

WILLIAM HURLSTONE

David C F Wright DMus

There are many who believe that if William Martin Yeates Hurlstone had not died so young, when only thirty, he could have been a musical force to be reckoned with. He did not belong to the school of Edwardian pomp and tedium but his music had movement, content and variety. His attractive Piano Trio in G is very well written with life, melody, coherence and it maintains our attention.

His father was Martin de Galway Hurlstone who was a surgeon and William was the eldest of four children, the other three being girls respectively named Florence, Lucy and Katherine. There was always music in the house and all the youngsters were gifted. William's grandfather was Frederick Yeates Hurlstone the first president of the Royal Society of British Art.

William was born at Richmond Gardens, Fulham on 7 January 1876, the eldest of four children already mentioned. He was composing by the age of nine and his father had his son's Five Easy Waltzes published in 1885.

The young lad learned to play the clarinet and had a preference for music with wind instruments.

He entered the Royal College of Music in April 1894. That year he composed his Variations in G minor for clarinet, bassoon and piano. He reused the theme in his Variations on an original theme for orchestra. At RCM he won the Dove prize.

One of his teachers, Charles Villiers Stanford, said that of all his students, Hurlstone was the most talented. And, remember, Stanford taught Vaughan Williams and Holst. It was after being awarded a scholarship that William studied at the Royal College of Music. His piano teachers were the eccentric Algernon Ashton and Edward Dannreuther and Stanford and Frederick Bridge for composition.

Hurlstone senior developed smallpox and had to give up surgery. He also lost his sight. This resulted in financial difficulties and the family were fortunate to have the generous help of Captain Alex S Beaumont.

Martin Hurlstone died of Bright's disease in 1896.

In 1906, Hurlstone returned to the Royal College of music as a professor but died on 30 May that year of bronchial asthma which had blighted his life.

WORKS include

Two Piano Trios 1891

Phantasie in A minor for string quartet, which won the Cobbett Chamber Prize

Piano Quartet in E minor Op 43

Piano Trio in G 1905

Trio in G minor for clarinet, bassoon and piano

Quintet in G minor for flute, clarinet, horn, bassoon and piano

Piano Sonata in F minor 1894

Miscellaneous piano works

Cello Sonata 1899

Violin Sonata 1896

Bassoon Sonata in F

ORCHESTRAL

Variations on a Swedish Air

Variations on a Hungarian Air 1897
Variations on an original theme 1896
Suite Magic Mirror 1901
Piano Concerto in D 1895

There are some songs and there was a proposed opera written with a fellow student by the name of Hart and also a dramatic work, Alfred the Great. Of his sonatas, the piano sonata is disappointing. The Bassoon Sonata is hugely entertaining.

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