

TWO COFFEE STORIES

BY ELEFThERIA KOTZIA

I was honoured to be invited by John Duarte to perform in Cannington on various occasions and also to eventually join the teaching team. Jack wrote the beautiful *Musikones* for me—a piece I love, have performed on many occasions, and recorded. During these collaborations and over the years, I enjoyed his sense of humor, his engaging stories, I admired his wisdom, his lucidity and his honesty. In his presence, I felt motivated and inspired but also challenged. He was bright, human and sensitive. The memory of two simple incidents—that I would like to describe here—brings an affectionate smile to my face.

It was my first visit in the Duarte household and I was immediately guided to Jack's studio. Dorothy brought a tray with coffee and biscuits and left it on the table. Jack, full of energy and enthusiasm, invited me to hear his new pieces, recent recordings of his works, as well as other styles of music that he loved. The delicious smell of the coffee had almost been forgotten. We chatted, time flew, and I realized it was time for me to go, said good-bye and headed for the bus station. On the way back, feeling thirsty, I was thinking of the cold coffee totally forgotten in its tray by two absent-minded people.

On another occasion I was invited for dinner. After dinner, the conversation continued in his studio. Dorothy brought a tray with coffee and left it on the table. I asked Jack how much sugar he takes and he said "four spoons," while, simultaneously, I heard Dorothy's voice—she was just ready to go out of the studio—saying, "one and a half." Puzzled, I looked at both of them, the one after the other, not knowing quite what to do. Dorothy insisted, "one and a half. He doesn't know," and so, one and a half it was. Jack, sipping his coffee, was happy enough.

Many people think of Jack with a glass of beer and his famous pipe in his hand, possibly in a pub. I don't. Now that he is gone, he comes back to my memory in his studio, either writing articles, reviews, CD liner notes, books, and especially his musical compositions, listening to Django Reinhardt, or chatting with his friends, while somewhere in the room a cup of cold coffee—with four spoons of unstirred sugar in it—is waiting to be drunk ...