

My Sister's Tears

Email responses from across the globe

"colin.touchin@ntlworld.com" <colin.touchin@ntlworld.com>
22/06/2007 03:50 AM

Hi there Ralph - spurred into immediate action, I've now got the disc and your music is very moving and impressive - it isn't really appropriate to say well done for the creation of works in such circumstances, but you must be rightly proud of these achievements, testaments to the spirits of those no longer here, but who will live on through such powerful expression. I wrote a chamber work following a friend's suicide "Pale Cast of Thought" (a bit of text from the famous "To be or not to be" soliloquy) and feel calmed and partially healed through the process of distilling unspeakable thoughts into expressible musical shapes. We are fortunate to be able to express this way something which otherwise has no release. I'll be with the Derbyshire staff on Sunday and ask if they might consider one of these for our 2007/8 programmes - I'd love to work with a baritone, several excellent options, and voice and band is much under-used so it'd be a fulfilling combination to include in our season. Will let you know how we do. Wishing you all all the best, Colin.

From: <CElledge@kjos.com>
To: <Ralphwho@smartchat.net.au>
Sent: Tuesday, July 12, 2005 7:03 AM
Subject: MY SISTER'S TEARS

Dear Ralph,

I hope you and your family are doing well and that your newest grandchild is close to delivery, if not already here!

I apologize for taking so long to respond to your letter and kind submission of MY SISTER'S TEARS. My Father passed away on June 29, following roughly a decade of battling Alzheimer's and Parkinson's, and more recently, severe leg ulcers. My Mom and I were so fortunate to be with him at his bedside when he died. I feel like I finally have my Dad back since he is with God, and I can share with him again. For so many years, because of his dementia, our communication was severely limited.

Despite our loss here, I cannot begin to imagine the feelings you must have about your sister and the way she passed. My deepest condolences to you and your family. As you said in your note, God's goodness far exceeds anything we can begin to imagine, let alone understand. I know you find great hope and comfort in that truth, as do I. You are in my prayers, as are your niece and sister, and entire family.

MY SISTER'S TEARS is a beautiful expression of love and faith. I know every note is from your heart. Thank you for allowing me to experience it.

Is it OK for me to share MY SISTER'S TEARS with the other editors here, and consider it for possible publication? Unfortunately, we would not be able to make a final publication decision until next spring. We are instituting an annual review cycle, and March and/or April are the months in which we conduct the major segment of our reviews. Is that time frame OK with you, or would you prefer to consider other options? I certainly understand if you would.

Please greet your family for me. I'm looking forward to seeing all of you in Chicago.

Thank you again for sharing your heart, and your art, with me. You are a true blessing to all of us in the music world.

With deepest admiration,

Chuck Elledge

"Marianne Halder" <mariannehalder@web.de>

Sent by: mariannehalder@web.de

19/02/2008 04:48 AM

Ralph!

I hope you're well, too!

I worked on your composition „My sister's tears“ and studied the score, listened to the music. I have no words. I'm overwhelmed. And I really could cry that I have NO BAND for to conduct such an incredible music.

All the best, marian

Marianne Halder

Dirigentin, Klarinettistin, Sangerin/

Conductor-Clarinetist-Vocalist

Treasurer of WASBE "World Association of Symphonic Bands and Ensembles"

Unter Nank 32/4, D-72461 Albstadt

Fon +49 / 7432 / 980 377

Fax +49 / 7432 / 980 376

e-mail: mariannehalder@web.de

www.mariannehalder.de

"Natahsha Briallan FOX" <18294@clayfield.qld.edu.au> (Young Con student)

08/06/2008 08:38 PM

Dear Mr Hultgren,

Thank you very much for letting me listen to those compositions, they were amazing. In particular, your doctorate piece, which I could see the pictures you painted with the instrumentation etc. I read the composer's notes before I listened to both of your pieces and I have to say, however I can't find the right words at the moment, that I

was overwhelmed with sadness for you for many reasons. Not only was it the loss of someone very special to you but it's scary to think that I celebrate my birthday the day before you mourn a loss and not only that but I remember my birthday in 2003 more vividly than any other which struck me the most when reading your notes. As you know, I also have a little brother who is 9 years younger than me, whom I'd do anything for. I think that your story has made me become more aware of him and his well-being just that little bit more and I want to thank you. You've helped me to value my family a lot more and not to take them for granted. I know that this may not be very important and I don't know if I should have said anything on the subject but for some reason I felt it necessary

Again, thank you very much for everything and have a good holiday!

Natahsha

Email from Bruce Pearson (USA) 27 July 2005

Hi Mate,

Dee and I arrived home safely two weeks ago and are finally feeling as though we are over the jet lag. I know you and Julie can relate to jet lag. We really enjoyed our time with you and we look forward to spending more time with you in our home in December.

After completing many of the household chores that have accumulated over the last month, we start our grandchildren's Cousins Camp on Thursday. We're getting tired already - just thinking about it. I know now why God wanted parents to be young.

Speaking of grandchildren how is your newest addition? How is Megan doing? The picture you sent us was terrific!

How is your son, Luke doing? We pray for him daily. We have no news regarding our son, Chad. His lawyer keeps telling him that it will be over soon. We pray that that will be true.

I spent the evening listening to the recording of your June 3rd concert. You have a fine band and Matt did a good job with them. My Sister's Tears brought me to tears for I felt your anguish and sorrow. Ralph, that piece is terrific. Bravo, mate! I've attached a new and improved Listener Response Pro Forma with this e-mail. I hope you find it helpful.

Please give Julie, your kids and grandkids a big hug from Dee and me.

With love,

Bruce

Lara Jensen (QCGU student) email 31 May 2004

Thank-you Ralph for an awesome season of Wind Symph!!!!

I had an absolute ball and as usual, learnt many invaluable lessons. Even though I may not show my appreciation as much as I should, I'd like you to know that you're an excellent teacher, conductor and composer.

I was extremely moved by "My Sister's Tears" and I'm sorry for your loss. It's an incredible work and some of the harmonies are heart-wrenching. It is indeed a beautiful piece of music.

I'm in the process of completing my Large Instrumental Ensemble assignment and was wondering if you could send me some details on the recordings left in the library please. (i.e. conductors, ensembles and dates of recordings.)

It's Emma's birthday today. Have you seen her lately? How is she?

I hope that you and your family are surviving winter without too many ails.

Have a wonderful day,

Lara Jensen

Email from Ron Johnson re MST

1 April 2009

Thanks, Ralph . . . I did not think the printed score was correct.

In one of those "cosmic moments in time" . . . in the past few days, several of the students in the Wind Symphony have been having loved ones die. Grandparents, cousins, brothers, sisters . . . one attempted suicide. So, your music is having a profound effect on many kids. Sometimes, they leave rehearsal as the pain becomes too great. Thanks for that.

Ron

M Ellerby <martin.ellerby@btinternet.com>

14/10/2008 03:59 AM

Dear Ralph,

Today I received the 'Heather' pack - thought at first it might be my Australian royalties but then we all dream on, especially in today's global financial crisis...!

Well, I've read through and you have my permission to use my little mention - I appreciate the courtesy of this.

The thing is I don't really think I've understood before just how this has torn you up. I hope that the university will understand the unique research process that led to and beyond the composition of *My Sister's Tears* and that you will not be accused of sentimentality and an over-personal distraction in your submission. The 'art-of-grieving' that I am

perceiving in this brings tears to my own eyes. If only you were not so far away physically I'm sure we'd hug for England and Aus in equal measure. Of course, you know me well enough to know that there are no borders big and broad enough to separate us spiritually and this is indeed an element of a love that most people trapped in insecurity and self doubt never find. Your flowing emotions touch a broad audience but I would implore you to resolve this issue - a burnt out Hultgren is not what you deserve to become: a mature and experienced one is acceptable. You are not allowed to lose that 'digging' smile and that humour that is born out of the joy of life. True, some of us can't take the little bits and pieces that make up the whole, and things have a tendency to overwhelm us at times, often with tragic conclusions. BUT, your sister's passing is not a guilt you should dwell upon - you have done the decent-composer-thing and shared your feelings through a very special and precious means of mass communication - ORGANISED SOUND. Therefore you have become 'universal' and isn't that what God (who he?) is?

I could go on...

However, I am proud to have recognised so immediately the underlying, somewhat deceptively simple (not simplistic) strength of *My Sister's Tears* and that I could have played a part in publishing and recording it gives me much personal satisfaction - 'cos it was worthy broth!

In closing (just about) I am aware of the other works that are still with me with a view to publishing and recording. As far as I am concerned they can still go ahead. My problem has been the future of Graham Jones at the Coldstream Guards. Well, I can report that he's now a full Lt Col which means in musical terms he's only got equals and none of those seniors pushing him down. I will pursue the project of a second volume with him including your works (*Joshua* and the trombone work) as I know he's up for it as is Stan to fund it. I'm so pissed off I never got that symphony from you - but I'll have to live with that...

We're both coming to the MidWest this year and in fact have three weeks in the States: Cincinnati University, 2 unis in Los Angeles, A couple of days in Dallas cos I've promised it to the Grassy Knoll for years (!) then Chicago where we'll all be together again. I think Nigel is definitely coming and maybe Kit is.

So, all that's left for now is to pass on my love to all the family and await our reunion in the Windy City!

As ever,

Martin