

## Meine Werke sind meine Kinder - My works are my Children

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Andrew Bond took a year out. Now he is back and raring for action. In the interview he also gives away a secret.

*AB, why did you go to England with your family for a year?*

My wife Andrea and I wanted to live with our children in another country for some time. I wanted to experience my home country through the seasons and let my children make a real link to their second "home country". They have dual British-Swiss nationality. It also gave them a chance to get to know their 99-year-old great-grandmother. What is more, I needed a break from the stage. I was so busy with performances that I could not get ahead with other projects.

*Did your stay there bring you what you had hoped for?*

Yes, it actually exceeded our hopes and expectations. We had fine weather for nearly the whole year. It rained so little that I finally had to force myself to sit down and write during lovely weather. We lived simply, but we had fantastically good neighbours and soon felt we belonged.

*Were you able to enjoy it despite the work?*

Oh yes! I am actually a bit of a restless character and fill my days with work. Over there I was able to let myself drift and sometimes I could spend hours just chatting to Andrea. The children were out of the house from 8.30 until 4.00. But it also happened that I once spent three weeks doing little except write.

*What does England mean to you?*

I was twelve years old when my family moved to Switzerland. I had to leave my childhood in England behind me. It is also a country with history and legend. There is a dimension there that not all countries have. But I made an effort not to look at the country romantically. We did not live in the village where I grew up, but in Leyburn, near a national park.

*You have been learning to work on the computer. How far have you got?*

I was able to take time for this and feel I have now mastered the things I need. I can process photos, record music on hard disc, compose music and do my bookkeeping on it.

*What is the basic principle of the way you organise your work?*

Keep it small and simple. There is a temptation at the moment to launch out in a bigger way, but then the quality of my life would suffer. I am my own agent and deal with concert organisers myself. This gives me the greatest freedom. My works are my children, and I want to have them in my own house.

*You have a long list of projects. Where do you get the energy for this enormous productivity?*

When I was out in the countryside alone it came to me that my so-called career was only a part of me, interesting as it is. I do not see my identity in my children's work. I want to lead a normal life.

*In a week you have the first concert of a new series. How is your voice?*

Fine. Last year I had to have treatment for my respiratory passages. Like a sportsman, I'll have to try myself out, but I feel confident. I can't earn nothing for a whole year.

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*How do you see the future?*

It certainly won't be boring. I am being heaped with interesting enquiries. I have plans for the next ten years. They involve times for production and times for concert tours, and next year should see the engagement of a co-worker. As for later, everything is open. I might well then do something quite different, I could go back to teaching, for example. I really like doing that.

*Your wife, and Joy and Tim: Do you feel they are with you in all this?*

It is really harmonious, probably because everything has developed slowly and naturally. It is important to me to take time with the family, with all the friction that also involves. My wife is my life's partner and my friend. As a teacher she's an expert with children, and can be quite critical of my work. As Martin Luther King said, "Behind every strong man stands an even stronger woman".

*On your web-site you say something about a secret. What is it?*

(He goes to his wife for a brief consultation.)

I have had a quick word with the manager. I have bought myself some special shoes and learnt to tap-dance. I have been practising hard. Now in my Christmas concerts I can dance the donkey's clip-clop. My concerts are my daily bread. They have to finance my books. The manuscript of the children's novel "Green Pearls from Ulvador" has been ready for four years.

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