



Lennox Berkeley and Friends: Writings, Letters and Interviews

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This book is a major source of information about one of the most influential British composers of the mid-twentieth century and the musicians he knew. It also provides details of the musical relationship between Paris and London before, during and after World War II. Berkeley had a ring-side seat when he lived in Paris, studied with Nadia Boulanger and wrote reviews about musical life there from 1929 to 1934. His little known letters to her reveal the mesmeric power of this extraordinary woman. Berkeley was an elegant writer, and it is fascinating to read his first-hand memories of composers such as Ravel, Poulenc, Stravinsky and Britten. The book also contains interviews with Berkeley's colleagues, friends and family. These include performers such as Julian Bream and Norman Del Mar; composers Nicholas Maw and Malcolm Williamson; the composer's eldest son Michael, the composer and broadcaster; and Lady Berkeley. Lennox Berkeley knew Britten well, and there are many references to him in this eminently readable collection. Peter Dickinson, British composer and pianist, has written and edited numerous books about twentieth-century music, including Cage Talk: Dialogues with and about John Cage as well as Samuel Barber Remembered (both with University of Rochester Press) and three books published by Boydell Press: The Music of Lennox Berkeley; Copland Connotations; and Lord Berners: Composer, Writer, Painter. Peter Dickinson's music is widely performed and recorded. Dickinson knew Berkeley from 1956 until the composer's death in 1989; performed many of the songs with his sister, the mezzo Meriel Dickinson; and has written and broadcast regularly about his music.

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Editorial Review

Review

This collection (...) is a major source of information concerning one of the most influential composers of the mid-twentieth century and the musicians he knew. **DELIUS JOURNAL** This is a fascinating and always interesting read - splendid for bedtime dipping and, thanks to the index, for research. Strongly recommended. **ELGAR SOCIETY JOURNAL** One doesn't need to be an admirer of Lennox Berkeley's music to appreciate the wisdom and insights which this most welcome collection of various writings has to offer. (...) Peter Dickinson is to be commended for bringing together this illuminating material. **MUSICAL TIMES** Every page in this excellently edited, finely produced volume speaks of a composer who listened to his inner voice, turning a deaf ear to the blandishments of fame or fortune. ... (Berkeley) has been too often overlooked; Peter Dickinson's book will surely do much to remedy that. **BBC MUSIC MAGAZINE** (Berkeley's writings reveal the same kindly, urbane and by no means undiscerning personality that is heard in his music.

INTERNATIONAL PIANO This valuable book reminds us that by keenly analysing limitations in other composers and himself without undue cruelty, Berkeley was more than the gentle and kindly soul whom all of the interviewees recall; he was also a most perceptive thinker about opera. **OPERA(T)** This is a handsome and welcome tribute to a composer who did not necessarily make a huge statement (...) As a publication and as a chronicle of a creative life, it could not be better achieved. **GRAMOPHONE** (P)rolific composer and well-loved man, Lennox Berkeley (...) remains an enigma to most of us even if we know little of his enormous output of songs, symphonies, ballets and spiritually inclined choral music. (...) (This) new collection of writings, letters and interviews, edited by his one-time pupil Peter Dickinson, offers an easily digested introduction to the composer and his milieu. **SPECTATOR** After reading (this) new volume I feel I almost knew the man. (...) highly recommended. **CLASSICAL.NET** This book is essential reading for all enthusiasts of 20th century music, and will be of tremendous value to all scholars of British music in particular and Western music in general. **MUSIC.WEB.INTERNATIONAL** (John France)

About the Author

Peter Dickinson was born in Africa but raised and educated in England. From 1952 to 1969 he was on the editorial staff of "Punch", and since then has earned his living writing fiction of various kinds for children and adults. His books have been published in several languages throughout the world. The recipient of many awards, Dickinson has been shortlisted nine times for the prestigious Carnegie Medal for children's literature and was the first author to win it twice. The author of twenty-one crime and mystery novels for adults, Dickinson was also the first to win the Gold Dagger of the Crime Writers Association for two books running: "The Glass-Sided Ants Nest" (1968) and "The Old English Peepshow" (1969). A collection of Dickinson's poetry, "The Weir", was published in 2007. His latest book, "In the Palace of the Khans", was published in 2012 and was nominated for the Carnegie Medal. Dickinson has served as chairman of the Society of Authors and is a fellow of the Royal Society of Literature. He was made an Officer of the Order of the British Empire in 2009 for services to literature.

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