

RICHARD HALL

David C F Wright DMus

Richard Hall was an English composer and teacher born in York on 16th September 1903 and died at midday on 24th May 1982 in Horsham

He was educated at Loretto School, Edinburgh where he was unhappy in this Philistine School, and at Peterhouse, Cambridge, where he was an organ scholar. He was exceptionally tall and teased about this and often retired to the organ loft to improvise, particularly during school games. He left Loretto School at the age of 14 following the death of his father. He read many books on music and performance and was, to some extent, self taught. He did take organ lessons from Sir Edward Bairstow in York. His first appointments were in the church in Leeds, as organist of All Souls and precentor at the parish church, He taught the choir and was an innovator bringing an orchestra into church. He was ordained an Anglican minister in 1926. He became the Vicar of Bardsey. There was an alleged scandal between him and a female parishioner.

But he made his most valuable service to music as professor of composition at the Royal Manchester College of Music, a post he held from 1938 to 1956, when he became director of music at Dartington. He became a prolific composer. It is said that in 1935 he wrote his piano sonatas number 2 to 18. In 1930 he had written nine major instrumental works.

He left Dartington in 1967 to return to the church, as a Unitarian minister having left the Liberal Catholic Church where he had been ordained a decade or so earlier.

But it must be recorded that his pupils at the RMCM from 1938 included Stevenson, Butterworth and, at one time in the early 1950s, Goehr, Maxwell Davies, Birtwistle and Ogdon, all members of the so-called Manchester school.

Hall's success as a teacher has overshadowed his achievement as a composer. His own music is not as progressive as that of some of his pupils but he was always receptive to new ideas. Thus, although his principles derive basically from Hindemith (by way of Arnold Cooke, his predecessor at the RMCM), his music is less conservative than this would imply. There is, for example, a remarkable set of Four Piano Pieces (1944) which are serially constructed, canonically organised, and virtually atonal in spite of their key signatures and their final triads.

He played the piano, organ, flute, violin and cello. He was kind to amateur musicians and a member of the Pipers' Guild.

Around 1956 he became interested in religion again and was ordained in the Liberal Catholic Church but his interest began TO BE less Christian and he became a Unitarian minister in Horsham and Billingshurst.

His symphonies are distinguished by thoughtfulness and contrapuntal interest. Sir William Glock, who was a faithful supporter of British music including traditional and tonal works, encouraged Hall and his music and broadcast the last two symphonies and the Piano Concerto. John Ogdon adored Hall's piano music.

With his health failing, Hall had a chamber organ installed in his home and he wrote much organ music yet to be catalogued at the time of my writing this. He was usually reserved but could be a warm personality with a sense of fun. He became somewhat gaunt in appearance looking similar to Delius.

Hall was also the author of several collections of poetry some of which is inspired by Chinese mysticism.

Musical Works

ORCHESTRAL

Rhapsody for organ and strings Op 2 (1929-1933)
Fugal Overture no 1 Op 4 (1929); No 2 Op 2 91929-1934); No 3 Op 16 (1930)
Piano Concerto Op 19 (1931)
Danse ballad for viola, piano and strings (1931)
Intermezzo for strings Op 33 (1933)
Symphony Op 34 (1933) larghetto revised as Nightfall in 1934
Suite for piano and orchestra no 1 Op 40 9 1934)
Suite for piano and orchestra no 2. Op 41 (1934)
Romanza Concertante for piano quartet and strings Op 64 (1935)
A ride in the underground for strings Op 71 (1936)
Eire, poem for orchestra Op 90 (1938)
Danse movement for strings Op 91 (1938)
Skoga for strings Op 93 (1938)
Violin Concerto Op 96 (1939)
Introduction and Fugue Op 98 (1938)
Symphony in B minor Op 101 (1940) sketches
Concerto grosso for flute, clarinet and strings (1942)
Cello Concerto (1943-1944)
Symphony no 1 (1944-1953)
Lemura, poem for orchestra (1945)
The sheep under the snow for strings (1947)
Orkney Tunes for strings (1948)
Piano Concerto (1951)
Three Idylls for oboe and strings (1951)
Symphony no 3 (1953)
Symphony no 4 (1953)
Musica concertante for piano, percussion, solo strings and orchestra (1957)
Es ist ein ros entsprungen arr for strings (1960)

CHAMBER

String Quartet Op 7 (1930)
Rhapsody for viola and piano no 1 Op 8 (1930)
Rhapsody for viola and piano no 2 in F op 9 (1930)
Sonata for violin and piano no 1 in A minor Op 11 (1930)
Rhapsody no 3 for viola and piano in B minor op 12 (1930)
Air and canon for cello and piano Op 13 (1930)
Sonata for violin and piano no 2 in F Op 14 (1930)
Sonata for violin and piano no 3 in C Op 15 (1930)
Sonata for violin and piano no 4 in G Op 17 (1930)
Suite for violin and viola 18 (1930)
Nocturne for string sextet Op 22 (1931-1937)
Sonata for violin and piano no 5 in D minor (1931)
Sonata for violin and piano no 6 in G (1932)
String Quartet Op 31 (1932)
Sonata for cello and piano Op 32 (1933)
Piano Trio OP 36 (1933)
Sonata for violin and piano no 7 (the real is within but the false is without Op 38 (1934)
Intimate Music nos 1 and 2 for instruments Op 58
Canzona for clarinet and piano Op 60 (1935)
Intimate Music nos 3 to 5 for instruments Op 69 (1939)

Prelude, dance and variations for solo cello Op 74 (1936)
 Sonata for flute and piano in A Op 76 (1937)
 Piano Quintet Op 78
 Sonatina for treble recorder and piano Op 79 (1941)
 String Quartet Op 87 (1938)
 Siciliano for three violins and piano Op 92 (1938)
 Sonata for violin and piano in E minor Op 100 (1940)
 Sonata for violin and piano in E minor Op 106 (1941)
 Sonata for flute and piano Op 109 (1941)
 String Quartet Op 110 (1942)
 Trio for flute, clarinet and cello Op 112
 Sonata for violin and piano Op 115 (1942)
 Capriccietto for flute and piano Op 118 (1942)
 String quartet no 1!! (1942)
 Sonata for cello and piano (1945)
 (Another) Sonata for cello and piano (1942)
 Four Aphorisms for flute and clarinet (1946)
 Sonata for violin and piano in D (1948)
 Five Chinese Traditional Melodies for flute and piano (1948)
 Rhapsody for violin and piano (1952)
 Five Epigrams for cello and piano (1952)
 Suite for violin and viola (1953)
 Sonata for violin and Piano (1953)
 Sonata for cello and piano (1953)
 (Another) Sonata for cello and piano (1953)
 Piano Trio (1956)
 String Quartet no 2 (1956-1957)
 Concerto da camera for violin and ensemble (1956)
 String Quartet no 3 (1957)
 Two Diversions for flute and bassoon (1960)
 Three Melodic Shapes from Old China for cello and piano (1960)
 Partita for cello and piano (1963)
 Aria di chesa for viola and organ (1976)

PIANO WORKS

Sonatas
 F, Op 20 (1931) revised as Sonata no 15
 1 in C The Mountains under the Sea Op 42 (1934)
 2 in B flat minor Caerleon Op 45 (1935)
 3 in E flat minor Wantage Op 46 (1935)
 4 in D minor op 47 (1935)
 5 in A minor Sherwood Op 48 (1935)
 6 in F Op 49 (1935)
 7 in B flat Dunkirk Op 50 (1935)
 8 in B minor Ashbourne Op 51 (1935)
 9 in C minor Studland Op 52 (1935)
 10 in E Carlton Op 53 (1935)
 11 in G Victoria Op 54 (1935)
 12 in D Op 55 (1935)
 13 in F sharp minor Op 56 (1935)
 14 in A Op 57 (1935)
 15 in F Op 20 (1931-1935)
 16 in D Op 59 (1935)

17 in E minor Op 61 (1935)
18 in F sharp minor Op 63 (1935)
19 in B minor Op 69 (1936)
Sonata in C minor Op 97 (1939)
Sonata in A minor op 100 (1940)
Sonata in C Op 105 (1941-1945)
Sonata Op 108 (1941)
Sonata in F Op 111 (1941)
Sonata (1955)
Seven Preludes Op 24
Three Pieces Op 70 (1936)
Three sonatinas Op 72 (1936-1937)
Six preludes Op 95 (1939-1940)
Three Inventions Op 107 (1941)
Fantasia Op 117 (1942)
Four Piano Pieces (1944)
Three Lyric Pieces Op 119 (1946)
Etude (1951)
Five Dialogues (1953)
Suite for piano (1954)??
Suite (1967)
Three Trigrams sets 1 and 2
Four Sketches (1972) written for the author of this article.

PIANO DUET

Rhapsody Impromptu Op 99 (1940)

TWO PIANOS

Mercury in Gemini (1964)

ORGAN

Three Cathedral Voluntaries Op 62 (1935)
Blanchard, variations on an original theme Op 80 (1935)
Three Pieces Op 81 (1937)
Two Pieces Op 84 (1938)
Festal Voluntary Op 89 (1938)
Tocatta, Intermezzo and Fugue Op 104 (1941)
Passacaglia (1961-1974)
Little Organ Book (four volumes) (1973-1974)
Four Pieces (1936-1974)
Nocturne music (1971) (revised from Piano Sonata no 9)
Seven Sinfonias (third arranged from Suite for piano, 1954)
Twelve Versettes (1976- 1977)
Eight Meditations (1977)
Four Canzonetta (1977)

SONGS

Song cycle for contralto and piano Op 3
Three Songs Op 6
Two Songs Op 10
Three Songs for contralto Op 23
Three Songs Op 30
Death-Life, monologue for speaker and organ Op 43

Two Songs Op 66
The ballad of Semmerwater (1948)
My star (1950)
Four Sonnets in memory of Philip Godlee (1952)
The Muse (1952)
Three Carols (1958-1960)

VOICE AND INSTRUMENTS AND ORCHESTRA

On the grasshopper and crickets Op 1 two voices, cello and piano (1929)
The ancient word, contralto, reciter and strings OP 37 (1933)
The revealing search, baritone and orchestra Op 39 (1934)
Lullaby and Canzonetta
Creator Spiritus
Four Songs (John Donne) bass and orchestra (1946)
Afterwards, baritone, piano and tam tam (1948)
Soliloquy for voice, flute and string quartet (1950)
Versus de cuculo voices and string quartet (1961)

CHORAL

Bread of the World SATB Op 21
Lord, be the word my rule Op 35
Lord, evermore give us this bread Op 43
How sleep the brave Op 94 (1939)
Chantecler and Pertelots for women's voices, two pianos and percussion Op 113 (1941-1942)
Ecce quam bonum SATB
The Divine Image
Holy eucharist for the Liberal catholic Liturgy
Three 'Western' songs

HYMN TUNES AND ORIGINAL WORDS

Rackham Hill Descend Creator Spirit
Assisi O Lord, enfire me from above
Norfolk Road Now is the time, Lord, when we make our prayer
Blanchard. Now our worship has been spoken
Roselalaham. ???

BAND

Sinfonisa for wind and percussion Op 29 (1932)
Prelude and march for military band Op 68

INCIDENTAL MUSIC

Doom windows Op 67
The Knight of the burning pestle Op 74
Manchester Centenary pageant OP 86
Music for BBC productions: Deirdre, Cinderella, In Belmont lives a lady, The Merchant of Venice

MUSIC FOR PIPES

Valse Symphonique, Music for flutes, drums and piano. Selne Suite, Valse Intermezzo... all under
Op 82
Five Pieces Op 83
Ninetten arrangements Op 85
Chorale and Variations Op 88
Siciliano

Menuetto
Serenade nos 1 and 2
Suite
Divertimento

POETRY

Beyond the stars (1970)
Sronan (1971)
Medallion (1971)
Alembie (1972)
Petros (1975)
Deucalion (1973)
From a full heart (1974)

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