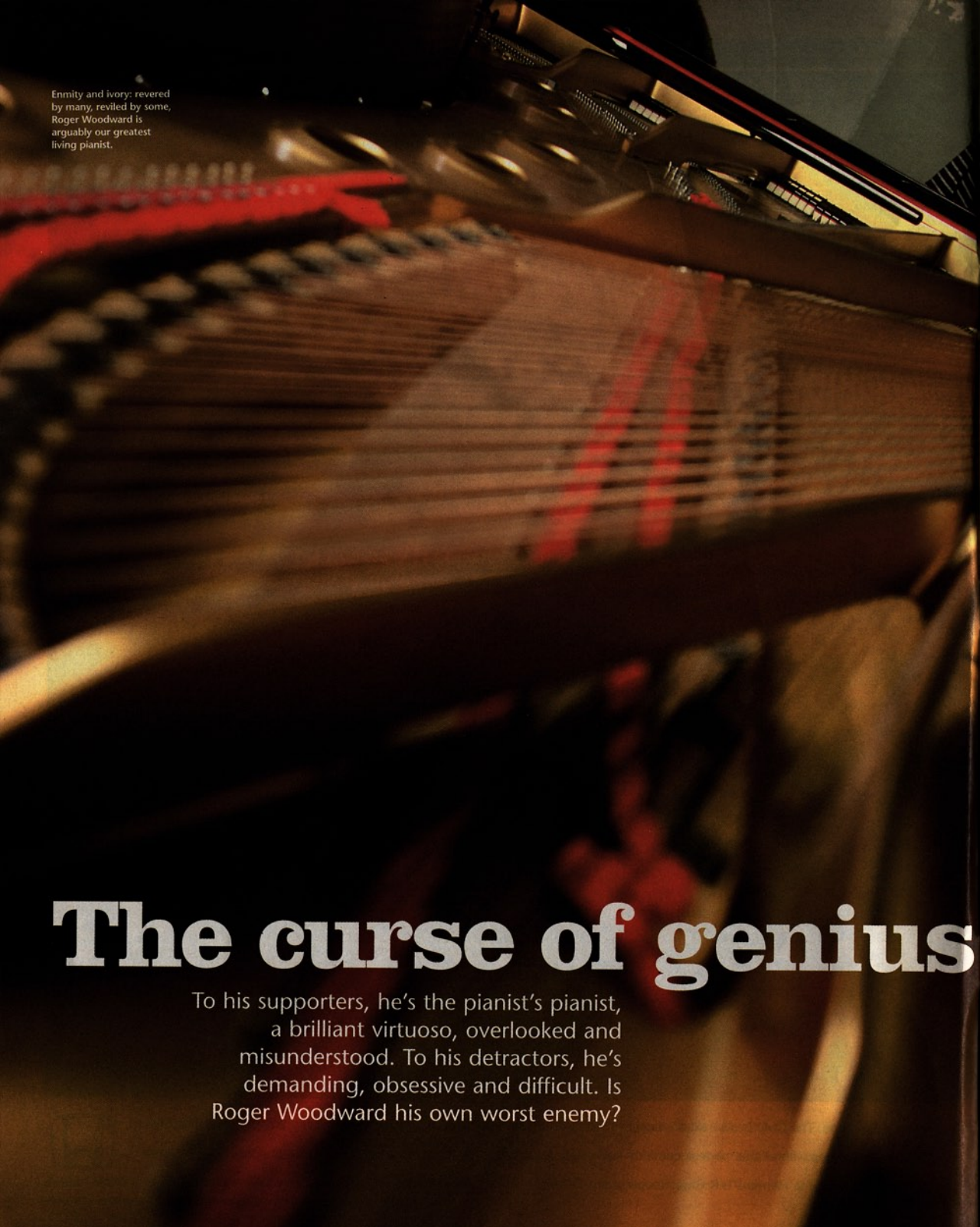


Piano Forte

Overlooked or overbearing?
In search of the
real Roger Woodward

By David Leser



Enmity and ivory: revered by many, reviled by some, Roger Woodward is arguably our greatest living pianist.

The curse of genius

To his supporters, he's the pianist's pianist, a brilliant virtuoso, overlooked and misunderstood. To his detractors, he's demanding, obsessive and difficult. Is Roger Woodward his own worst enemy?



Story by DAVID LESER Photograph by SANDY NICHOLSON

IT WAS THE PERFECT NIGHT FOR DEBUSSY. Elemental. Lush. Vivid. And Roger Woodward was in full flight. The jutting chin. The glowering eyes. The dancing hands. The 130 patrons of the Botanic Gardens Restaurant music series were transfixed.

Everything seemed to be going smoothly, until suddenly, in the interval following an exquisite rendition of 11 *Preludes*, Woodward stormed out into the rainforest. The lighting was all wrong. Too pink, he said. Too bright.

For a good 15 minutes, he railed about the lights and the inappropriateness of filling the silence at interval with recorded Mozart, and might even have left, there and then, had someone not taken him by the arm, given him a glass of red and gently urged him back towards the stage where he was given a standing ovation in the semi-darkness. Mercifully, the lights had been switched off.

Later that evening, the performance over, he sat with his companions expounding on the subject of persecution and alienation. The world was full of authoritarian figures, he exclaimed; a breed of person with a mania for power and control. You could find them in the old totalitarian regimes of Eastern Europe and, believe it or not, in the orchestras of Australia. Fascists. Rednecks. Nazis. People who centralised power and who tried to squash the life out of good, talented people.

Warning to this hoary theme, he then took aim at his principal bête noire in Australia, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra's general manager, Mary Valentine – the woman he believes has virtually banned him from playing here – and attacked her in language that lurched from the colourful to the unprintable.

"That's enough, Roger," someone remonstrated, but to no avail. Woodward was speaking from a deep sense of injustice, from a sense that there are forces working against him, cliques blocking his path and lies being put about.

ROGER WOODWARD IS UNQUESTIONABLY ONE of the most brilliant pianists this country has produced. Among the high patrons of the arts, you will get debate, vehement at times, as to his consistency; his sometimes wilful disregard for the way a piece of music "should" be played; his passion for new, sometimes inaccessible music.

But who could argue with his ability and the scale of his achievements, both here and abroad? And it's not just his own curriculum vitae which reminds you of this when it quotes from *The Guardian*: "A genius"; *The Scotsman*: "A pianist's pianist"; *The New Yorker*: "Fingers and nerves of steel"; Artur Schnabel: "One of the finest Chopinists of our time"; *Le Monde*: "Sensational".

There are many distinguished listeners of music in Australia, too, who believe such self-promotion is more than valid. "If he simply played the notes from A to G on the keyboard, I should sit entranced," music reviewer Ken Healey once wrote. "When he is in top form, there are very few people who can touch him," says Maria Prerauer, arts editor of *The Australian* for 14 years and now a regular contributor to *The Bulletin*.

Roger Covell, professor of music at the University of NSW and *The Sydney Morning Herald's* music critic, observes: "He is one of the

most exciting pianists anywhere, but, like many outstanding artists, he is living on his nerves a lot. He can be abrasive. He can have unfortunate encounters with people and pianos, and the results sometimes leave a few scars."

Leaving aside the pianos for a moment, Woodward can be a notoriously difficult, prickly and litigious individual – so much so that, despite his obvious brilliance, some prefer to have nothing to do with him. As much as he is revered, he has also been reviled.

"Roger has played a very important role in encouraging younger performers in Australia to take contemporary music very seriously," says Justin McDonald, who has worked in arts management for 30 years. "The sadness is that he has had disastrous relationships with a whole range of people which have prevented him from doing more than that. He could have been more influential, much more important to the music scene in Australia had he not had all those rifts."

And yet according to Professor Anne Boyd, head of the department of music at Sydney University, Australia's failure to nurture Woodward represents one of this country's greatest cultural tragedies. "He has applied for several positions here as an artistic director and no-one will give him a chance," she says. "He has been demonised."

The demonisation is not confined to these shores. "He seldom appears in any series anywhere in America," says one agent, who declined to be named. "He is too hard to deal with – no-one wants all the attendant headaches."

In England, there have been echoes of the same theme. A leading figure in the music world, who also preferred to remain anonymous, notes Woodward's brilliance and versatility, but says that he has suffered from the climate of the times. "You have to be the latest kid on the block," he says. "There was a time in the '70s when he was quite a force to contend with. He got a reputation. He was basically a bit difficult to deal with."

And yet to hear it from Woodward and his supporters, this is far from the complete picture. "My international standing is well recognised," Woodward says, and then points to the events that will choke his calendar this year and beyond: his Sydney Spring Festival, his two small festivals in France each year, his new engagement as artistic director of a Pacific music festival in Vanuatu, performances in the United Kingdom and Scotland, Macedonia, Mexico; invitations to play in Israel, Germany, China...

"It is inconvenient for these people that I work with the world's greatest conductors and greatest recording companies," Woodward says. "This is a rock-throwing exercise. They did the same with Joan Sutherland."

WOODWARD'S LIFE STORY IS THE FILM SCRIPT THE makers of *Shine* might have written, had they not stumbled upon David Helfgott instead.

As Emile Zola once said about being an artist, "I am here to live out loud." Woodward has always lived out loud. Born in 1942 in the Sydney suburb of Chatswood to Gladys and Frank Woodward, he was, by the age of two, composing his own tunes and, by nine, stepping onto the stage

for his first concert. By the time he was 13, he was playing Chopin's *Etudes* before breakfast and then committing to memory most of the Bach organ works. At 21, he won the piano section of the 1964 ABC Concerto and Vocal Competition, ahead of – that's right – David Helfgott.

"It's a tough game, isn't it Roger?" said the young Helfgott to Woodward in Shine, as they waited for the competition results. "It's a blood sport," Woodward replied darkly.)

From these auspicious beginnings, the remarkable international career of Roger Woodward was launched – his sell-out debut performances in the late '60s and '70s in the great halls of London, Warsaw, Paris, Vienna and New York, before kings and queens and heads of state, and the rave reviews that followed; his championing of new music, marking him as the favoured performer for some of the world's leading modern composers – Xenakis, Takemitsu, Barraqué; his friendships with the likes of Svyatoslav Richter, the famous Soviet pianist; the soprano Lina Prokofiev (widow of the composer); the distinguished violinist Yehudi Menuhin; and the Polish pianist and composer Artur Rubinstejn; to say nothing of his own compositions, his recording contracts, his work with such leading conductors as Boulez, Masur, Mehta, Maazel.

He possessed a prodigious memory – he carried in his mind the entire oeuvre of Chopin, Schubert, Schoenberg, Liszt. He also had a flair for the unexpected. In 1980, in a series of eight Sydney recitals, he played all of Beethoven's 32 piano sonatas from memory. On one occasion, he even played the 50-minute-long *Hammerklavier* sonata, as an encore. "I can't imagine anyone in the world doing that, and that is the result of his single-mindedness," says Nathan Waks, principal cellist with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra (SSO).

Another quality that marked Woodward out was his lack of elitism. He played in villages on the Russian and Polish borders; on the ground floor of David Jones department store; and, like Dame Nellie Melba and Percy Grainger before him, in pubs and clubs and halls throughout regional Australia. He wanted his music to penetrate the senses, wherever you happened to be. Sometimes literally. He once had Estée Lauder perfume pumped through the Sydney Opera House's air-conditioning system during his performance. It was a replay of what another mercurial character, the late Russian composer Alexander Scriabin, had done in Paris at the turn of the century. "Anything can happen in my concerts, anything," Woodward once declared. "You will never be safe with me."

IN THE WINTER OF 1965, WITH NOTHING BUT \$48 in his wallet, a small bag of clothes, an electric shaver and the manuscript of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, 22-year-old Woodward headed for Poland.

It was to be a period of self-exile that would inform everything – his artistic ability, his international reputation, his relationship to his country and his view of himself. It was as much a political awakening as it was a musical one.

While studying at Warsaw's Conservatory, he was exposed to the ugly face of anti-Semitism and resurgent Stalinism; a country being rent and twisted by purges, secret police, informers, underground cells; a place where artists – and plenty of musicians among them – would be sent routinely to work in the smelters.

There are those who believe that all Woodward's subsequent troubles – the feuds with arts administrators; the fallings-out with agents, publicists, concert promoters and even his own

daughter; his prickliness over perceived injustices; his incessant demands; his sometimes unexpected changes of mood; his preoccupation with notions of tyranny and exile – stem from this period.

Otherwise, why so suspicious of people; why so ready to see slights where none was intended; why so preoccupied with conspiracy theories and notions of centralised control?

In 1973, for instance, he was firing broadsides at successive Australian governments for their failure to stop the exodus of artists from our shores. He was also refusing to play in Melbourne and Brisbane because in both cities posters of Michelangelo's David and illustrations by British artist Aubrey Beardsley had been confiscated. "I don't like Hitlerism," he said at the time. "I won't

Kim Williams, Music Rostrum's former administrator and currently chairman of Musica Viva, agrees with Murdoch. "When you have had an endless stream of phone calls [from Poland] at three in the morning, you get to the point when you say, 'Enough is enough.' It was about the program [which he kept wanting to change]. We had one too many arguments and, even though I harbour no ill will towards him, I have had nothing to do with him since. Most people who work or operate in creative life are committed to outcomes. They are not committed to preventing things from happening. Roger has always seen people as working against him, which is extravagant nonsense. He has a conspiracy view of the world which I don't subscribe to."



"Roger has always seen people as working against him, which is extravagant nonsense. He has a conspiracy view of the world."

Piano man: Woodward pictured with (clockwise from above) composer Iannis Xenakis in 1986; Finnish conductor Paavo Berglund; and early teacher Alexander Sverjenksy.

stand for any kind of totalitarianism. How can you expect me to play in cities that have this kind of crap, really."

That same year, he was banned from further using the Opera House's Steinway grand pianos because the then general manager, Frank Barnes, believed his unorthodox style of playing – he'd been plucking the strings inside the piano as well as striking the keys with drumsticks – had already damaged two of the instruments. Woodward borrowed another one, accused Barnes of cultural apartheid and called for his sacking. (The two made up the following year.)

In 1975, he arrived in Sydney for a series of concerts for Music Rostrum Australia and launched a stinging attack on the ABC, accusing it of having a "fascist" monopoly over Australian orchestras. Music Rostrum had been Woodward's brainchild – it was, at the time, the biggest contemporary music festival ever conceived in Australia – but by the following year, he'd fallen out with the board of directors and quit.

"Roger was just an unending pain during that period," says James Murdoch, a former member of the board, as well as Woodward's manager for a short period in the late 1960s. "He always wanted first-class airfares when no-one else was getting them. It was just delusions of grandeur, and so, fairly quickly, everyone began to duck their heads. ("I would not dream of jeopardising a concert by flying anything but first class," Woodward was quoted as saying at the time.)



By the early 1980s, Woodward had taken up the cause of the Polish trade union movement, Solidarity. In one memorable lunchtime recital, a new Steinway was taken on the back of a truck into Sydney's Chullora railway yards so that Woodward could serenade the workers. His purpose, though, was greater than music alone. He believed Australia's railway unions were controlled by Stalinists and that they were blocking Australia's international vote in support of Polish strikers. His tactic worked. The vote carried. ("Dear Roger," a union official wrote to him later. "I've spent

40 years in railways workshops. Much of the time it has not been all that much fun. Your visit yesterday made up for it all ... although I would not know a bolognaise from a polonaise.")

Less amusing was the claim by Woodward that he'd been the victim of KGB death threats, that his phone was being tapped, that he was being followed. Who could be sure? James Murdoch recalls a time when he was still managing Woodward and the pianist insisted on their leaving London for the countryside to discuss an upcoming concert. "He said we each had to go by separate cars so as to not be tracked. I said 'Roger, this is a piano concert, not a summit

thing with Solidarity began, they didn't want to know. None of them wanted to know."

And you felt one day there was work and the next day there wasn't? "That's right. It's the reality. It's not what I felt. It's what happened."

But is it? Bob Hawke, for instance, had a proven track record of supporting Solidarity over the years. He'd also had no problems with inviting Woodward to play at his 1987 campaign launch at the Sydney Opera House.

In any event, by 1995, having accused the Australia Council of corruption and the former prime minister Paul Keating of administering the arts "like the old Soviet Union", Woodward threw his lot in with the Liberal Party, at both the State and Federal level. "He came to me and said, 'What can I do to get rid of this bloke [Keating]?' " says Woodward's friend, the former NSW Opposition leader, Peter Collins. "So I made contact with [Federal Arts Minister] Richard Alton and John Howard and said he was more than happy to get involved." Woodward gave performances for Liberal Party fundraisers in the lead-up to the 1996 Federal election.

Before Peter Collins was deposed as leader, Woodward offered to help him become premier. "He said he would go on country tours with me to get me elected as premier," Collins says. "This is a sign of his personal commitment to his friends."

WE MEET IN THE BOTANIC GARDENS RESTAURANT, one of Woodward's favourite places in the world (when the lights aren't too bright). He arrives in a pair of shorts and T-shirt, holding a straw shopping bag. He takes his seat, places a bottle of Berocca, some arnica tablets (for internal bruising) and a box of tissues on the table, and sneezes. "This is my little hypochondriac's corner," he says with a snuffle and a smile.

For the next six hours, Woodward and I sit facing each other on a veranda, above a lotus

talking about life, art and the purpose of what we are doing. Why are we no different to a wonderful piece of music? We are wonderful creations of art and what we do with our lives in the short space we have is to constantly redefine and reshape it. So nothing is safe, nothing is predictable."

To hell with those who would blacken his name then? "I get on with my life, but other people try to make you look as though you're trying to make out you are [persecuted]. I am not ... But it becomes really hard when people say, 'Oh, there's something wrong with him because he's not getting to play with orchestras.'

"I have never stopped playing in the major centres all my life (nor the country areas) and I have never played less than 80 concerts a year. Sometimes I play 120 ... But people see me in Mittagong and think my career is on the blink."

Which brings us, naturally, to the question of Symphony Australia in general and Mary Vallentine in particular. As general manager of the SSO for the past 13 years, Vallentine is one of the most powerful figures in Australian cultural life. It is an open secret that Woodward despises her and has blamed her for years for his lack of engagements with Australian orchestras.

As recently as last year, he threatened to change citizenship and hand back his OBE and Companion of the Order of Australia because of what he described as the "hate" campaign being directed against him by a few decision-makers in the music industry, including, naturally, Vallentine. Six years earlier, he'd become the prime mover of a petition by more than 90 professional musicians calling on the Federal government to hold an inquiry into the administration of the ABC's concert music department. (Basically, he wanted Mary Vallentine and the then Federal director of ABC orchestras, Tony Fogg, removed.)

When I ask him whether he is obsessed with Vallentine, his lips curl and his milky, blue eyes turn leaden. "No, not at all," he says. "Not at all. I think Mary has performed her service very well for the SSO and, who knows, she might go on to run electricity or ... I don't know."

What about the hate campaign you claimed last year that Vallentine was waging against you? Is this still the case?

"I can only answer that by saying I am not employed by Symphony Australia [the organisation that runs Australia's six symphony orchestras] for any projects for some years or in the immediate future. And the name you mention, the general manager of the SSO, that manager was advising all the orchestras at one stage for a very prolonged period of time about who should perform with these orchestras and who shouldn't."

Mary Vallentine was extremely reluctant to be quoted for this article, primarily, one presumes, because she didn't want to aggravate an already troubled relationship. But she did offer the following: "I have never advised any other orchestra not to engage Roger Woodward. I do not choose the soloists who play with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, nor do I have a veto over their engagement. They are chosen jointly by the chief conductor, myself, the artistic administrator and the musicians of the orchestra through [their] representatives."

Vallentine provided GOOD WEEKEND with a list of Woodward's engagements with Australia's six orchestras since 1988 - 18 all up, including a three-year contract between 1994 and 1996, guaranteeing him four performances a year. There are plans also in the wings to invite him back in



Coming home? Now based in London, Woodward has expressed a desire to return here permanently: "My boy [13-year-old Benjamin] needs me."

"Artists ask nothing more than to just get on with ourselves, and the manipulation of that is inevitable by those who seek power."

meeting.' But it showed the depth of his fear."

And perhaps not entirely without cause. Woodward's opposition to repressive regimes had not gone unnoticed. In 1982, East German authorities abruptly cancelled a series of concerts he was due to give with the Gewandhaus Orchestra. His name had been blacklisted in Eastern Europe - as he was to discover years later when communism finally collapsed and he was presented with the Commander Cross of the Polish Order of Merit, the country's highest civilian award.

Woodward says now that Australia took a similar stance to Poland in the way it ostracised him. This is when he says he became a "non person". This is when the offers of work suddenly dried up. "I would always, until that time, play often with Australian orchestras," he says. "But then it all stopped exactly from September 1983 - when I was put on the [communist] list and I received that telegram from the East Germans banning me from all concerts there and throughout the whole of Eastern Europe.

"There's no self-sympathy or pointing fingers here. I remained very loyal to people like Gough [Whitlam], to Bob [Hawke], to Neville [Wran], to all these people that I love, but as soon as this

pond and a giant water gum, listening to the shrieks of ibis and cockatoos, surveying the arc of this 56-year-old artist's life.

He is variously warm, ebullient, artless, funny, cool, romantic, belligerent, besotted and obsessive. After perhaps half an hour, Woodward confesses despondently that he'd been extremely reluctant to do this interview, or any interviews, in this country because of "the moral tone that newspapers take. It's like a negotiation, really, having an interview. A negotiation of your existence. And it shouldn't be that. All the untruthful things that are said about you in order to tear you down. [It's a sign] of people who are deeply insecure and lacking in confidence. I can't know how many lies have been told to you by people who would wish to do this.

"Artists ask nothing more than to just get on with ourselves," he says almost beatifically, "and the manipulation of that is inevitable by those who seek power ... because the true power behind works of art is the true power that politicians and people who seek power actually want."

Toying with his meal, Woodward regards his interlocutor with a sudden rush of fellow feeling. "Look at us now," he enthuses. "We are

2001, but Woodward regards this as too little, too late. "I am more or less banned from the orchestras," he says, and "I don't know who controls this state of terror."

TO EXPLAIN ROGER WOODWARD AWAY AS the difficult artist is to ignore too many aspects of the man: his vulnerability, his child-like passions, his powers of communication, his fierce individualism, his generosity.

Woodward has donated literally thousands of hours of his time to giving master classes to young Australian students and sunk hundreds of thousands of his own dollars into the annual Sydney Spring Festival, a celebration of contemporary music. He has stood behind various human rights struggles – Poland, Tibet, reconciliation with Aborigines – for no other reason than he fervently believes in the cause.

For every person he has exasperated, he has won others over with acts of kindness. "He is one of the most poetic, romantic, wonderful friends you could have," says literary agent Jill Hickson. "If you are in London, he will drop everything to welcome you. He is just so endlessly passionate and this sometimes goes awry, as it does with all geniuses."

Mary Ellen Barton, a London-based friend, supports this view. "When my daughter was 10 and it was the Bartok centenary, he gave her a little piano to encourage her," she says. "He drove it all the way from Poland to London on top of his car."

Ralph Lane, his record producer at ABC Classics for the past 10 years, recalls the time Woodward presented him with a rare and hugely expensive collection of Debussy's solo piano music scores. "He was just thanking me for my friendship," Lane says. "Like everyone else, I had a perception that Roger Woodward was difficult. Isn't that the word you always hear about him? But, you see, I don't think he is. I think that like many artists he is demanding, but he demands the most from himself and, anyway, if you're a genius like Roger is, you have a right to be demanding."

Woodward's mother, Gladys, was once quoted as saying that the youngest of her four children was more trouble than her other three put together.

Sydney's Conservatorium of Music – where Woodward studied before leaving for Poland – obviously thought so, too. They suspended him for misbehaviour. Twice. (On one occasion, he'd reportedly run the principal's knickers up the flagpole.) Only his rare talent convinced the authorities to allow him back.

But if it's true that his career has suffered because of his demanding personality, then it is also true that his family life has suffered as a result of his demanding career.

In the last of maybe a dozen phone calls he would make to me after our interview, Woodward said he'd decided to return to live in Australia permanently. (He'd told other people the exact opposite – that, depending on the slant of this article, he might stay away forever.) No more basing himself in the London suburb of Brixton while his wife, Trish Ludgate, and their 13-year-old son, Benjamin, remained in Sydney. "My boy needs me," he said plaintively.

Only days earlier, Woodward had insisted that Benjamin understood his need to work in Europe and spend time with his other son, Elroy Palmer. Obviously, there'd been a change of heart.

Today, Elroy Palmer is a 32-year-old husband, father of three and student of politics, but back in the mid-1980s, he was an 18-year-old languishing in a London cell awaiting trial for manslaughter.

Palmer – whom Woodward began fostering in 1984 – had been charged in the wake of the 1985 Brixton riots after a freelance photographer was killed and his camera stolen. Palmer was alleged to have brought the camera home and given it to Woodward, who was then supposed to have hidden it. Woodward was charged with perverting the course of justice and spent four days in a police lock-up working on a book about Beethoven.

In December 1986, Palmer was cleared. Five months later, the charges against Woodward were dropped, with the judge declaring that Woodward was entitled to leave the court "without a single stain on his character". Three years later, he was back in court, this time with Prudence Page, the mother of his first child, Asmira.

Woodward and Page were fighting a bitter legal battle over the Sydney house in which Asmira had grown up. The court eventually found in favour of Woodward, but the damage between father and daughter had already been done.

At the time Asmira was born, Woodward was given the choice between staying in Sydney or going to work with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra under the eminent French-born conductor Lorin Maazel. He chose Cleveland.

Woodward says now this was the lowest point in his life. "It was my first realisation that I would never have a stable family life and that my children would suffer as a result."

At 25, Asmira Woodward-Page is an accomplished violinist, estranged from her father. "We lunched together last year," Woodward says mournfully, "and we talked about many things. We started writing to each other, but there's been a silence. There's been a reaching out [on my part]."

"He is demanding, but he demands the most from himself and, anyway, if you are a genius like Roger is, you have a right to be demanding."

I went to her concerts. She's a wonderful musician.

"What I would do to play with her ... but I don't think she wants to. Her answer is, 'It is a matter of trust.' I am not sure what she means by that, but as the years go by I might, eventually."

Contacted in New York, Woodward-Page is full of smouldering anger and contempt for her father. Her comments – all on the record – would no doubt make for fascinating reading, except they do neither party any service. Suffice to say that it will probably be a long time before an audience gets to see this father and daughter on stage together.

ROGER WOODWARD IS POSSIBLY NO different from many artists who have sought to live by their wits and their God-given talents, and have struggled with the times they were born into. Choose a time. Name an artist. The exile of Chopin. The misfortunes of Beethoven or Mozart. The scandal of Eugene Goossens. The snubbing of Percy Grainger. The unravelling of David Helfgott.

In a sense, Woodward might argue he has survived better than most. If the piano is the monster that must be tamed, then Woodward could claim to have done so more completely and over a wider repertoire than many pianists in the world.

According to Roger Covell, Woodward remains one of the few Australian artists to have ever created a national and international following. He also stands tall as one of the finest performers of contemporary music in the world. "Barraqué and

Henakis and Boulez say that he is the only person who has ever got it right," Covell says.

But still, he remains his own worst enemy. When the producers of *Shine* sent him an early draft of the script – and an invitation to play himself – Woodward sent a lawyer's letter back threatening legal action. (Woodward denies ever being asked.)

He was apparently irritated that the film would show him with a flower in his lapel. He was less than pleased, too, that Helfgott would be referring to him as Roger the Dodger, even though it was widely accepted that Helfgott had never been able to resist a good rhyme.



The script was ultimately changed, and many of the scenes involving Woodward expunged, to minimise the risks of litigation.

Now, as we linger over the remains of a long lunch, Woodward says that he loved the finished film. He just didn't like all the untruths in the initial script. "I don't like lies being told," he says.

Ask him whether he would agree with the observation that crisis seems to have followed his life like a vapour trail, and he replies hotly: "It sounds good, doesn't it? Print it. It might sell a few papers. I think a lot of my fellow countrymen can't handle the idea that somebody is successful. Tear somebody down until they can hardly stand. Then you start erecting monuments to them. Isn't that the history of this country?"

He sinks lower into his chair as the afternoon sun shimmers on the lotus pond. It takes a while, but eventually he recovers his spirits and begins to ruminate once more on the joys of being home and the benediction of music.

We leave our table and walk towards the water gum, the kind of tree, says Woodward – in poetic mood again – you could bequeath your ashes to, or die trying to protect.

"I think people on the whole don't understand Roger Woodward," says Anne Boyd. "As a person or as a musician, particularly in this country which doesn't nurse eccentricity in individuals very well. Most of us have never met a genius. And genius has its own curse." ■