



Robert Baksa

February 7, 1938 - June 24, 2023

Robert Baksa

Born in New York City February 7, 1938, he died in Hudson, New York on June 24, 2023

following a short illness.

As one of America's most prolific composers, Robert Baksa composed over six hundred

instrumental and keyboard works as well as art songs, choral music, and operas. His works are

available on CD at Amazon, Presto Music, and in streaming form on Apple Music and Spotify.

Recently, his setting of Emily Dickinson's "Heart, We Will Forget Him" was recorded by Sandrine

Piau (soprano) on the Alpha Classics label, as well as by Patricia Petibon on Sony. Susan Manoff

played piano on both albums. Ms. Piau performed Mr. Baksa's songs at Wigmore Hall, London,

in July 2018 to critical acclaim. His Octet for Woodwinds, Quintet for Flute and Strings, and

Nonet for Winds and Strings, all performed by the Bronx Arts Ensemble, are popularly played on

classical radio stations.

Robert was born to Hungarian immigrants in New York City. The family moved

to Tucson,
Arizona where he attended the University of Arizona earning a B.A. in
composition. He began
writing music as a teenager and studied with Henry Johnson, Robert McBride,
and Lucas Foss.
Having won several competitions early on, he went on to receive a Martha
Baird Rockefeller
grant, and a Lincoln Center commission. His popular compositions include
Chamber Concerto
for 4 Winds and Strings; Song Cycles of A.E. Housman, Emily Dickinson, and
Ambrose Bierce;
Nine Shakespearian Madrigals; Herrick Songs for Vocal Quartet with Piano;
Seven Choral
Anthems; and Five Canzonas for Brass Quintet.
Besides Mmes Piau and Petibon, his works have been performed by
harpsichordist Elaine
Comparone, saxophonist Paquito D’Rivera, Sharon Robinson, The Boehm
Quintette, and the St.
Luke’s Chamber Ensemble.
His short opera Red Carnations was revived in 2009 by Walking the Dog
Theater and performed
at the Basilica Hudson. His major operatic work, Aria da Capo was based on a
play by Edna St.
Vincent Millay. Mr. Baksa’s works are listed on ASCAP and published by Tetra
Music
Corporation and Theodore Presser Company. All of his manuscripts have
been endowed to the
University of Arizona.
Compared with other contemporary classical music composers, Mr. Baksa
eschewed
modernism and worked in a classical style with formal ties to the eighteenth

century. The combination of modern harmonies with classical melodic contours is reminiscent of Richard Strauss, Mr. Baksa's favorite composer. In addition to his dedication to music, Mr. Baksa's varied interests included cartoon illustration, a keen knowledge of astrology, and a witty, pun-filled use of language. He is survived by his sister, Nancy Kennedy, of Richmond, VA. A memorial is being organized and will be held at a later date.