the year 2000, looking for other groupings for winds and strings – everybody was playing the Spohr Nonet and the Beethoven Septet, I ran across mention of Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Nonet. The manuscript was in the Royal College of Music in London, where he'd studied for several years, and I received a photocopy of the manuscript. In order to hear it, I made an edition, and in 2002 a local group of players performed the work in Son Marroig. I put sample pages on my website, and one of the musicians who bought my edition informed me of several errors. Thus began a long collaboration with Lionel Harrison, a pianist and composer living in London; he's probably the person who knows more about Coleridge-Taylor than anyone else, or at least one of this composer's greatest fans. He owns every recording ever made of Coleridge-Taylor's music, or so I believe, and after we published the Piano Quintet in G Minor, was influential in getting it recorded by the Nash Ensemble.

Soon we published the A minor Symphony from this Afro-English composer, and the Haytian Dances for string orchestra, a five movement version his well-known *Noveletten*.

Lionel and I both had read Geoffrey Self's *The Hiawatha Man*, a biography of Coleridge-Taylor, and lamented the lost string quartet and the Grand Opera *Thelma, or the Amulet*, finished in 1909 but never performed, declared lost in Self's book and elsewhere. The composer died in 1912, thirty-seven years old, never having heard this major work.

Then the grand surprise: Lionel, looking in the British Library's on-line catalogue for another work by Coleridge-Taylor, discovered the manuscript of *Thelma*!! It had apparently been there all the time, if I understand correctly what Lionel told me. We got copies and settled down to a couple of years' labor of love.

Here I backtrack a little. In 1988-1992 I helped establish an orchestra in the Spanish city of Granada. It was then called the Orquesta de Cámara de la Ciudad de Granada, and now has become the Orquesta Filarmonica de Granada. For the inaugural concert, the director and I wanted to present a new work written for the orchestra, as well as an earlier work by a Spanish composer which had never been recorded. We commissioned a work by a composer from the city of Granada, and found a musicologist in Catalonia who had begun editing several early symphonies by one Carles Bager, from the time of Haydn. There were no playing parts for this piece, and I spent desperate weeks learning the Finale program for publishing music to produce a score and parts. Since then I have spent nearly thirty years using the program on a daily basis, an almost obsessive activity demanding hours of the most intense concentration with a long learning curve, at least in my case.

In 2005 I lost my partner of 29 years and co-founder of the Deià Festival, a flautist and singer named Stephanie Shepard. Since then more and more I work on scores. I gave up the Festival, no fun without her, and dedicated myself almost exclusively to making editions of music which would otherwise not be available for performance. And just in time; for many chamber groups and orchestras have begun looking for such music, partly due to the saturation of the grand classics already out there, and partly because there is a growing public for these alternative programs.

There are labels such as Sterling, CPO, and Naxos who are releasing works by such composers as Ferdinand Ries – a composer who studied with Beethoven, who himself had studied with Ries' father – Heinrich von Herzogenberg, Swiss composer Schnyder, a "lost" piece by Paul Dukas, Philipp Scharwenka, the wonderful violin concerto by Frederic Cliffe, and so on. Often there is no performance material, and they ask me to prepare it for them.

Thus what began as a drive to hear unusual pieces has led me into a niche market with a seemingly endless list of scores worthy of revival.

At this moment, the upcoming celebration of Coleridge Taylor's hundredth anniversary is promising to bring his name to the fore. Whereas in the past he was known principally for his early success, *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, we will get to know his songs, his symphony, his remarkable chamber music, and finally in 2012 his opera, to be performed in London by the Pegasus Opera. The composer only heard *Thelma* in his head, and I have heard it in the computerized playback, but soon a much larger public will be able to enjoy his greatest endeavor. Already the tunes live again in my head, and in Lionel's; now others will come to know them. I'm sure Coley, as Lionel tells me he was known to his friends, would be very happy indeed.