

Suburb
Style editor
Deborah
Warland,
talks to
residents
about some
of their
favourite
things



Deborah
Warland



SUBURB

Composer

featuring David Matthews

Sitting in a charming garden in Temple Fortune Hill sipping a refreshing cup of tea, made by the gentleman himself, it is difficult to believe that I am in the company of one of our country's leading composers of classical music. Indeed, David is so modest that it takes a good deal of persuasion to prise out of him his many professional achievements; which include composing four concertos, numerous vocal works, four symphonic poems, six symphonies and eleven string quartets! It is the String Quartet No 11 Op 108 which has its world première next month at the Proms at St Jude's on Wednesday 17th June. His works have been performed by leading orchestras and ensembles worldwide and many are available on CD.

David and his wife Jenifer, who is a child psychotherapist, have lived on the Suburb since 2002. She was on a course in our area when she happened to look in an estate agent's window and saw the property they now live in. They looked at the house, relished its proximity to the Heath Extension and Bigwood, and decided that it would be ideal for them. If you are an early Suburb riser you may see David in either of these locations – striding very purposefully – as his ideas for composition 'come from walking not sitting'. He

loves the Suburb's trees, quietness and pleasing aesthetics – plus the proximity to the centre of London – but worries (like so many residents that I have interviewed) about the number of cars and the anti-social driving of some.

When not living here David can be found at his house in Deal or travelling the world. Australia is a favourite because of his friendship with the composer Peter Sculthorpe with whom he has been collaborating since 1972. He also finds his trips to Finland and Russia interesting because he can observe 'the take' they have on his work which is a musical style they are unfamiliar with. He always takes his sketchbook but finds there is never enough time to pursue this interest properly.

I asked him whether, in his experience, he felt that conductors and musicians were intimidated performing in front of the composer. He said that once musicians were at ease with him they found it stimulating and one thing that he always made very clear was that 'I write for musicians'. He added that he had never had the urge to wrest the baton from the hand of a maestro conducting his work because he didn't have that particular gift. He added that many composers who 'took up the baton' should not have done so, however one who was superb in the role was Benjamin Britten. In fact Britten was the first composer that David met and he became an apprentice in his studio, watching how he worked and learning how a composer functioned. David went on to say, "I didn't quite realise at the time that I could not have had a better example, and that this was invaluable training for a composer." In fact David went on to write books about both Britten and Michael Tippett.

David's String Quartet No 11 was commissioned by Proms at St Jude's with the support of the Britten-Pears foundation and will be performed by the Carducci string quartet who he has enjoyed working with before. It is a set of thirteen variations on Beethoven's (David's 'god' of composers) Bagatelle in C. He is currently working on his 7th symphony which will be performed by the BBC Philharmonic next March.



Only Fresh Fish

Special Offer

Homemade bread
+
Fish Soup
+
Whole Grilled Sea Bass
served with Salad

only £8.95

offer ends 31/01/10

www.fish-fish.co.uk

179 Archway Road, Highgate, London, N6 5BN
020 8348 3121

30 Temple Fortune Parade, Finchley Road,
Golders Green, NW11 0QS
020 8458 2375

SUBURB

Fundraiser

featuring Silvia Pace

