

## LELAND SMITH

David C F Wright DMus

Leland Smith was born on 6 August 1925 in Oakland, California,

By the mid 1930s, he was studying the piano and was particularly interested in the woodwind family. He proceeded to the study of string and brass instruments.

He joined the Musicians Union when he was seventeen and was playing the tenor saxophone in some San Francisco nightclubs, some of which were of ill-repute.

He had started to compose at the age of eleven and had theory lessons in Oakland Schools. When he was seventeen he studied composition, theory and orchestration with Darius Milhaud in the Oakland area.



Smith served in the Navy during WWII and was a member of the 13th Naval District Admiral's Band based in Bremerton in Washington. After the war he spent 30 months studying with Roger Sessions.

*(See separate article on Roger Sessions).*

The awards of BA and MA were bestowed on Leland Smith. He was an assistant to Milhaud with his teaching at Mills College. In 1948, Smith went to Paris to study with Olivier Messiaen concentrating on composition and the study of woodwind instruments.

He returned to New York in 1948 playing with the National Orchestral Association and the International Society for contemporary Music. He also worked for the Mercury Publishing Company and then was a bassoonist in the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra, the New York City Ballet and the Chicago Lyric Opera and the magnificent Chicago Symphony Orchestra, an orchestra which Fritz Reiner elevated to one of the greatest orchestras in the world. It is a pity that his successors did not maintain that superior quality.

He was also a good clarinetist

Leland Smith was a teacher for 42 years... a year at Mills College, six years at the University of Chicago and 34 years at Stanford University from 1958. He also taught at Colgate University and was Visiting Distinguished Professor at the University of California. He has lectured on various music subjects in about ten countries. In the 1960s, he began studying electronic music and taught in Paris as a music programming consultation. It may be true to say that his computer generated music is what he best noted for. He originated a software programme called SCORE.

But the 'conventional music' has his own personal style with tonality and atonality. It may be correct to say that his music is an acquired taste. I am still getting to know it.

His works include:

Overture: Santa Claus

Piano Sonata (1954)

Exercises for Mrs Smith (trumpet studies)

Quartet for horn and string trio  
Quintet for bassoon and string quartet  
Sonata for trumpet and piano  
Suite for solo viola  
Three Pacifists Songs  
Trio for flute, clarinet and piano  
Trio for woodwind  
Wind Quintet  
Sonata for hecklephone and piano  
Six Bagatelles for piano  
Sonata for viola and piano  
Sonatina for violin and piano  
Concert Piece for violin and piano

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