



The Canadian composer Istvan Anhalt was born one hundred years ago today, on April 12, 1919, in Budapest. To commemorate the centennial of his birth, rather than offering a biographical portrait, I would like to highlight four things about him that I regard as important: 1) he was of Hungarian Jewish descent and a holocaust survivor; 2) he was remarkably intelligent; 3) he spent most of his career teaching; and 4) his music will endure. I will elaborate upon each of these four themes.

1. A Holocaust Survivor

To note that Anhalt is a holocaust survivor places his life and music at the heart of the central historical issue of the twentieth century. Philosophers, historians, psychologists, religious leaders, politicians, and many other public intellectuals have grappled with the problem of how to come to terms with the holocaust and its devastating impact upon humanity. Words cannot adequately describe the events of those years, nor can art.

Survivors of the holocaust have been the subject of countless studies. Symptoms which are commonly found include depression, suicidal feelings, and a deep-seated guilt at having survived when so many other family members and friends perished. Many survivors retreated into silence about what they had been through, refusing to talk about or even acknowledge their experiences. Coming to terms with the holocaust, individually and collectively, is an ongoing process and one which will never be complete. The story of each survivor is singular and unique to that individual, but at the same time is only comprehensible within the framework of the bigger historical picture that unfolded during those years. Here, in brief, is Anhalt's story as I have come to understand it.

I first met Anhalt in Kingston, two years after he moved to the city to become the head of the music department at Queen's University. We both lived on the same street, half a block apart. It was the summer of 1973, and my parents had invited Anhalt and his wife Beate, who was of German Jewish descent, to a garden party. (NB: Beate Anhalt died three months ago, at the age of 94; an obituary is available online [here](#).) He was 54 years old then; I was a 17-year-old high school student, in awe of Anhalt's depth of knowledge, breadth of experience, and cosmopolitan European education. Little did I know at the time how hard won that knowledge had been and at what cost that European education had been attained.

In the early years of my acquaintance with Anhalt, I was aware that he was of Hungarian birth, but I did not even know that he was Jewish, much less a holocaust survivor. It was not a subject that came up in our conversations; nor, as far as I knew then and am aware now, was there any written record of his experiences. Biographical information about Canadian musicians was not so easily come by in those years: not only was there no Internet, there was not even the *Encyclopedia of Music in Canada*; sources of reliable information were scarce. If I had read the entry on Anhalt in the CBC's *Thirty-Four Biographies of Canadian Composers* (1964), I would have been no wiser about his experience of the holocaust. The biography of him in that book describes his graduation from the Academy of Music in Budapest in 1941, and moves directly on to his decision to move to Paris in 1946, passing over the crucial years in between in silence. That silence derives, I believe, from Anhalt himself. Coming to terms with his Jewish identity,

his personal history, and his experiences during the holocaust, and making that private business a matter of public record, was a long and gradual process for him, a process that I think had only just begun when I first met him. By the time the biographical dictionary *Contemporary Canadian Composers* was published in 1975, the silence between 1941 and 1946 was filled in by a single sentence. Udo Kasemets, Anhalt's exact contemporary and the author of this biographical entry, writes "In 1941 he graduated from the Royal Hungarian Academy, but combined circumstances of the war and his Jewish family background prevented him from immediately launching a professional career."

It was while I was a music student at Queen's University (1974–78) that I got the first indication of the significance of those five years of silence. A full-page article about Anhalt appeared in the local newspaper, the *Kingston Whig-Standard*, in the late 1970s. As far as I am aware, this was the first public accounting that Anhalt gave about his experiences during the Second World War. I learned not only that he is Jewish, but also that he had served in a forced labour brigade during the war. He barely escaped with his life by fleeing from his labour brigade during a desperate forced march to Austria, just one step ahead of the advancing Soviet troops. He soon managed to make his way to Budapest, and with the help of various courageous people lived in hiding. He had arrived just in time to witness the siege of Budapest, a battle that lasted from November 1944 to February 1945, and saw some of the most violent and deadly urban warfare in Western Europe during the Second World War. The most detailed account of this siege is [*The Siege of Budapest*](#) by Krisztián Ungváry, who based his research on the testimony of survivors, most of whom were not free to tell their story until after the fall of the Soviet Union. When I visited Anhalt in the cancer ward of the Kingston General Hospital in February 2011, Ungváry's book was by his bed. Knowing my interest in this period of his life, he recommended that I read it. It is a harrowing tale; the battle between German/Hungarian forces on the one side and the Soviet army on the other was fought street by street, building by building, in the midst of a helpless and trapped civilian population. The battle raged for over 100 days; by contrast, Vienna would fall in just six days and Berlin in two weeks.

In *A Weave of Life Lines* [WLL], his detailed 500-page autobiographical manuscript, Anhalt tells of his experiences during the aftermath of the siege. He recalls walking through the streets of Buda early in 1945:

The streets were in a terrible mess: snow, mud, broken vehicles of all sorts, debris from half demolished houses on both sides of the streets, torn trees, dead horses, burned out military hardware ... it was a sight which was made even more eerie through the fact that it was not the picture of destruction of an alien place, but the death of my home town, in which every corner, almost, was allied with a memory from my youth or childhood. [WLL, p. 474]

During this walk, Anhalt came across a sight that would stay in his memory forever:

On the roadway, half buried in the mud, lay the quasi-two-dimensional distortion of what must have been a man. He was wearing the uniform of a German soldier. What did he do to deserve this? Who was he? I found myself *wanting* to believe that he was an SS murderer who was lying here, flattened to a 'pancake' by a passing tank. But I cannot be certain of this. How much choice did this 'pancake man' have in doing what he did in the course of the war? How much was it up to him to choose *not* to do what was alien to his nature, mind, values, beliefs? I often thought of that terrible sight which I came to associate in my mind with *decision and the consequences that may accrue from it*. [WLL p. 474-5]

As a result of that moment with the pancake man, Anhalt reflected carefully on every action in his own life. To many, he must have seemed overly cautious and guarded over the years, but he was only too aware that even simple actions can have grim and unforeseen consequences. It is perhaps no exaggeration to say that the pancake man hovered in the back of Anhalt's mind from that day forward to remind him of the importance of weighing up all possible circumstances which could result from any decision.

One lingering effect of Anhalt's experiences during the war was a recurring dream he had frequently, in which he is still trapped in a forced labour camp. In this nightmare, he realizes the war is over, the Nazis have lost, and all of Europe has been liberated – except for the camp in which he is trapped, and about which the world at large is unaware. There is no way to get out a plea for help, as the camp is still closely guarded by the Nazis.

His experiences during the war certainly left their mark on his waking life as well. He was always reluctant to speak Hungarian or associate with Hungarians; the language and the people were powerfully associated in his mind with experiences of alienation and persecution during the period up to 1946, when he left the country forever. The only time I heard him speak Hungarian was in conversation with his mother, who lived with him in his house in Kingston from 1977 until her death in 1985.

Anhalt's experience as a holocaust survivor was also a factor in his decision to move to Kingston. With the rise of Québécois nationalism in the 1960s, followed by the FLQ crisis in 1970, Anhalt became increasingly worried about the situation in Montreal. Having lived in Paris between 1946 and 1949, he was fairly fluent in French. He lived in a predominantly English-language environment in Montreal, but nevertheless counted a number of Francophone composers and musicians among his close friends. As an allophone Quebecker, though, he came to feel increasingly alienated from his nationalist Francophone colleagues and friends, as he was not entirely in sympathy with their vision of an independent Quebec. Whether justified or not, he came to feel that the situation in Montreal in the late 1960s and early 1970s evinced disturbing parallels with the situation in Budapest of the 1930s. There were over 200 FLQ bombings in Quebec during these years, including one at McGill University where Anhalt worked, and another in a mailbox just a block away from the school that his daughters attended. Driven by memories of social and political unrest in the Budapest of his youth, Anhalt packed his bags and relocated to peace and quiet in Kingston.

It is notoriously difficult to make art about the Holocaust; as Adorno famously stated, “writing poetry after Auschwitz is barbaric.” [*Prisms*, p. 34] Perhaps for this reason, Anhalt has specifically avoided any direct reference to the holocaust in his music; there is no *A Survivor from Warsaw* in his catalogue. Nevertheless, the influence of his experience as a holocaust survivor on his music is evident in at least two works, *Thisness* for mezzo-soprano and piano (1985), and *Traces (Tikkun)* for baritone and orchestra (1995); both works have strong autobiographical associations. *Thisness*, which Anhalt calls a duo-drama, is dedicated to his parents (both of whom survived the holocaust as well) and to Phyllis Mailing, who premiered it. It is the first work for which Anhalt wrote the text himself, as opposed to assembling a collage text from pre-existing sources. In the course of the work's ten movement-like sections, the singer assumes various personae, including a father, a traveller, and a show-business performer. The seventh section is called “Unreason,” and strongly evokes the world of hatred that Anhalt experienced during the holocaust era. [p. 34 of score; [Centrestreams recording](#), 38'40” to 43'02”] The text of “Unreason” from *Thisness* begins “Is this the end of your speech, foreigner? How strangely you speak. I hate you for it. I hate you, pharmakos.” The word *pharmakos* references Anhalt's longstanding fascination with the world of classical antiquity. In Ancient Greece, a

pharmakos was a human scapegoat who was expelled from the community, sometimes even executed, at times of crisis. The relation to Anhalt's experiences in Hungary are all too evident.

Traces (Tikkun), the other work which most directly shows the influence of Anhalt's experience of the holocaust, is dedicated to four of his classmates at the Royal Hungarian Academy of Music, all of whom perished in the holocaust: László Gyopár, István Székely, Ödön Taubner, and László Weiner. It too is in ten movement-like sections, the third of which, "Labyrinth," evokes a nightmare scenario rather like the one that Anhalt himself experienced, though not quite as specific. The text reads in part "you keep running through tunnels, passageways, trying to escape from revolving doors, tapping, tapping the walls, stumbling on shadows, doubles, ancient refuse, all your own." As Anhalt notes in his commentary on the work, this section evokes "any and all threatening situations a person might have encountered in life. It symbolizes extreme danger, as well as a sudden liberation from it" [*Pathways and Memory*, p. 386].

The liberation, in Anhalt's case, was being admitted to Canada. As he told Paul Helmer, "The greatest gift Canada gave me was my landing card, to admit me, and that was the greatest gift that I ever received. I don't need any pats on the back in addition to that. That was an unearned credit given by this country to me. All the rest that I did could be regarded as a partial payback for that landing card." [*Growing with Canada*, p. 230]

2. *His intelligence*

Anhalt was educated at a *real-gimnázium* in Budapest, a school that combined the curriculum of the *gymnasium* with that of the *real-schule*: on the one hand, studies in Latin and ancient Greek as preparation for a career in the humanities; on the other, training in modern languages and science as education for the 'real world'. The secondary school that Anhalt attended (Dániel Berzsenyi Gimnázium) was not considered one of the top ones in Budapest, and in addition his academic record there was not outstanding. But the level of education in Budapest was extraordinarily high; minimum standards for secondary schools were set by law, and it was a fiercely competitive environment. A remarkably large number of highly accomplished intellectuals arose from the ranks of the middle class in Budapest during these years, and especially from the assimilated Jewish population. The number of Jews who could be admitted to university studies was restricted by law; ironically, this led to an improvement in academic achievement by this sector of the population. Young Jewish students realized they had to compete harder and achieve more outstanding results than others to gain access to a third-level education, and they rose to the challenge. Science and music were especially cultivated, as they provided excellent avenues of escape for young Jewish intellectuals wishing to emigrate. Among those who flourished in Budapest in the early twentieth century were Dennis Gabor, who invented the holograph; Leo Szilard and Edward Teller, who developed nuclear chain reactions and the atomic bomb; and John von Neumann, a brilliant mathematician whose contributions ranged from game theory to the development of digital computing. Musicians who came from this same milieu included the conductors Antal Dorati, Eugene Ormandy, Fritz Reiner, Georg Solti, and George Szell, all of whom emigrated to America.

Anhalt's educational mind-set was formed in this hothouse atmosphere, but the remarkable thing is that the trajectory begun there continued for the rest of his life. He was a voracious reader – he probably checked out more books from the Queen's University library system than anyone else in the history of that distinguished institution. He read widely across many disciplines, including anthropology, archaeology, history, linguistics, philosophy, and sociology. As Bill Benjamin noted in a tribute on the occasion of Anhalt's 90th birthday, Anhalt

has been “continually absorbed in new and challenging intellectual projects, in exploring bodies of writing that forced him to extend, even renovate his thinking.” Benjamin noted that “this intellectual curiosity is something he has always known how to keep in check, so that it didn’t become an end in itself but might instead be harnessed to artistic ends and made to serve music, that least ideological of the arts.” Indeed, Anhalt’s intelligence and his creativity were in constant dialogue throughout his lifetime. I will cite an example.

In the late 1950s, Anhalt became interested in the emerging compositional field of electronic music. Never one to do things by half measure, Anhalt returned to school, auditing courses in advanced mathematics and physics at McGill University to prepare for immersing himself in the world of electronic music. Next he travelled to all of the leading electronic music studios in the world: Hugh LeCaine’s studio at the National Research Council in Ottawa, Pierre Schaeffer’s studio in Paris, the Westdeutscher Rundfunk studio in Cologne, where Stockhausen was working, and the two leading US studios, Columbia-Princeton Electronic Music Center and Bell Telephone Laboratories in New Jersey. This research was put to creative and practical ends; creatively, in realizing his own electronic music compositions; practically, in founding the McGill electronic music studio in 1964.

It is in his contributions to music theory, though, that Anhalt’s intelligence was most in evidence. His central contribution in this field, notwithstanding a number of important essays on his own music and on that of other composers ranging from Bach to Beckwith, was his book *Alternative Voices: Essays on Contemporary Vocal and Choral Composition* (1984). As Friedemann Sallis notes, “there is a sense that [the book] was motivated by an underlying unease and dissatisfaction with the reigning theoretical work of the day.” [*Centre and Periphery, Roots and Exile*, p. 397] Based on his own ongoing creative exploration as a composer of the musical possibilities of the human voice, Anhalt in *Alternative Voices* examines a large amount of vocal and choral repertoire, most of it of then recent origin, which had puzzled other music theorists, to the extent that they considered such works at all. Drawing upon scholarship from anthropology, ethnomusicology, linguistics, mythology, narratology, philosophy, physiology of the voice, psychology, religious studies, sociology, and visual art, among other fields, with an extensive bibliography that cites the work of over 350 authors, Anhalt brings a wealth of new ideas and critical insights to bear on the works he studies. The book is a work of erudition and a contribution of lasting value to music theory, but it is also a personal manifesto about the value and importance of the human voice in an age saturated with technology.

3. *His career as a teacher*

Until the age of 65, most of Anhalt’s time was devoted to teaching theory and composition; his work as a composer was largely confined to the summer, and his compositional output before retirement, though important, was relatively slender. I do not know how his pedagogical ideas were formed. He certainly had important teachers to learn from as role models, including Zoltán Kodály in Budapest, and Nadia Boulanger in Paris. But he reacted strongly against both of those teachers. He did not share Kodály’s vision for the renewal of Hungarian music, feeling as he did cut off from Hungarian society at large. And while he respected Boulanger as a teacher, and was appreciative of what she had to offer, at the same time he realized she had no sympathy for his growing interest in the music of Schoenberg and his school, and learned to keep his studies of that repertoire to himself. Anhalt has written that “Kodály was very aloof, almost to the extent of being unapproachable, [whereas] Boulanger was very approachable, very warm, understanding and interested in the students.” [*Pathways and Memory*, 20] Curiously enough, Anhalt combined

those two approaches: in the classroom he could often be aloof and unapproachable himself, but to those who engaged with him one on one, he could be incredibly warm and encouraging.

In considering my own 45-year trajectory as a student of Anhalt – first studying under him, and later also studying him – I find myself searching for frameworks to put my pedagogical experience in some sort of context. Perhaps the network of his pupils could be thought of as something like a North Indian gharana, with Anhalt as the Khalifa. A gharana is a lineage or school of musicians related by the transmission of musical knowledge, or by blood – and indeed, Anhalt was a father figure to me, while he in turn called some of his pupils his musical sons. Bill Benjamin has written eloquently on several occasions about Anhalt as a teacher. In an essay that was published on the occasion of Anhalt's retirement from Queen's, Bill wrote:

There are obvious traits essential to good teaching: dedication, organization, deep understanding of the subject matter, and true involvement with the student. These he certainly had, but there was also his willingness – far from common – to roll up his sleeves and attend to the nuts and bolts of a student composition. Even more important, there was on his part a capacity to show genuine warmth, without favoritism, to those students whom he felt had begun to pay their dues.

Paying dues was certainly part of the price of admission to the Anhalt gharana. I paid mine during a fourth-year undergraduate class in the analysis of 20th-century music he taught at Queen's University in 1978. We students were frankly in awe of him. He was a polymath, fluent in several languages, a composer and theorist who published scholarly articles and corresponded with and knew personally many of the leading composers of his day. He definitely had more templates in his brain than the average academic.

There were about 20 students in the class to begin with, but less than half that number by the end. It was an intimidating experience to be in the classroom with Anhalt, and for most, the price of admission was too steep. He held us to Ivy League standards; we were all expected to devote a great many hours outside of the class time to reading and absorbing literature that was at an advanced graduate school level. In classroom discussion he could abruptly cut off a student if he felt that he or she was not making a useful contribution, interrupting in mid-sentence to resume control of the class. It was unclear to me at the time whether this was done out of social awkwardness, an autocratic desire to stay in control of the class, or a genuine perception that this was the best way to facilitate the learning process. There was no particular hostility involved; not once in my experience did he reprimand a student or raise his voice in anger. On one occasion this led to an amusing situation.

The class had been told to study Ligeti's *Nouvelles aventures* for three singers and seven instrumentalists. Anhalt asked us what we thought of the piece. The question was greeted with silence; we probably all had an opinion about the work, but not one that any of us wanted to state out loud. Finally one student, who usually did not have much to contribute to the class discussions, said "It sounds like a bunch of ape men grunting to me." Her remark was greeted by silence, and we waited in anxious anticipation of how Anhalt would respond. "Did anyone else think this?" he asked. Silence. "In the ten years that I have been teaching this piece, you are the first person to have said that," he began. We cast furtive, sympathetic glances at Nancy, fearing what was to follow... However to our surprise Anhalt continued with "That is the most profound insight I have ever had from a student, and in fact that is exactly what this piece is about – the emergence of semantic content in speech during an early phase of human development." Nancy had unwittingly stumbled upon the central thesis of chapter three of *Alternative Voices*. It was a teaching moment that none of us would forget.

As Bill Benjamin remarked, Anhalt did not play favorites – everyone was treated the same, and as the incident with that student demonstrates, he was quick to recognize and celebrate insights no matter how tentatively they were offered. Nor did he subscribe to a simplistic empty vessel theory of pedagogy; clearly, his vessel held a lot more water than ours did, and he did do a lot of pouring from it, but he encouraged us to seek out many other sources of water – from recordings, articles, books, and from each other. He demanded that we take the course seriously, accord the subject matter our full respect, and devote our best efforts to it both in the classroom and outside of it. Informed discussion of big ideas and difficult readings was the central activity in the course. There was nothing vague or wishy washy about his pedagogy: you either were pulling your weight in his class or you were not. The atmosphere could be a bit forbidding at times, but in every class there was a genuine sense of wonder and discovery. And to those who showed promise and put the required effort into their studies, he was absolutely unstinting in his support.

George Steiner, in his book *Lessons of the Masters*, derived from the Charles Eliot Norton Lectures he gave at Harvard, offers a panoptic survey of great teaching, from ancient times to the present, citing examples from Socrates to Heidegger. He notes that being a professor “spans every conceivable nuance from making a routine, disenchanting living to an exalted sense of vocation.” [1] He outlines three types of student-teacher relationship. The first two are poisonous: in the first kind, the teacher destroys the student psychologically, while in the second the tables are turned and the pupils subvert and ruin their teacher. But Steiner’s third category consists of a reciprocal learning relationship, based on trust and, indeed, love. “The intensity of the dialogue generates friendship in the highest sense. It can enlist both the clear-sightedness and unreason of love.” Of the three scenarios Steiner proposes, I know that I am not alone among Anhalt’s students in having experienced the third type of scenario – a life-long reciprocal relationship that was based on mutual respect, deep friendship, and love.

4. His music will endure

Anhalt came relatively late to music; he began piano lessons at age six, but these were abandoned when he was twelve and he did not return to the serious study of music until he was sixteen. He was certainly no child prodigy, but by his late teens his musical worldview was essentially formed – there was a set of core values in place that remained with him throughout his life, to be added to continuously but never abandoned. His musical creativity was always shaped, guided, and refined by his intellect. A charming example of this is an incident that he relates when, as a little child, he brought a knife to the piano to insert the blade into the crack between adjacent keys to find the sound that must be hidden there. He was disappointed by the resulting dull sound, but in a sense his career as a composer could be said to have been foreshadowed by this child-like experiment.

Notwithstanding his fine contributions to music theory, his eminence as a pedagogue, and his important achievements as a university administrator, I believe it is his work as a composer that will keep Anhalt’s name alive. This may seem a preposterous prediction, arising from an outmoded and old-fashioned concept of the lasting value of ‘great’ music, an idea that lost its relevance sometime in the twentieth century. Against that charge, I can only cite my personal experience by way of refutation. The more scholarship I read about music, the more I realize that it is all destined to be consigned to the dustbins of history, while the music itself endures. Of course, not all music endures – much of it too will be forgotten, perhaps never to be revived. But all other factors aside, good music has a much better chance of enduring than good scholarship. *Ars longa, scholastica brevis.*

Anhalt's entire output is not large – there are about three dozen works, completed over a period of 60 years from 1947 to 2007. Played through back to back, the entire oeuvre would last about twelve hours in duration – shorter than Wagner's *Ring* cycle. I classify about two dozen of these compositions as major works and the rest as shorter pieces or juvenalia. Of the two dozen major works, half were written after the age of 65 in retirement. With the exception of *Symphony of Modules* (1967), a massive work that will possibly never be performed, all of his music received notable premieres, but only a few works have been performed more than once. Three of his four electronic compositions and eight of his other works have been recorded, and ten other pieces can now be heard online via streaming audio through the Canadian Music Centre's [Centrestreams](#) service.

In his student years in Budapest and Paris, Anhalt worked through the influences of Stravinsky and Bartók in a handful of early instrumental works, some no longer in circulation. His first important works date from the early 1950s, not long after his arrival in Montreal in 1949: an atonal Piano Trio and three notable twelve-tone works: a Violin Sonata, the Fantasia for piano recorded by Glenn Gould in 1967, and the Symphony of 1958. These four works all contributed to Anhalt's reputation as the 'heavyweight among Canadian composers' (as Udo Kasemets wrote in *Contemporary Canadian Composers* in 1975). The Symphony is the most complex of the four, as detailed in an extraordinary 65-page analysis by Bill Benjamin in the book *Pathways and Memory* [pp. 169–233].

Anhalt's interest in electronic music resulted in four compositions, and tape parts for four other works: *Cento*, *Foci*, *La Tourangelle*, and the Symphony of Modules. The tape parts for this last work were never realized, which is one of the reasons why it has not yet been and perhaps never will be performed. As his confidence in the potential of electronic music waned, his interest in the manifold expressive possibilities of the human voice moved centre stage. This interest resulted in his book *Alternative Voices*, but also in numerous compositions, including *Cento* for 12 speakers and tape, *Foci* for soprano, chamber ensemble, and tape, *Thisness* for mezzo-soprano and piano, and his first two operatic works: *La Tourangelle* and *Winthrop* – these works occupied him from the late 1960s to the mid-1980s. During this period, his musical idiom underwent a significant change. After his move to Kingston, his music began to diverge from the high modernist stream and to find its way to an idiom that is concerned with the spinning out of musical ideas that can be followed, memorized, and anticipated. There were a number of reasons for this change of style: his relative isolation in Kingston from the musical avant garde, his friendship with the late George Rochberg, and perhaps most importantly, his growing interest in his Jewish heritage, which made him want to communicate musical ideas in a more concrete way, with music functioning as a symbolic language that is historically grounded, culturally encoded, and accessible to non-specialist audiences. This new idiom was firmly in place by the mid-1980s and resulted in his final ten important works: the last two operatic works, *Traces (Tikkun)* and *Millennial Mall* (1996 and 1999), a string quartet movement titled *Doors ... Shadows* written in memory of Glenn Gould in 1992, and a series of seven orchestral works written between 1987 and 2007. I would like to close with some brief comments on a movement from *Four Portraits from Memory*, Anhalt's final work, which exists in two versions, one for solo piano, and another for a small orchestra of 26 players.

The second of the *Four Portraits* was completed in its piano version on 6 June 2005. The full title of the movement is "Dirge (a song of mourning and incomprehension) for George Rochberg ... a soul-brother". As a memorial tribute from one composer to another, this dirge can be placed in a long and distinguished lineage, from Ockeghem's tombeau on the death of Binchois and Josquin's lament on the death of Ockeghem, on up to such recent examples as

Arvo Pärt's *Cantus* in memory of Benjamin Britten, Alexina Louie's *O Magnum Mysterium: In Memoriam Glenn Gould* and beyond.

We now know a great deal about the relationship between George Rochberg and Anhalt, thanks to *Eagle Minds* (2007), Alan Gillmor's superb edition of their selected correspondence between the years 1961 and 2005. The two men met at an International Conference of Composers that was held in Stratford, Ontario in 1960, and quickly struck up a friendship that was to endure up until Rochberg's death on 29 May 2005. As Rebecca Marchand noted in her [review](#) of the book, their correspondence provides "a tapestry of intellectual worldviews intertwined with spiritual investigations, personal suffering, and aesthetic introspection." Given Rochberg's strong influence on the style of Anhalt's late works, it was wonderfully appropriate that Anhalt should compose a dirge in memory of his dear friend as one of his own final compositional efforts. Anhalt's *Four Portraits from Memory* are acts of homage, but also reflections on death and bereavement, life and art, tradition and imagination. In the dirge for George Rochberg, the two opening notes – repeated D half notes two octaves apart, each with a fermata – set the tone for the movement. The character of this initial musical gesture invokes the idea of a ritual; by reducing the musical materials to a level of elemental simplicity, Anhalt invites us to turn our thoughts inwards, to reflect upon the past, and to take our time as we commemorate the dead. In this movement, Anhalt creates a masterful synthesis of Rochberg's musical style with his own, uniting his personal musical idiom with that of his dear departed friend. It is a moving and poignant statement, and all the more so now that Anhalt himself has died. I look forward to a forthcoming Centrediscs release, in which the Victoria-based musician Ajtony Csaba conducts the orchestral version of *Four Portraits from Memory*, as well as the work that Anhalt wrote immediately before it, ... *the timber of those times* ... (*... a theogony* ...). It will be a fitting tribute to mark the centennial year of Anhalt's birth. The CD will be released in June of this year.

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