

Preserve Harmony



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MASTER ELECT

In November, Professor Malcolm Troup becomes Master of Our Company. He brings together in one and the same person all three of the major pathways open to a musician – first composer, subsequently performer and eventually academic.

Born in Canada, from his early childhood Malcolm records his first memories of being lulled to sleep to the strains of a Chopin Nocturne played by his English mother, whereas his dour Aberdeenshire father had no time for the liberal arts. Considering that the family were brought to financial ruin by the final years of the Great Depression – and he still remembers dealers arriving to haggle over the contents of the family home – it is the more remarkable that his musical talent survived and developed.

Sheer ability to win a succession of prizes and scholarships enabled him to take his ARCT at the tender age of fifteen without any support from his father despite the fact that a great uncle had been Precentor of Music to Queen Victoria at Balmoral.

Although Malcolm's initial musical career was aimed at composition, at seventeen he was diverted to the concert platform after making his debut with the CBC Orchestra in Toronto in a performance of Anton Rubinstein's third Piano Concerto. No aspiring composer could hope to survive in the Toronto of the 1940s without a private income. Thus it came about that he found himself studying Performance alongside Glenn Gould with Alberto Guerro, the famous Chilean born teacher, the first of many significant South American connections!

With the aid of private sponsorship the scene now moves to London where, aged twenty, Malcolm's studies continued with Sidney Harrison at the Guildhall School. This transfer ultimately led to a series of felicitous encounters which effectively laid the firm foundations of his future career.

Following a chance meeting with the formidable Dame Margaret Rutherford on Hampstead Heath, he toured Scandinavia with her and subsequently appeared in one of her Pinewood films – although we are not aware in what capacity! Another major patroness was the Dowager Marchioness of Headfort – Rosie Boot, the former Gaiety Girl. Her introduction to HRH The Princess Alice of Athlone – whose husband had been Governor General of Canada – led directly to studies with Walter Gieseking and one of the



Professor Malcolm Troup, DPhil, Hon DMus, Hon LLD, FGSM, ARCT, FRSA.

Photo: Michael Machalepis.

most exhaustive tours yet undertaken by any pianist throughout the length and breadth of Canada.

In the period following his return, Ibbs & Tillett engaged him for his London debut at the Wigmore Hall. Thereafter, a round of concerts, including engagements with the London Symphony and Halle Orchestras, was followed, in 1980, by an all-embracing tour throughout Brazil and Argentina. While the subsequent news of his mother's death was hard to bear, the British Council persuaded him to undertake a series of performances in Chile during which he met and subsequently married his charming wife Carmen, a relative of the then Chilean Cultural Attache in Buenos Aires, Maria Concha Subercaseaux. Further engagements followed in Peru, Mexico and Cuba. While the last country included a passing encounter with Fidel Castro, it was in Peru that

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