

West Linton
Peeblesshire
Scotland
April 4 2001

Dear Mr Deverell, - Yours was the first letter I received, welcoming me to New Zealand; and the last letter, for me to read on the homeward flight, which I did. Thank you.

My wife and I enjoyed our stay in your beautiful country. Marjorie's brother drove us to see much of the North Island. We particularly loved the wealth of tree-life. The New Zealand bush is a wonder of nature.

Marshall Walker was on vacation. He phoned me in a friendly way. It proved impractical to broadcast an interview. I rang Jonathan Besser who sounded warm and friendly. I asked if he had any solo piano music but he hadn't: he's only used the piano in chamber music. This seems to me a current trend. It's difficult to write well for solo piano: one needs to be a pianist. Most younger composers aren't. One day I'd be interested to see and hear something of Douglas Titcham Lilburn's music. When you wrote that he was 85 I thought it would be an imposition for me to contact him.

My brother-in-law especially hired a fine piano for me during my stay. As a small token of thanks, I gave two private recitals for him and his friends. My wife and I shortened our sojourn a little in order to attend a performance of my Pasacaglia on Dsch by a fine young English pianist, Mark Gasser, in London. The BBC recorded it and broadcast it a little later. And soon Mark left to perform it in Australia, where it was also broadcast.

All the e-mail information you sent me was of real interest, perhaps especially your thoughts on aesthetics. Do you know Busoni's opusculer A New Esthetic of Music (1911, Schirmer, N.Y.)? It was re-issued as a paperback* with Debussy's M. Croce and Charles Ives's Essay before a Sonata (the 'Concord' Sonata). Some of your comments on aesthetics remind me of Busoni's New Aesthetic.

Before our visit to New Zealand Marjorie and I attended Busoni's opera Doktor Faust at the 'Met' in N.Y. A fine performance. Premiered in 1925. It had taken nearly a century to reach the Met.

The obituary of Mansell Thomson was of special interest to me. My library includes some copies of the Early Music which he founded: an exquisitely produced magazine full of musicological interest.

You may or may not know there's a society for publication of my music and for sale of CDs of it. If I may, I'll ask the secretary to send you a newsletter and a catalogue. I'm told there's a fair amount about the R.S. Society on the internet, though I don't use a computer myself.

All the best. Do keep in touch.

Your letters are a

Cordially

Thank you.
Ronald Stevenson

* The Dover edition is entitled
Three Classics in Music Aesthetics.