

ALAN SPEDDING

David C F Wright DMus

Organists and composers of sacred music are often forgotten and, sadly, there is little call for ecclesiastical music as we are living in an increasing secular society and the appreciation of religious music has a small following.

Alan Spedding is one such casualty. And yet he was a fine organist, composer, conductor and teacher.

I am advised that he was born in Wimbledon, London on 25 September in 1938. He was educated at Rutlish School, Merton, South London, studied organ and the cello at the Royal College of Music. His organ tutor was John Birch of Chichester Cathedral. From 1964 to 1967, he was the organist at Kingston on Thames and, at one time, at St Johns, Wimbledon. From 1967, he was the organist and choir master of Beverley Minister, one of 56 applicants, in the East Riding of Yorkshire, a career that lasted for 42 years until he retired in 2009.

He was the director of the Hull Choral Society for 16 years and the conductor of the East Riding County Choir from 1969. For 18 years, he was the music master at Beverley Grammar School and taught part time at the University of Hull, becoming a honorary director in 1994.

He was awarded the MBE in 2003.

He made organ recordings including one on the Charles Allen Organ of St Mary and St Everilda at Everingham with music by Handel, Boyce, Wesley and others.

I vaguely recall the BBC broadcasting a chamber work by him.

He made a series for Yorkshire Television called The Psalms of David which was introduced by James Galway. For the 1979 Festival of Remembrance at the Albert Hall he took the Minster Choir and played the organ.

He had an interest in things medieval particularly carvings of musical minstrels on which he was a noted authority.

An inspirational and hard working man with an easy disposition and good humour are some of the qualities he possessed.

He died on 6 March 2014. He was 76. The Yorkshire Post says he was 70. He leaves a wife, Ann, a piano teacher whom he married at St Johns Wimbledon and had two sons, John and Christopher, and six grandchildren.

His anthems and organ music is published by Banks Music at The Granary, West Court, Hovington, York, telephone 01653 628545

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