

BRITISH SINGLE PIANO CONCERTOS

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I set these British composers out in no particular order as composers having composed one piano concerto each. There are others.

1. Francis Edward Bache.

He was born in Birmingham on 14 September 1833, and became an organist and composer. His father, Samuel, was a Unitarian minister and owned a school where his son was educated. In 1846, Francis played the violin at the Birmingham Festival and, at the behest of Sterndale Bennett, who was his first teacher from 1849, he went to Leipzig to study with Moritz Hauptmann.

In 1855, he had a severe attack of tuberculosis at the Birmingham Festival.

The following year he travelled to Algiers, Paris, Leipzig, Dresden, Vienna and Rome giving some concerts.

He composed concertos, including one for the piano, overtures, two operettas, a piano trio and piano pieces.

A concert of his music was given on 5 August 1858. On the 24 August 1858 he died of tuberculosis. He was 28.

2. Robert Simpson

He was born in Leamington Spa on 2 March 1921, and originally read medicine. He studied music with Herbert Howells and later received his doctorate of music at Durham University in 1951 for which he had submitted his magnificent Symphony no 1. He worked for the BBC for about 30 years from 1951 resigning in 1980 objecting to their policies of playing their favourite composers and ignoring others. He was told that the BBC did not have a black list and he replied, but they have a white list! This was after the excellent William Glock retired from Radio 3 in 1972. Robert had a BBC programme called The Innocent Ear in which he announced the music after it was played.

He composed eleven symphonies, sixteen string quartets, a violin concerto, which he withdrew, and a piano concerto of 1967 recorded that year by John Ogden and the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra under Constantin Silvestri. There is a piano sonata of 1946. The piano concerto is stunning.

In 1981, his first wife, Bessie Fraser, who he married in 1946, died and, in 1982, he married Angela Musgrave. He moved to Ireland in 1986 and died at Tralee, County Kerry, on 21 November 1997, six years after a severe stroke.

His fine collection of symphonies and string quartets are second to none. He also wrote informative articles particularly about the Beethoven string quartets.

3. Peter Racine Fricker

I did not warm at first to his Piano Concerto Op 19 commissioned by and written for Harriet Cohen who was a very limited pianist, Then I heard a performance by David Wilde and the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra under Albert Rosen and I changed my opinion.

Fricker was born in London on 5 September 1920, studied at RCM from 1937, was a radio operator with the RAF during World War 2, married the pianist Helen Church in 1943, and, after the war studied with Matyas Seiber. He taught at RCM from 1955. Disillusioned with his decline in popularity he went to the USA in 1964 where he stayed for the rest of his life. His second wife, Catherine Gayer, was a very fine soprano.

He was a lifetime friend of Humphrey Searle as they both had a wonderful capacity for friendship.

It is not strictly accurate to say that he wrote one piano concerto as there is another in manuscript, Op 97.

His music has been said to be often too serious and he turned his back on classical design and so his music might sometimes lack some cohesion. His music for organ and choir is exceptional.

He died in St Barbara on 1 February 1990.

4. Peter Maxwell Davies

He wrote a piano concerto in 1997 and it is awful and I have yet to hear anyone say anything favourable about it. Even his admirers seem to dismiss it.

He was born in Salford on 14 September 1934, studied at Manchester University and the Royal Northern College of Music. In 1959, he was the Director of Music at Cirencester Grammar School and left in 1962. He moved to Australia and taught music at the University of Adelaide, 1965-66.

He moved to the Orkney Islands in 1971 and set up the St Magnus Festival in 1977.

He was appointed Master of the Queens Music which was controversial as he was a republican. Nor did he win many favours for his allegedly extreme homosexuality propensities and there were stories that he caught swans to kill and eat whereas swans are the property of the Queen.

He was awarded the CH in 2014, having been knighted in 1987.

He was an outspoken critic of the Labour Party and Tony Blair and Gordon Brown.

He composed ten symphonies and ten string quartets.

He died on 14 March 2016.

5. Joseph Holbrooke

He wrote two concertos as such but the first is The Poem :The Song of Gwyn ap Nudd, a king in Welsh mythology. It is not a concerto in name and is a long and somewhat tedious work. The so-called Piano Concerto no 2, named Orient, Op 100, was completed in 1928 and is called a concerto.

Holbrooke was born in Croydon on 5 July 1858, studied at RAM, wrote a lot of works which he called Poems and eight numbered symphonies. and works in other genres. He was a controversial figure and highly disliked and when his music was side-lined, his behaviour was irrational and disturbing. He said that his music was of such quality it ought to be played at least once a week,

One of his sons, Frederick James Gwydion, who was born in 1912, changed his surname to Brooke as his father was so difficult, objectionable and an embarrassment. Holbrooke damned anything and everything that was new and original and what he did not like. Gwydion Brooke became one of our finest bassoonists.

Joseph Holbrooke died on 5 August 1958.

The editor of a music website told me that Holbrooke wrote the finest ever piano concerto! This editor cannot even read music!

6. Edmund Rubbra

He wrote a Piano Concerto Op 30 which he withdrew and there is a Sinfonia Concertante for piano and orchestra Op 38 but the Piano Concerto in G Op 85 is his only named piano concerto.

He was born Charles Edmund Duncan Rubbra at Semilong, Northampton on 23 May 1901 and started composing while still at school. He played the piano for a Congregational Sunday School and, from the age of 14, worked for Crockett and Jones, boot and shoe manufacturers. At the age of 17, he organised a concert of music by Cyril Scott. Later, he became a correspondence clerk at a railway station

Rubbra won a scholarship to Reading University where Holst taught. He also taught at RCM. Rubbra was called up into the Army in 1941 and formed a piano trios with Joshua Glazer (violin) and William Pleeth (cello).

Edmund Rubbra married the French violinist, Antoniette Chaplin, and they had two sons, Francis and Benedict. He later married Colette Yardley and had a son, Adrian.

He composed eleven symphonies, four string quartets, much vocal music, some of great beauty, a violin concerto, Op 103, viola Concerto Op 75 and the profound Soliloquy for cello and small orchestra Op 57.

His orchestral music has been criticized for 'being brown' and the quartets as being claustrophobic.

In 1947, he became a Roman Catholic and was badly treated by Cyril Scott because of this. Scott was into spiritualism and vehemently rejected religion. He was an atheist and very offensive in an unnecessary and vindictive way.

Rubbra taught music at Oxford until he retired in 1968.

He died in Gerrards Cross on 14 February 1986.

7. Lennox Berkeley

Sir Lennox Randal Francis Berkeley was born in Oxford on 12 May 1903. He was educated at Dragon's School and, in 1927, went to Paris to study with Nadia Boulanger and had a few lessons

with Ravel. He met Roussel, Poulenc, Stravinsky, Milhaud and Honegger. During World War II he worked at the BBC and from 1946-1968 was professor of composition at RAM.

But to retrack. He met Britten in 1937 and fell in love with him and formed a relationship. This eventually ended and Berkeley was married and had a son, Michael.

Berkeley was knighted in 1974 and was President of the Cheltenham Festival from 1977 - 1983.

His music shows Gallic influences and some works have an irresistible charm such as the Serenade for strings and the Divertimento. He composed five operas, four symphonies, a guitar concerto, a piano sonata, choral works, chamber works and the ravishing Four Songs of St Theresa of Avila Op 27 for contralto and strings. The Piano Concerto in B flat Op 29 of 1948 has never caught on being described as rather ordinary.

His last years were plagued by illness and the Symphony No 4 sadly displays this. He died on 26 December 1989.

8. Alan Bush

Alan Dudley Bush was born in Dulwich, London on 22 December 1900 and died in Watford on 31 October 1995. He was a composer, pianist and committed communist.

He was educated at Highgate School (1911-1917) and went up to RAM (1918-1922) and taught there from 1925-1978. He studied in Berlin 1929-1931 and met other left wingers. He married Nancy Head in 1931 and in 1940 conducted the British premiere of Khachaturian's Piano Concerto with Moura Lympany as soloist.

He was an outspoken advocate of Marxism and atheisms and vicious in his opinions.

In 1936 he was the co-founder of the Workers Party and conductor of the London Labour Choral Union.

His communist works are many :

Prologue to a Workers meeting Op 16.

Song of Labour 1926

Song of Freedom 1934

Song of the Hunger Marchers 1934

He wrote four piano sonatas, quartets, a quintet and four symphonies and operas based on 'Labour heroes' of the past such as Joe Hill and Wat Tyler as well as the opera The Sugar Reapers presumably about workers.

His Piano Concerto Op 18 completed in 1937 has a choral finale in which the leaders of capitalism and imperialism are condemned.

9. John Gardner

John Linton Gardner was born in Manchester on 2 March 1917 educated at Eagle House School Sandhurst Wellington College and Exeter College, Oxford He had two terms as a teacher at Repton School where he taught John Veale. He enlisted 1941 and was a bandmaster in the Army.

In 1956 he joined the staff at RAM where he taught for 30 years. he married Jane Abercomdie and they had three children, Christopher 1956, Lucy 1958 and Emily 1962.

His piano concerto in B flat Op 54 dates from 1957 and is a fine piece.

He composed three symphonies and three quartets, two oboe concertos and concerto for trumpet and one each for flute, bassoon, an organ sonata and a fine sextet.

His many choral works are of excellent quality such as Cantiones Sacrae Op 12, Ballad of the White Horse Op 40, Herrick Cantata Op 49, A Latter Day Athenian Speaks Op 51, two masses, A Burns Sequence Op 213, Hardy Song Op 235, and five operas.

His church music has a remarkable and infectious vigour.

He died at Liss on 12 December 2011.

10. Christian Darnton

Philip Christian Darnton was also Baron von Schunck born in Leeds on 30 October 1905 into a very wealthy family. He studied at Gonville and Caius in Cambridge and during world war ii composed his Stalingrad Overture. He joined the Communist party in 1941 and. like Alan Bush, was very outspoken to the point of being offensive and objectionable.

He composed a Concertino for piano and chamber orchestra in 1926, concertos for violin, harp and a concerto for orchestra respectively and his Piano Concerto dates from 1935

And he loved fast cars.

He died on 14 April 1981

11. Francis Chagrin

He was born Alexander Paucker of Jewish parents in Bucharest on 15 November 1905. He studied for an engineering degree in Zurich and also studied at the Music Conservatory there apparently with some secrecy. He graduated in 1928 and had further lessons with Nadia Boulanger and Paul Dukas.

He settled in England in 1936 and founded SPNM, the Society for the Promotion of New Music in January 1943.

He is known for his excellent film scores including An Inspector Calls and The Colditz Story.

He composed two symphonies and his attractive Piano Concerto dates from 1948.

He died on 10 November 1972

12. Charles Proctor

I know nothing about this somposer. He wrote two brief orchestral pieces, Alla Gavotte and Elegia, a 25 minute piano concerto, four various songs for high voice and strings,three children's songs for voice, violin and strings, the motet, Veni Creator Spiritus for chorus and orchestra, all published by Lengnick.

13. Howard Ferguson

He was born in Belfast on 21 October 1908 and studied at RCM with R O Morris and Vaughan Williams. During World War II, he helped Myra Hess in her morale -boosting concerts at the National Gallery and from 1968 taught at RAM. His Piano Sonata Op 8 found favour as did his Concerto for piano and strings Op 12. He wrote an Overture for an Ocassion and two violin sonatas. He stopped composing about 1958 as ' there was nothing else to write.'

He died on 31 October 1999.

14. Alec Rowley

Alec Rowley is well known as a writer of educational music and some fantastic Chorale Preludes on well known hymn tunes published by Edwin Ashdown and two symphonies for organ.He was born on 13 March 1882 and studied at RAM with Frederick Corder and taught at Trinity College, London. For many years he was the organist at St Marys Teddington and his Piano Concerto with an accompaniment of strings and percussion was premiered in 1938.

He died on 11 January 1985

15. Denis Apivor

He was born in Eire on 14 April 1916. His father was an Anglican clergyman. They moved to Hereford in 1925. Denis wanted to study music with Bernard van Dieren but he was ill and could not take pupils so Denis went to Alan Rawsthorne for two years. ApIvor's work The Hollow Men of 1939 was a success and,in that year because of his medical qualifications, he was called up to serve in London hospitals. He was in the Worcestershire Regiment during the war as a medic and his first wife,Grace O'Brien, died of kidney disease in 1945. In 1947, Denis married a theatre sister, Irene Russell.

His excellent piano concerto Op 13 of 1948 was premiered by Eiluned Davies and then taken up by Patrick Piggott and Gordon Watson.

His opera Yerma of 1959 was never staged and this began a lifelong disregard for his work. The concert performance with Joan Hammond was warmly received.

Spanish music interested him.

From about Op 30 serialism appealed to him and he was one of the few composers who had the ability to work in this exacting discipline.

He wrote five symphonies of which only the second has been heard on the BBC. There are three sting quartets and operas, She stops to conquer (1947) Ubi Roi (1966) and Bouvard and Pecuchet

of 1974. There are four ballets including Blood Wedding of 1953, brief successes in their time but have died since. There is much piano music, chamber music, two violin concertos and a cello concerto and songs often to texts by Lorca.

He met and married Rima Austin in 1962 who died in 1997 and his last wife was known as Sue.

He died on 27 May 2004.

16. Ralph Vaughan Williams

He was born in Down Ampney, Gloucestershire on 12 October 1872, the son of an Anglican vicar. When young, he took an interest in Darwin and evolution which eventually caused him to hate Christianity and religion. He was educated at Field House Preparatory School at Rottingdean and Charterhouse from 1887, then he went up to RCM from 1880, Trinity College Cambridge in 1892 with lessons with Parry, composition with Charles Wood and organ with Alan Gray.

He returned to RCM in 1895 and became a friend of Holst. In 1897, he married Adeline Fisher and, in 1917, he was in the Royal Army Medical Corp driving ambulances.

He took an interest in the English Hymnal and folk songs.

He composed nine symphonies of which numbers 4, 5 and 6 are excellent. The Symphony no 4 in F minor is a masterpiece and the composer said of it, If this is modern music I don't know whether I like it or not.

He wrote operas which have never really caught on, ballets, three numbered string quartets, much choral music, some of which is very fine, a violin concerto, an oboe concerto and a tuba concerto.

In 1896, he had composed his Fantasia for piano and orchestra and, in 1931, completed his Piano Concerto which someone has said is a neglected masterpiece. Most others disagree.

Adeline died in 1951 and RVW married Ursula in February 1953 who became his librettist in some works.

He died on 26 August 1958 in London and was buried in Westminster Abbey.

17. William Wordsworth

William Brocklesby Wordsworth was born in London on 17 December 1908, a descendant from the brother of the distinguished poet. He was educated at home by his father who was a C of E vicar.

Bill, as he was sometimes known, studied harmony and counterpoint with George Oldroyd, the organist and choirmaster at St. Michaels, Croydon between 1921 to 1933 continuing studies with Donald Tovey at Edinburgh University from 1934-36.

Wordsworth was a man of good morals, a pacifist and conscientious objector. He worked on the land from 1939 which was made a condition of exemption from military service at his tribunal.

He lived in England until 1961 when he moved to Invernesshire in Scotland. In 1966, he helped found the Scottish Composers Guild and helped to form the Scottish Composers Guild.

He composed eight symphonies between 1944 and 1986. The Symphony no 6 was written in memory of his son Tom killed in a motor accident in 1971 aged 23. Bill's wife, Frida, was an excellent support. He wrote six string quartets, chamber music, vocal music, a violin concerto and his solo piano works are of real quality, the Sonata of 1939, the Chesseombe Suite of 1945 and the Ballade of 1949.

His Overture Conflicts was written in protest at the invasion of Czechoslovakia by the left wingers of Soviet Communism.

Latterly, he became very reticent but did not suffer from false modesty. He died at Kingussie on 10 March 1988. He is another composer no longer treated well by the BBC although William Glock championed him as he did other conservative and tonal composers.

18. Geoffrey Smith

I know nothing of this composer except that he composed a Concertino for piano and strings published by Lengnick

19. Francis Routh

This is a composer of many unique talents. He was born in Kidderminster on 15 January 1927, was in the RNVR 1948-1948, read classics at King's College, Cambridge, studied at RAM 1948-1951 with William Alwyn, then with Matyas Seiber. Routh was the organist at St Philips, Earls Court 1961-1973. He produced the Redcliffe Concerts on the South Bank in 1961 and founded Redcliffe Recordings in 1963. He taught at Morley College from 1971.

His music shows excellent craftsmanship. His vocal scores cannot be bettered such as A Woman Young and Old and Spring Night. He wrote a Poeme Fantastique for piano and orchestra and his Piano Concerto Op 32. There is a violin concerto, a double concerto for violin, cello and orchestra, a cello concerto, two symphonies, some outstanding solo piano music and his Ensemble Concertos. His organ music and sacred music can only be admired.

20. Bernard Stevens

He wrote an attractive piano concerto Op 25 in 1955 and revised it as Op 54 in 1981 and it exists in manuscript form.

He was born in London on 2 March 1916 and studied English and Music at Kings, Cambridge. He became a professor of Music at RCM from 1967.

He was a left winger being a member of the Communist party until the Hungarian Uprising in 1956 when he 'saw the errors of his political ways.'

He composed two symphonies, the first being called Symphony of Liberation. There is a violin concerto Op 4, a cello concerto Op 18, two quartets, much piano music, some of which is commendable, and a unfinished opera, Mimosa.

Some have claimed him to be a superb and distinguished composer. Others have said his music lacks originality.

He died in Colchester on 6 January 1989. He was 72.

21. Peter Dickinson

He was born in Lytham St Annes, Lancashire on 15 November 1934, studied the organ at Queens, Cambridge and became a student at the Julliard School in New York with Bernard Wagenaar.

In 1964, he married Bridget Jane Tomkinson and they had two sons.

In his career he has experimented with electronic, aleatory and modern styles.

He has composed a piano concerto. There is much choral and vocal music two string quartets the second with tape, an organ concerto and a violin concerto all three concertos available on a Heritage CD.

Dickinson was a lecturer in music at Keele 1974, chair of music at Goldsmiths College 1991-97. He was a founding member of the Association of Professional Composers in 1980, made FRSA in 1981, became a board member of Trinity College in 1984 and joined the Royal Society of Music in 1985.

He has written about American composers such as Ives, Thomson, Cage, William Schumann as well as Lord Berners and Erik Satie.

His interest in some forms of music misleads him as he has composed trite piano music such as blues and rags.

In conversation, he is prejudiced and belligerent.

22. William Busch

He was born in London on 24 June 1901. His parents originated from Germany.

William studied in London, Berlin and the USA. Among his teachers were John Ireland and Bernard van Dieren.

He premiered his piano concerto in 1938 and also composed a cello concerto. Both concertos are on a Lyrita CD.

He was a pacifist in World War II.

He died in Woolacombe, North Devon on 30 January 1945. He was 43.

23. John Ireland

John Nicholson Ireland was born in Bowdon, Cheshire on 18 August 1879 and had a sad childhood. He went up to RCM in 1893 to study the piano with Frederick Cliffe, although Ireland never became a proficient pianist. He also studied the organ with Walter Parratt and, in 1897, studied with Stanford.

Ireland's violin and piano sonata no 1 won the Cobbett Prize in 1909. From 1923, he taught at RCM and his many pupils included Richard Arnell, Moeran, Alan and Geoffrey Bush (not related) and the odious Benjamin Britten who said that Ireland was a very weak character. Ireland said that Humphrey Searle was the cleverest musician he ever met.

Although Ireland had a brief marriage to a 17 year old pupil Dorothy Phillips who was 30 years his junior, he was a lifelong bachelor.

Among his interests were the Channel Islands.

His Piano Concerto in E flat is not a good work lacking in originality and some have said that the best bits of this concerto were written by Ravel.

His most famous piece is The Holy Boy and is in many arrangements. He composed two string quartets both on 1897, a sextet of the following year, two violin and piano sonatas, trios, church and organ music and piano music with irrelevant titles such as Merry Andrew, The Towing Path, The Boy Bishop and Amberley Wild Brooks.

His finest work is the choral work, These things shall be.

He was a limited composer.

He died of heart failure on 12 June 1962 in Sussex. He was 82.

24. Thomas Ades

Thomas Ades was born in London on 1 March 1971. He studied piano with Paul Berkowitz and composition with Robert Saxton at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and then at RCM with Alexander Goehr and Robin Holloway. Thomas became professor of composition at RAM and, in 2004, became a honorary doctor of music at London University. He was the first director of the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group in 1999 and the artistic director of the Aldeburgh Festival, 1999 -2008.

He has written three operas, Powder Her Face, The Tempest and The Exterminating Angel, a Chamber Symphony, the Concerto Conciso for piano and ten instruments of 1997, a piano quintet and a few orchestral scores.

I do not know his music and need to investigate it.

25. Richard Rodney Bennett

He was born in Broadstairs, Kent on 29 March 1936, but spent the war years in Devon. He went to Leighton Park School and RAM studying with Howard Ferguson. He was fascinated by serialism and spent two years in Paris with Pierre Boulez.

Bennett taught at RAM 1963-65 and the Peabody Institute in Baltimore 1970-71

He composed many attractive film scores.

There are three good symphonies, concertos for alto saxophone, harpsichord, trumpet, violin, marimba and piano which Stephen Bishop and Martin Jones have taken up. He composed six operas and choral works. His ballet, Jazz Calendar, was successful.

But he became a jazz pianist and 'crossed the line'. He worked with Cleo Laine, Marion Montgomery (I saw him in concert with her) and others and his serious works declined dramatically and that was an artistic pity.

He died on 24 December 2012.

26. Howard Blake

He was born in London on 28 October 1936. In 1982, he wrote the music for the film, *The Snowman*, including the song, *Walking in the Air*. He went to RAM to study music but he did not get on with the college and became an embarrassment and a trouble maker.

He has composed five concertos for clarinet, violin, piano, flute and oboe respectively and many film scores.

It is said that he lived in a beach hut in Cornwall for two years.

He collaborated with the group Queen in the film score, *Flash Gordon*.

His music has a worrying inconsistency.

27. Ronald Corp

He has composed melodious and attractive music, is an accomplished conductor and an Anglo-Catholic priest.

He was born on 4 January 1951 and grew up in Wells, Somerset. His Piano Concerto of 1997 has been recorded by Leon McCawley.

Corp founded the New London Children's Choir in 1991 and has composed much for them and other choirs. There is a symphony of 2009 and three string quartets.

His music has deservedly found many friends.

28. John Joubert

John Pierre Herman Joubert was born in Cape Town on 20 March 1927 and educated at the Diocesan College at Rondebosch. He had originally hoped to be a painter but studied music with William Henry Bell. He came to the UK and studied at RAM with Theodore Holland, Ferguson and Alan Bush.

In 1950, he became a lecturer in music at Hull University and when he moved to Moseley in Birmingham, he lectured in music at Birmingham University.

He married Mary and their daughter Anna is a cellist and their son Pierre is a violinist.

There are two symphonies, three string quartets, three oratorios, some fine church music., songs and concertos for violin, Op 13, piano, Op 25, basson, Op77, and cello, Op 171. There are three piano sonatas and three operas, *Silas Marner*, *Under Western Eyes* and *Jane Eyre*.

29. George Dyson

He was a Yorkshire man born in Halifax on 28 May 1883. He studied at RCM and won the Mendelssohn Scholarship in 1905 and spent some time in Germany and Italy. In 1914, he joined the Royal Fusiliers and was sent home in 1916 with shell shock and, later, joined the RAF.

In 1921, he began teaching at Wellington College and also that year became professor of composition at RCM and a director from 1937.

He was knighted in 1941.

He composed a symphony in 1937, a violin concerto in 1941, and a Concerto leggiero for piano and orchestra in 1951. There some accomplished choral works such as The Canterbury Pilgrims 1930 and Nebuchadnezzar 1934. There is some fine church music.

The difficulty is that he was a composer who lived in the past and, like others, hated new ideas and progress.

He died in Winchester on 28 September 1964.

30. Hamilton Harty

He was born in Hillsborough, County Down on 4 December 1879. His father was an organist in the Church of Ireland. At the age of 12, Hamilton became the organist at Magheracoll Church, County Antrim. He studied at the Royal Irish college of Music with Michele Esposito.

Harty moved to London when he was 20. He married Agnes Nicholls on 15 July 1904 and conducted his Irish Symphony. He also conducted the London Symphony Orchestra and conducted Tristan and Isolde at Covent Garden in 1913 but it was not a good performance. The following year he conducted the Liverpool Philharmonic and became the conductor of the Halle Orchestra in 1920 and severed those ties in 1934.

He made interesting arrangements of music by Handel.

He composed music with a welcome Irish flavour and Irish titles. There is a violin concerto of 1906, a piano concerto in B minor of 1922, two string quartets, songs and choral music. His music is attractive and well written and he was a fine conductor.

In 1936, he was diagnosed with brain cancer and he died on 19 February 1941. He was 61.

31. Constant Lambert

Leonard Constant Lambert was born on 23 August 1905 and educated at Christ's Hospital and RCM with Vaughan Williams, R O Morris and Dyson. He studied conducting with Sargeant and piano with Herbert Fryer.

At the age of 20, Lambert was commissioned to write a ballet for Diaghilev.

Technically, he wrote two piano concertos. The main concerto of 1931 was premiered by Arthur Benjamin in 1931. The other concerto has not always been acknowledged as it is for piano and ten

instruments. There is also The Rio Grande for piano, chorus ad orchestra of 1927. And there is a piano sonata of 1930.

He had a meteoric celebrity status for many years. His book Music Ho of 1934 was greatly admired.

He married Florence Kaye and divorced her in 1947 Their son was into pop music with The Who. Lambert promptly married the artist Isabel Delmer.

Lambert had an on off affair with Margot Fonteyn.

He died of undiagnosed diabetes and alcoholism on 21 August 1951.

32. Sir Alexander Campbell Mackenzie

He was born in Edinburgh on 22 August 1847 and, by the age of 8, was playing the violin in his father's orchestra. He went to Schwarzburg Sondershause in Germany to study with K W Ulrich and Edouard Stein and then to RAM. He was awarded the Kings Scholarship and played in orchestras and music halls sometimes under Michael Costa. He returned to Edinburgh in 1865 teaching and, in 1870, was in charge of music at St Georges, Charlotte Square.

He succeeded Sir George Macfarren as principal of RAM.

He conducted the Royal Choral Society and the Philharmonic Society and premiered works by Borodin and Tchaikovsky. He wrote books on Verdi and Liszt and he composed about 22 orchestral works including overtures and Scottish Rhapsodies, a violin concerto Op 32, Scottish Concerto for piano and orchestra in 1897, choral works and oratorios which were well received at the time. There are six operas /lyric dramas.

He died in London on 28 April 1935. He was 87.

33. Andzej Panufnik

He was born in Warsaw on 24 September 1914 and graduated from the Conservatory in 1936. He went to Vienna to study with Weingartner and was interested in the Second Viennese School and serialism.

Panufnik lived in Paris and London. Back in Warsaw, he formed a piano duo with Witold Lutoslawski during World War II. He fled the 1944 Warsaw Uprising with his mother in 1944. On his return to Warsaw, he found his manuscripts of two symphonies and the Tragic Overture destroyed. He moved to Krakov and wrote film music for the Army Film Unit and became principal conductor of the Krakov Philharmonic Orchestra and, later, of the now defunct Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra.

He left Poland with little money and had financial help from Vaughan Williams and the pianist Witold Malcuzyński. In 1960, he visited the USA to meet Stokowski. He became principal conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra between 1957-59 and became a British citizen in 1961. He was knighted in 1991 and died in Twickenham on 27 October 1991.

He composed eight existing symphonies all with titles Rustica, Elegiaca, Sacra, Concertante, di Stere, Mistica, Metasinfonie and Votiva. Titles can be a hindrance and deflect from the music itself.

There are four concertos, violin, piano, bassoon and cello respectively, three string quartets, a ballet and vocal music.

His music varies in quality.

34 Sir Charles Hubert Hastings Parry

He was born on 27 February 1848 in Bournemouth and brought up at Highnam Court in Gloucestershire. He went up to Eton in 1861 and took his BMusic in Oxford when he was only 18. He moved to London and worked for four years at Lloyds Bank. In 1872, he married Elizabeth Maud Herbert. He had lessons from Sterndale Bennett and the pianist Edward Dannreuther. In 1883, he began his studies for his doctorate in music at Cambridge.

Sadly, he is only generally known for Jerusalem to weird words by William Blake.

Musicians of his day vastly preferred his music to that of Elgar.

He wrote very many songs, choral music, some with orchestra and some unaccompanied. His Blest Pair of Sirens is an amazing piece. There are five symphonies, although the fifth is called Symphonic Fantasia. Fine church music and organ music flowed from his pen as did three string quartets and two piano trios.

The piano concerto dates from 1872 and there is one opera, Guinevere, of 1886.

Unlike Elgar, his orchestration and sense of form is excellent

He had heart trouble for most of his life and died in West Sussex on 7 October 1918. He was 70.

35. Michael Kemp Tippett

He was born in London on 2 January 1905. At 13, he attended a public school in Edinburgh and then studied at RCM with Charles Wood, Kitson and R O Morris. He received his BMus in 1928 and taught at Hazelwood Preparatory School.

He was a left wing sympathiser and joined the Communist Party in 1935. In his early years, he was a lover of Beethoven and, later, Handel and Corelli.

He had a relationship with Francesca Allison who committed suicide in 1944. Tippett was homosexual and two of his many partners were painters.

His first success was the Concerto for double string orchestra of 1939 which some foolishly said was in the Elgar tradition.

In 1940, he began to teach at Morley College.

He was a conscientious objector and spent three months in prison as a result.

He composed five operas, Midsummer Marriage, King Priam, The Knot Garden, Ice Break and New Year. There are four symphonies, the opening of the second is remarkable, some fine song cycles, four piano sonatas and five quartets. There is a Triple Concerto, Concerto for orchestra and the Piano Concerto of 1955 which many concert pianist cannot understand.

He was very intellectual and people found him impossible to understand.

He died on 8 January 1998.

36. Donald Francis Tovey

Tovey was born on 17 July 1875 in Eton and studied with Parry.

Tovey was a friend of the violinist Joseph Joachim and Tovey taught music at Edinburgh University. He founded the Reid Concerts. He premiered his own piano concerto Op15 in 1903 with Henry Wood.

He wrote many essays on music and some of these are not helpful. His tempi for the Beethoven sonatas are often too slow and his fingering is not always good. He made an edition of Bach's Art of Fugue.

He was knighted in 1935 and the Elgar brigade assert it was down to Elgar !

Tovey composed a symphony Op 32, a cello concerto as well as the piano concerto. There are three piano trios and two quartets.

He died on 10 July 1940 in Edinburgh.

37. Benjamin Britten

Along with Alan Bush and Sorabji, Britten was one of the nastiest men I ever met.

Before I knew anything about his life style, I did not like his music.

Our Hunting Fathers was said to be about man's relationship with animals but Britten admitted it was about bestiality. The Serenade for tenor, horn and strings was also sexual. The tenor was a man and the horn represented a penis. The Rape of Lucretia of 1946 was deliberately written to hide his homosexuality and the first Canticle My beloved is mine is also portrayed as homosexuality as was his opera Billy Budd. Britten slept with and had sex with the actor David Hemmings and with Wolf Scherchen and many other pubescent boys. His opera, The Turn of the Screw, told of dead Quint who wanted to come back to life and have sex with the boy, Miles.

The conductor of a proposed performance of one of Britten's works with gave Britten a piece of his mind and walked out.

The last item in the War Requiem is a homosexual duet. Death in Venice is about a man in love with a boy. When watching a choral work by J C Bach the choirboys were laughing and wet themselves. Britten was turned on.

He was known to have said, I would like to see what choirboys have under their cassocks. His work Young Apollo for piano and orchestra was inspired by a full frontal nude of this handsome figure of which Britten said, i like what he's got.

He used boys in the Spring Symphony.

He said to Walton, and I heard it, "You don't know what you have missed if you have never buggered a boy".

His having anal sex with underage boys is statutory rape.

When the harpsichordist, Viola Tunnard, told Britten she had cancer he retorted, Don' t die yet. I cannot get a replacement.

He was a coward during World War II and, with Peter Pears, fled to the USA. When America called up men,including the British.,to serve in the war, Britten and Pears were called up. These two individuals organised the dismissal of the three ladies who ran CEMA, later known as the Arts Council, so that these two cowards could take over this organisation.

When Lady Susanna Walton was shown around Britten's home, she noticed only one bed and asked, Where does Mr. Pears sleep ?

His piano concerto is awful and includes a waltz and a march. He would criticise Beethoven without mercy and admired gay composers such as Tchaikovsky. He said that only gay composers could write great music.

I am not homophobic. I have male friends, some of who are professional musicians, who are homosexual but they do not have sex with boys or are effeminate.

People complain that I dwell on his life style and should only concern myself with his music but his life style is in his music.

Britten became a life peer and titled Lord Britten which added to his narcissism. He was a pervert, paedophile and a criminal.

Homosexuality was a crime for most of his life.

He was born in Lowestoft on 22 November 1913 and died on 4 December 1975 of heart failure brought on by syphilis as it has now been disclosed..

38. Robert Still

He was born in London on 10 June 1910. He attended Eton College 1923-29 and then Trinity College, Oxford graduating in history and French and, later, music with Ernest Walker and Hugn Allen. At RCM he studied with Kitson and Gordon Jacob and, later in life, with Hans Keller. Still taught music at Eton and during the war manned searchlights and conducted the band of the Royal Artillery. He married in 1944 and had four daughters. He considered becoming a Freudian lay psychoanalyst and eventually died of a heart attack on 13 January 1971.

His piano concerto dates from 1970. He wrote a violin concerto in 1969, an unfinished viola concerto, and an incomplete opera Oedipus. There are four quartets, three piano sonatas, many songs and four symphonies of which the fourth is exceptional.

39. Ruth Gipps

Wid was a personal friend who suffered at the hands of two highly prejudiced conductors, Beecham and the awful David Willcocks.

She was born at Bexhill on Sea on 20 February 1921 and had her first piano lessons with her mother at the age of four. In 1929 she performed her piano work The Fairy Shoemaker.

In 1934, her family opened the Bexhill School of Music. She entered for the LRAM in 1936, and the following year went up to RCM and studied with R O Morris and Herbert Fryer. In 1938, she had oboe lessons with Leon Gossens and composition with Gordon Jacob. In 1942, she married the clarinettist Robert Baker and their son, Lance, was born to them and became a horn player. Ruth had some lessons from Tobias Matthay, then 85 year old. She played the cor anglais in Sibelius's Swan of Tuonela.

She was an outstanding pianist playing Brahms 2, the Emperor and Glazunov. She achieved her DMus from Durham, taught at Trinity, London from 1959-1966, took charge of two orchestras, the London Chanticleer and the London Repertoire orchestra. She became the choral director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra and Beecham objected to the appointment.

George Weldon took up her Symphony no 1 which dates from 1949 and Willcocks said she was having an affair with this conductor. Willcocks did not approve of a female choir mistress. He was a most unpleasant man.

Ruth composed five symphonies, concertos for clarinet, oboe, violin, horn and piano (1948) respectively. I had to edit the piano concerto and have it printed, score and parts, and yet no reference was made to my work on this and the subsequent recording. There is also a concerto for violin, cello and orchestra of 1957.

Ruth was a good friend and an individual driving a red Morgan sports car.

She died in an Eastbourne Nursing Home on 23 February 1999 She had a stroke and cancer.

40. Arnold Cooke

Arnold Atkinson Cooke was born in Gomersal, Yorkshire on 4 November 1906 and was educated at Repton School, Gonville and Caius Cambridge where he read history. In 1929, he took his second degree in music. He studied in Berlin with Paul Hindemith and then became director of the Festival Theatre in Cambridge.

His piano concerto dates from 1943 and was premiered by Louis Kentner and the BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Adrian Boult. Cooke Composed two operas, a ballet, vocal and choral music, two clarinet concertos, a cello concerto premiered by Thoma Igloi, a Concerto for orchestra premiered by the brilliant Bryden Thomson, a quartet and six symphonies.

Cooke was a founder member of the Composers Guild and professor of harmony and counterpoint at Trinity College, London 1947 to 1976

He had a stroke in 1993 and died on 13 August 2005 at Five Oak Green in Kent.

His music is well written but not very original. Nonetheless, it is worth hearing.

41. Haydn Wood

He was born in Slaithwaite, Yorkshire on 25 March 1882 but, at the age of three, the family moved to the Isle of Man. In 1897, he entered RCM studying with Arbos and Stanford. At the opening of

RCM's concert hall in 1901, Sarasate and Joachim were impressed by him and sent him to Brussels to study with Cesar Thomson. Then he went on a world tour with the singer Dame Emma Albani and accompanied her in recitals for about eight years.

For the orchestra, he composed 15 suites, 9 rhapsodies, 8 overtures and concertante pieces. There is a piano concerto of 1909 and a violin concerto of 1933.

He is best remembered for his songs such as Roses of Picardy, A Brown Bird Singing. Laughter of the Children etc.

But he is often dismissed because his music is light, which it is.

He died on 11 March 1959.

42. David Dorward

It is a great relief to be able to write positively about a composer who is a kind and delightful person. David Campbell Dorward was born in Dundee on 7 August 1933, attended Monike Primary School 1938-1945, and then Morgan Academy until 1951, He read English and History at St Andrews University obtaining his MA with honours. He studied music with Cedric Thorpe Davie and had two years National Service with the Royal Artillery. He entered for the Blumenthal scholarship at RAM. In June 1968, he married Janet Offord and they had three children.

His has a love for Sibelius and admires many British composers although Elgar is a blind spot.

He composed a short opera, Tonight, Mrs Morrison, two symphonies, concertos for violin, cello and viola respectively and his Piano Concerto of 1976 was a disaster as the pianist Ronald Stevenson invented most of the finale. There is a musical, A Christmas Carol. The five string quartets are very fine, the second being quite superb and the fourth written in memory of his father who died in September 1971. There are many other works including a splendid Ode for small orchestra.

He is a shy, modest man and an authority on many aspects of music.

43. Alexander Goehr

He was born on 10 August 1932, the son of Walter Goehr, a pupil of Schoenberg.

Alexander was one of the Manchester Group which included Maxwell Davies, Harrison Birtwhistle and John Ogden. In 1955, Goehr went to Paris to study with Messiaen and then Pierre Boulez, returning to the UK in 1956. He was professor of music in Cambridge from 1976 to 1999. He wrote five operas including Arden must die. There are three string quartets, a piano sonata Op 2, a piano concerto Op 33 of 1972, written ten years after his violin concerto. There are symphonies such as the Little Symphony, Sinfonia, Symphony in one movement and Symphony with Chaconne.

He is a very clever, gifted and exceptional composer and deserves to be admired yet his music is often tough and uncompromising.

44. Richard Anthony Sayer Arnell was born in Hampstead on 15 September 1917. He was known as Tony to his friends. He studied at RCM with John Dykes for piano and John Ireland for composition. He went to the New York Fair of 1939 and because of the war was advised by the

authorities to stay there. From 1943 -45, he was the consultant for the BBC North American Service. He met Beecham there who premiered eight of Tony's works. From 1947 to 1987 Tony taught at Trinity College, London.

His marriages and romances he insisted should be kept private but Lewis Foreman and Paul Jackson did not respect this. These two also invented the dreadful lie that William Glock, when controller of Radio Three, prevented conservative and tonal music being broadcast in favour of the avant garde. Absolute nonsense.

Tony completed six symphonies all of which are very worthy and number five is a gem. He wrote two violin concertos, a splendid piano concerto Op 44 recorded by David Owen Norris on Dutton, although there is a second but it is not called a concerto but Sections written for John Ogden. There is a harpsichord concerto, two piano sonatas, two organ sonatas, five string quartets and film music. His ballet scores had brief success.

His music is tonal and immediate.

He died in a Musicians Benevolent Home in Bromley on 10 April 2009 possibly troubled by the news that everyone was going to be moved. He was 91.

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