

Shostakovich

BY AUBREY WILLIAMS



AN EXHIBITION OF NEW PAINTINGS 20 October - 15 November

3rd Symphony;
opus: 20
82" x 52"
for orchestra and
chorus (poetry by
Semyon Kirsanov).

Photography:
Martin Proctor,
Senior Photographer,
Commonwealth Institute

Commonwealth Institute
Kensington High Street, W8

Introduction

It has now been some years since Aubrey Williams exhibited in London and it would have been a good thing to see his most recent work simply to keep in touch with the continuing development of an important artist. These Shostakovich paintings are a revelation.

They have all been painted in the same burst of inspiration and creativity. They relate to each other and to a strong central theme. It is rare to have an exhibition which is so much a unity. The paintings express Aubrey Williams' passionate involvement with Dimitri Shostakovich - not simply with his music but with the whole process of his life and his struggle as an artist within the context of the Russian Revolution and the great political events of the first half of the twentieth century in Europe. For Aubrey Williams Shostakovich through his music expresses feelings of profound relevance to an individual attempting to come to terms with the violence and the frustration and the idealism of our times.

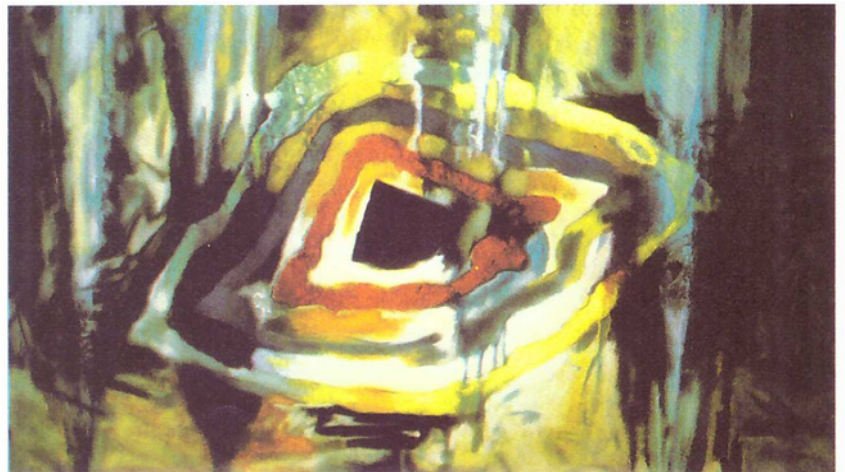
There is a long and on the whole rather vapid and undistinguished history of artists experimenting in the transference of ideas from one art form to another. This is decidedly not the way to approach these paintings. They are not "translations" of individual symphonies and quartets into a visual form of the music. Aubrey Williams looks behind the music so that he can use for his paintings the same source of inspiration that Shostakovich used for his music.

ROBERT ATKINS,
Arts Director,
Commonwealth Institute

7th Quartet;
opus: 108
82" x 52"



12th Quartet;
opus: 133
82" x 52"



The symphonies and quartets of Dimitri Shostakovich - Paintings

Over the years of producing these paintings, I have been asked the question with increasing regularity - Shostakovich?

To me, this is like asking Dimitri Shostakovich why did he use themes from Shakespeare, Lorca, Michelangelo, Rilke, Burns and Appolinaire, etc., in the production of his inspired music.

On hearing the finale of the first symphony of Dimitri 35 years ago I realized a sonic connection with a new well-spring of this state of human consciousness we call ART. I have been involved with this music with an intensity that has grown over the years since that time.

When Shostakovich died, I had been working on a visual expression of his music on and off for over five years and had three of the symphonies culled from my many attempts. I had already gone through a very frustrating period of endless experiment during which I had tried a colour notation (having discarded one of form), then the idea of notation itself was discarded, and rightly so as I seemed to be attempting to rewrite the music in visual terms. By this time, I was lost in a miasma of structural rendition, rather Cubistic in aspect - a cerebral consideration on canvas far removed from the rich humanity and surrealistic mystery of the man's music. I trust that I have now answered the WHY and the WHEN - I will now attempt to deal with the HOW.

This TRACT, EXPLANATION, PROLOGUE or whatever one might care to call it is against all that I hold sacred in ART, and is done out of a sense of duty to the public.

Respect has always been paid to the inherent disciplines within the music. In many cases particularly in the quartets, the four parts of the musical development are blatantly visual but never I trust to the point of total dominance of the picture plane.

I am not naive nor arrogant enough to think that any sensitive person looking at these paintings would automatically *feel music*. If Beethoven did not name a movement of his Pastoral symphony "Storm", if Debussy did not name a tone "La Mer" - in the case of Beethoven one might have thought on hearing the music - a war? a quarrell? or maybe a storm? and regarding Debussy, many things. If I should ask a stranger unconnected with ART what do these paintings make you feel and he should answer *Music*, I would be greatly surprised! I know that it is nearly impossible to succeed in an attempt to transpose sense function - to hear light, to taste sound, etc.

This series of paintings has sprung from my growing admiration for one whom I have come to think of - and deeply feel - has been a supreme human being, the greatest composer of my time and one of the noblest patriots Russia has ever produced.

AUBREY WILLIAMS
May 1981

Biographical note

AUBREY WILLIAMS was born in 1926 in Guyana, where he was educated and worked in the Civil Service. During service in the North West jungle of Guyana, he lived with the Warrau, a primitive Indian Tribe, for two years. During this time intense application in art work was maintained.

On return to city life, Williams studied first with De Winter and then with Burrowes (Guyanese Painters) and participated in the Working Peoples' Art Group.

Williams came to Europe in 1952 and travelled extensively. He settled in London in 1954 where he studied at St. Martins College of Art. He continues to work, lecture and live in London at the present time.

Williams is a lecturer in Fine Art (Painting) Exeter College of Art, Devon, England, and the Camden Arts Centre, London.

He has lectured at the following Universities:

St. Catherine's College
Van Mildert College
Rutherford College
Elliot College
Oxford University
Durham University
Kent University
University of York, England
University of the West Indies, Jamaica
University of Guyana

and various Institutions, Associations and Art gatherings.

HONOURS

The Golden Arrow of Achievement, Guyana, 1970
The Cross of Merit of St. Anthony of the Desert, 1980

AWARDS

Real Aula Mallorquesa seu Esquela Miramar, 1979
Dip. Distinzione — Premio D'Italia
Accademia Italia delle Arti e del Lavoro, (Nomination as "Academic of Italy with Gold Medal"), 1980
Chevalier du Tres St. Sauveur

PRIZES WON

Commonwealth Prize for Painting, London, 1964

Exhibitions

One Man Shows (Oils)

Archer Gallery, London	1954
New Vision Centre, London	1958
Ferens Art Gallery, London	1958
Blanden Art Gallery	1958
Peterborough Museum	1958
Cavendish Gallery, Dublin	1958
Redcliffe Gallery	1958
Galleries Collette Allendy, Paris	1958
Portal Gallery, London	1958
Contemporary Art Society, London	1959
A.I.A. Art Gallery	1960
Towner Art Gallery	1960

Gallery Caravan, New York	1961
The Walcheturm, Switzerland	1961
Irish Living Art, Dublin	1962
Grabowski Gallery	1963
Gallery Pater, Milan, Italy	1964
Commonwealth Institute, London	1964
Richmond Hill Gallery, London	1967
Expo 67 Administration Building, Canada	1967
House of Commons, London	1968
Royal Albert Memorial Museum, Exeter	1969
John Peartree Gallery, Jamaica	1970
Camden Arts Centre, London	1971
Nicholas Treadwell Gallery, London	1972
Carifesta, Festival of the Creative Arts, Guyana	1972
Chicago	1972
Olympia International Arts Centre, Jamaica	1974
Barry Watson Gallery, Jamaica	1976
Festival of the Arts, Lagos, Nigeria	1977
Coral Reef Murals, Wiltshire	1978
Dalhousie Murals, Nova Scotia, Canada	1978

Touring Exhibitions

ONE MAN SHOWS

Sussex University	1967
Oxford University	1967
Kent University	1967
Durham University	1967

GROUP SHOWS

Commonwealth Institute	1977
Museum of Modern Art, San Francisco	1960
Glasgow University	1968
York University	1968

Dutch Informal Group	1968
Hessenhuis, Antwerp	1968
de Warende, Gent	1968
Gallery Ores, The Hague	1968
Gallery 31, Dordrecht, Holland	1968
Leyden University	1968
Gallery Glassin, Kassel, Germany	1968
Contemporary African Painting, Nigeria	1970
San Paulo Bienally (XI) Brazil	1973

Important Purchases

Arts Council of Great Britain
 Royal Albert Memorial Museum
 York Art Museum
 Booker Bros. McConnel & Co., Bucklersbury House, London
 Guyana House of Assembly
 British Broadcasting Corporation
 University of the West Indies, Jamaica
 St. Catherine's College, Oxford
 Elliot College, Kent University
 Rutherford College, Kent University
 University of York
 Van Mildert College, Durham University
 Sussex University
 Tuesday Magazine, Boardroom, Chicago
 Olympia Art Centre, A.D. Scott, Jamaica (collection)
 Skopje, Yugoslavia
 Guyana Museum, Colgrain House, Guyana
 Jamaica House, Jamaica
 Museum of Arts, (New Building), Rio de Janero

Commissions

City of York Art Gallery	"Heraldry at York"
Airport Mural, Guyana	"Timehri"
Guyana Museum	"Revolt Guyana"
Guyana Museum	Mythological Murals
Guyana Museum	Guyana Collection
Rice Marketing Board of Guyana	"Apotheosis of Rice"
Wiltshire, England	Mural
San Francisco	Mural
Olympia Art Centre, Jamaica	Mural
Chicago	Mural
Jamaica (Guyana High Commission)	Mural
Dalhousie, Nova Scotia	Mural
London	Portrait, His Serene Excellency Baron Bradford of Kani

ATV
TV

"Music Hall"
"UFO" MGM

Also paintings used by many advertising companies, including Rayant Films, Presbury Films, Gerry Poulson, Natural Break, NHS Ltd., Augusta Productions

Still Photographers: Terrence Donovan, David Franklin, Michael McCarthy Productions

Works featured in films, television and still photography – 1976-77

ATV Series	"The Strange Report" with Anthony Quale, Transcontinental Films, Pinewood Studios, England
ATV	"Journey to the Unknown" MGM
ATV	"Up She Goes" Millicent Martin
ATV	"Father Dear Father" T.T.L.
ATV	"Carry On Again Doctor" Rank Film
ATV	"Tiger Trap" Play



8th Quartet;
opus: 110
82" x 52"
chamber symphony



5th Symphony;
opus: 47
109" x 72"

Shostakovich Quartets

1st Quartet;
opus: 49
82" x 52"

2nd Quartet;
opus: 68
82" x 52"

3rd Quartet;
opus: 73
82" x 52"

4th Quartet;
opus: 83
82" x 52"

5th Quartet;
opus: 92
82" x 52"

6th Quartet;
opus: 101
82" x 52"

7th Quartet;
opus: 108
82" x 52"

8th Quartet;
opus: 110
82" x 52"
chamber symphony

9th Quartet;
opus: 117
82" x 52"

10th Quartet;
opus: 118
82" x 52"

11th Quartet;
opus: 122
82" x 52"

12th Quartet;
opus: 133
82" x 52"

13th Quartet;
opus: 138
82" x 52"

14th Quartet;
opus: 172
82" x 52"
state prize of the
RSFSR, 1974.

15th Quartet;
opus: 177
82" x 52"

1st Symphony;
opus: 10
104" x 64"

2nd Symphony;
opus: 17
82" x 52"
with chorus to the
poetry of Alexander
Bezhemsky.

3rd Symphony;
opus: 20
82" x 52"
for orchestra and
chorus (poetry by
Semyon Kirsanov).

4th Symphony;
opus: 43
104" x 64"

5th Symphony;
opus: 47
109" x 72"

6th Symphony;
opus: 54
104" x 64"

7th Symphony;
opus: 60
104" x 64"

Symphonies

8th Symphony;
opus: 65
108" x 68"
honorary member of
the American
Academy and
Institute of Arts and
Letters.

9th Symphony;
opus: 70
72" x 60"

10th Symphony;
opus: 93
96" x 64"

11th Symphony;
opus: 103
104" x 61"
Lenin prize, 1958.

12th Symphony;
opus: 112
96" x 64"

13th Symphony;
opus: 113
108" x 68"
(Babi Yar) for bass,
bass choir and
orchestra to the
poetry of Yevgeny
Yevtushenko.

14th Symphony;
opus: 135
104" x 60"
for soprano, bass
and chamber
orchestra to the
poems of Lorca,
Apollinaire,
Kukhelbecker and
Rilke. Mozart
Memorial Medal of
the Mozart society,
Vienna.

15th Symphony;
opus: 171
104" x 65"
Order of the
October Revolution.
'Great Star of the
Friendship Among
Peoples' in gold.
Honorary Doctorate
in music, Trinity
College, Dublin.

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