
Obituary: David Huntley

David V. Huntley, Vice President of the Serious Music Division of Boosey & Hawkes Inc. since 1986, died on 1 July at the Cabrini Medical Center in Manhattan, after a long illness which he had endured with great courage.

Born in 1947 in the farming community of Phoenix in upstate New York, he studied music history and flute at the State University of New York at Potsdam, and musicology and opera direction at Indiana University. He joined Boosey & Hawkes, Inc. in 1976, becoming Promotion Manager in 1980. From that year he also served as a member of the Performance Committee of the Music Publishers Association of the United States, and chaired the committee for several years. He was an artistic advisor to the New York City Ballet for its American Music Festival of April-May 1988.

Gangling, engagingly ironic and tirelessly interested in the obscurer reaches of 20th-century repertoire, David Huntley was a minute and enthusiastic reader of Tempo, as of so much contemporary musical literature. Known throughout the US musical world as a sturdy advocate for contemporary music and astute spotter of new talent, he was instrumental in bringing about Boosey & Hawkes's associations with, among others, John Adams, Louis Andriessen, Stephen Mackey, Steve Reich, Christopher Rouse and Michael Torke. He was the dedicatee of a number of celebrated modern works, including David Del Tredici's Tattoo and the Violin Concerto of John Adams, who added in his programme note for the work that 'American composers have few better friends'.

On the day of David Huntley's death the British composer and conductor Oliver Knussen was moved to write this tribute:

David Huntley was one of the rare people whose enthusiasm for the music he cared about and the composers who wrote it far exceeded his professional duties. A meeting with David was

invariably the welcome pretext for a joyous exchange of information about music recently encountered and ideas about everything from 19th-century American painters to animated cartoon soundtracks to the latest Elliott Carter, all informed by his acute sense for quality and his unique sense of humour. I am happy that he lived to hear the recording of Copland's newly-found ballet *Grohg*, the fulfilment of a project which he nurtured from its inception and which concerned a composer whose music was particularly dear to David.

And let a critic pay tribute to a friend sore-missed. Through my years as a New York music critic, he was a companion, guide, and fellow-enthusiast. He won critics' trust and their affection. He knew their particular tastes, and also their disrelishings. He never urged me to attend an event that I regretted, nor hesitated on occasion to say 'Oh, don't bother to go, it's not really for you'. From a practical point of view he was a critic's dream: scores, tapes, foreign reviews, background material were always forthcoming when one wanted them; but there was no bombardment. He was patient with my impatience at some modish trends. But when he told me of some new young composer (not necessarily a Boosey composer) whose work he thought might interest me, it always did. We shared a fondness for drawing up detailed performance annals of pieces we cared about. David was kind, keen, loyal, acute, wide-ranging, and good company.

Andrew Porter