

## A LOST GENERATION OF PIANISTS?

by Dr David C. F. Wright

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For easy reference here is a list of vignettes of pianists in this article:

Colin Horsley, Herbert Fryer, Lance Dossor, Irene Scharrer, Myra Hess, Esther Fischer, Kendall Taylor, Colin Kingsley, Kyla Grrenbaum, John Clegg, Benjamin Kaplan, Peter Katin, Lisa Fuchsova, Frank Merrick, Eileen Broster, Arthur Alexander, David Parkhouse, Lamar Crowson, James Gibb, Edith Vogel, Ronald Smith, Ian Lake, Terence Judd, Moura Lympany, Nina Milkina, Katharina Wolpe, Denis Matthews, John Bingham, Harriet Cohen, Clifford Curzon, Peter Wallfisch, John Ogdon, Susan Bradshaw, Valerie Tryon and Margaret Kitchin

Nine years into the twenty first century we can very easily forget the great pianists of the past. There is an unfortunate attitude prevailing in some quarters that only living performers deserve our attention and, therefore, some pianists of a previous generation, and some who are still working today may be in danger of being forgotten at some time in the future. Many fine pianists who have died, even in comparatively recent years, are ignored or forgotten despite some of their recordings being available.

It is not possible to mention all the pianists of yesteryear that have graced the concert platforms in England, but this article is written to remind us of some of the outstanding pianists who may be in danger of being forgotten. For example, David Parkhouse was an outstanding pianist, but there are apparently no solo recordings of his available and many music lovers of today do not even know about him.

However, I have included in this article many fine pianists who are still alive and still delighting audiences and some who have recordings available. It is hard to believe that some of these may be forgotten.

I have not put the pianists in any order for many reasons including the wish to avoid any suggestion of superiority and in order to be spontaneous. However, my study of these pianists and the enjoyment of their performances has, of course, lead to my assessments. And, of course, this article is not satisfactory since I am only setting out the briefest biographies but, later, I may choose to write extended articles about some of these pianists, or hope that others might do so.

As a starting point, Colin Horsley is one such pianist of yesteryear. He was born in Wanganui, New Zealand in 1920.

Through the Associated Board, he won a scholarship to study in England arriving in London in 1936 and studied at the Royal College of Music (RCM).

His grandfather, who was born in 1854, had left the Isle of Man in 1880 for Auckland in New Zealand in which country Colin's father was born in 1885.

Colin Horsley studied with Herbert Fryer and was a student in the next generation after Cyril Smith (1909-1974) who, sadly, is only remembered for the loss of the use of a hand when he had a stroke in the USSR in 1956. Another pianist he met was Kendall Taylor, who was born in Sheffield in 1905. Horsley then studied with Angus Morrison (1902-1989). Later, he was to have six lessons with Tobias Matthay when Matthay was well into his eighties which he describes as a revelation. Colin Horsley was also helped by Irene Scharrer.

Colin Horsley made his London debut in 1943 at a Promenade Concert as one of three soloists in Bach's Concerto for three pianos. In those days students from RCM and RAM alternated yearly to be soloists and this was the first year that the Promenade Concerts were held at the Albert Hall. Horsley's solo debut was in Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no. 3. He knew Medtner and rates the Sonata in G minor very highly and premiered the Piano Quintet because the composer was ill with heart trouble and was unable to perform it himself. After Medtner's death his widow asked Horsley to perform the Piano Concerto no. 3 at a Memorial Concert at the Royal Festival Hall under Anatole Fistoulari.

In 1946 Horsley premiered the scintillating Piano Concerto no 1, Op 5 by Humphrey Searle, a work of great technical difficulty which indicates the pianist's ability. Horsley found Searle a splendid character, a modest and most likeable man. Horsley also worked with Max Rostal performing all the Beethoven violin sonata with him. Rostal (1905-1991) was Austrian and settled in London in 1934 and was a magnificent teacher as well as a performer, and he introduced us to many fine contemporary works. Horsley also worked with the legendary Dennis Brain (1921-1957) in such works as the horn trios of Brahms and Lennox Berkeley

and recorded much of Berkeley's solo piano music. Although the Vaughan Williams's piano concerto is not pianistic, he has played it and admires such works as *The Lark Ascending* and *Flos Campi*. Horsley was awarded the OBE in 1963 and taught at the Royal Manchester College of Music from 1964 to 1980 and at RCM from 1955 to 1990.

Herbert Fryer was born in London in 1877 and was a pupil of Oscar Beringer (1844- 1922) at the Royal Academy of Music (RAM). Beringer gave the British premiere of Brahms's Piano Concerto no. 2. Fryer won a scholarship to RCM and spent time with Busoni at Weimar. Fryer was professor of piano at RAM (1905-1914) and, thereafter, went to New York where he was professor of piano for the duration of World War I, before taking up a similar post at RCM. His students included Philip Challis, Constant Lambert, who dedicated his *Rio Grande* to him, George Malcolm, Cyril Smith, Kendall Taylor and Colin Horsley. Fryer died in 1975.

Another of his many pupils was Lance Dossor who was born in Weston super Mare in 1916. After studying at RCM he won prizes at the Liszt competition and the Warsaw Competition both in 1937, which was also the year that he made his London debut. He went to live in Australia in 1953 and was professor of piano in Adelaide. Arthur Benjamin dedicated his *Siliciana* of 1936 to Dossor.

I am grateful to Eileen Broster for her assessment of Cyril Smith. She has said that Cyril Smith was a Rachmaninov specialist (he was also magnificent in Brahms), a very kind man and thorough as a teacher. He was a generous man and often a lesson with him would take half a day or a whole day with food provided as well. He did not believe in short cuts or making things simpler. You played what was written.

Irene Scharrer was born in London in 1885 and made her debut in a Promenade Concert in 1900. She pestered Henry Wood and almost camped on his doorstep until he agreed to hear her play. She studied at RAM with Tobias Matthay and sometimes appeared with Myra Hess as a piano duo but she had a wide solo repertoire specialising in Chopin and Schumann. She has been credited with the rescuing from possible oblivion the famous Scherzo from Liszt's *Symphony Concertante* no. 4.

Myra Hess (1890 - 1965), will be remembered for giving many wartime concerts at London's National Gallery and sustaining morale. There are those who say that her Beethoven's Fourth Concerto was painfully slow and her finale of the Schumann concerto was also atrociously slow, and her recording testifies to this. However, Colin Kingsley has said that, in her early days, Hess played contemporary music of its time including D'Indy's Sonata which was surprising as D'Indy, like Chopin, was outrageously anti-Semitic and Hess was Jewish. It is also said that her early recording of the Schumann concerto with Walter Goehr was not pedestrian. In her early days she was associated with the great works such as Liszt's First Concerto and Brahms's Second Concerto. Hess was much revered and people still talk with enthusiasm of her playing of the Brahms' F minor sonata.

It is true that her playing during the Second World War lessened her attitude to music and by her making it acceptable to people, who had no previous experience of classical music, she 'adjusted' it to make it more palatable.

Bax referred to Scharrer, Hess and Cohen as the three giggling girls.

Esther Fisher (1900-1992) came from Christchurch, New Zealand. Her father was a New Zealand MP and a tennis champion. Her first professional teacher was Alfred Bunz who studied with Leschetizky in Vienna from 1903-1906. Esther once played for Busoni as a girl. She made her London debut in 1923 having from 1920, studied in Paris with Isidore Philipp (1863-1958). She was a close friend of Cyril Scott, who was into both spiritualism and the occult, and often played piano duos with him, but he was not a good pianist although, surprisingly, he was a piano teacher. His compositions leave much to be desired and he claimed that they were dictated by the spirit of the Great Master in Tibet. Scott also wrote poetry, books on philosophical and medical matters and yet he was not a doctor or had any experience in the medical profession. As for Fisher, she married a baronet in the early 1950s and became Lady Barran, but her husband died soon afterwards. She does not seem to have left any recordings that are now available, but those who heard her play speak well of her performances. She was a piano professor at RCM.

No praise is too high for Kendall Taylor who was professor of piano for over fifty years at RCM from 1929. He made his debut with Mozart's lovely D minor concerto K 466 when he was twelve. He made twenty six appearances at the Proms sometimes with Barbirolli. In fact it was said that he was the only soloist who persevered with this inadequate conductor. Taylor had an amazing affinity with Beethoven. He loved the countryside and was a Christian and, indeed, a truly admirable man and the best piano teacher I have encountered. He died on 5 December 1999 aged 94.

One must speak about the brilliance of the pianist Colin Kingsley, not only as a soloist but as a superlative accompanist, chamber player and lecturer. Kingsley was born in London in 1925 and largely taught himself before studying at Cambridge University for his BMus and with Arthur Alexander at RCM. In 1952 he studied with Marcel Ciampi of the Paris Conservatoire and regards him as the most lucid exponent of movement and muscular control. Kingsley's career was also encouraged by his enthusiasm for John Ireland all of whose works he has played, and, after this, Kingsley was fascinated by Peter Racine Fricker's work premiering his Anniversary at Cheltenham in 1978. He has played most of Fricker's piano music including some of his very early pieces. As Fricker had an interest in the piano works of Faure, Kingsley took this composer up as well. He performed Hindemith and prefers his first sonata. He has also played Maxwell Davies's Op 2 and, in the 1960s, took up the works of John White of which he still speaks with unabated enthusiasm. Kingsley has played most of the concertos in the classical repertoire and, while he has loved Brahms's Piano Concerto no 2 since he was fifteen, he has only played it once explaining that he has the wrong type of hands for it. He has toured the world introducing audiences to some splendid contemporary works.

He taught at RCM and at Edinburgh University at the behest of Sydney Newman, and among Kingsley's pupils are Donald Runnicles, now known primarily as a conductor, and Anthony Peebles.

We recall the pioneering work of Kyla Greenbaum, born in Brighton in 1922, who gave the British premieres of Schoenberg's amazing Piano Concerto in 1945 and Prokofiev's Piano Concerto no. 2 in 1955.

John Clegg was born in London in 1928. He began to seriously study the piano with a lady in a village near Bletchley where he was evacuated in 1939-40. This teacher encouraged him to listen to music. On his return to London, he studied with Herbert Fryer until Fryer's death, often at his country house in Effingham. Clegg won a scholarship to Jesus College, Cambridge, to study mathematics (1946- 1949) and, after a year in National Service, he made his London debut playing French music of which he is particularly keen. His concerto debut was in Rachmaninov's First Concerto which was warmly received. Many of his performances were overseas the tours often facilitated by the British Council including about 20 tours to South Africa. He taught at the Watford School of Music and, from 1961 at the University of Aberystwyth teaching maths and music. These were also his disciplines at the University of Lancaster from 1965 although, in his last ten years there, he was pianist in residence. He performed for the BBC many times specialising in Medtner who, along with Reger, were composers championed by Robert Layton and Robert Simpson, and, with the conductor Constantin Silvestri, John Clegg performed the amazing Reger concerto three times.

A pianist who will probably be remembered for his teaching and famous pupils is Benjamin Kaplan who was born in London in 1929. His early musical experience was due to his father Alf Kaplan being in Oscar Rabin's dance band at the Hammersmith Palais. Benjamin Kaplan was evacuated when he was nine and, after the war, was an external student at the Guildhall School with Frank Griggs. A great influence on Kaplan's life was the violinist Leonard Freidmann with whom he travelled in Europe giving recitals. Kaplan was in the Army Education Corps and later studied for five years with Franz Reizenstein and, thereafter had five years with Louis Kentner. In 1954 he made his Wigmore Hall debut recital. He was keen on the music of John Ireland and Bax, particularly the F sharp minor sonata, and he premiered Humphrey Searle's Concertante for piano, percussion and string orchestra. Kaplan came second in the Liszt Competition in 1961 and gave recitals for the BBC between 1960-1978 before devoting his time to teaching in England, New York and Japan and among his pupils are Daniel Blumenthal and the brilliant Noriko Ogawa who was born in 1962.

He also accompanied Britain's finest contralto, Sybil Michelow, in some of Frank Merrick's Esperanto songs.

Peter Katin was born in 1930 and is not only a pianist of the very highest rank but it is true to say that his playing is always beautiful. He was born in England but is a Canadian citizen. His London debut was in 1948. His career took off when he played Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no 3 at a Promenade Concert in 1953. It was such an amazing performance that people still talk about it today. His recording of the Rachmaninov preludes cannot be bettered. In his early days, he played all the war horses such as the Tchaikovsky and, for decades, his was the only recording of Tchaikovsky's Concert Fantasy. His Liszt was remarkable causing a fellow pianist to write, 'Katin performs feats of prestigious prestidigitation.' Later, Katin was to delight with his Mozart, Haydn and his Beethoven. He has also specialised in Schubert and Chopin. He recorded the William Mathias Piano Concerto no. 3 and Malcolm Lipkin wrote a sonata for him. Katin was professor of piano at RAM from 1956 to 1969 and at the University of Western Ontario from 1978-1984. He is in danger of being forgotten. The BBC has not given him a recital or concert for many

years and yet he is undoubtedly one of the finest pianists of all.

Another stunning pianist in danger of being forgotten is Liza Fuchsova who was born in Brno in 1913 and who studied at Brno and at the Prague Conservatory and taught there after graduating, and, later, settled in the UK in 1939 as a refugee from the Nazis. She was a truly sensational pianist and a charming, smart and elegant woman. Karol Janovicky wrote his Variations on a theme of Brigadier H Smith and remarks on how well she performed the work. She premiered Martinu's Concertino H 269 with amazing clarity and her reliable dependable accuracy. Those who knew her said that she was and will remain the best Janacek pianist of all, and she was connected with the Society of the Promotion of New Music. Humphrey Searle wrote the fiendishly difficult Toccata from his Op 14 for her. She was superb in chamber music and the pianist for the Dumka Trio and an excellent teacher. She died in London in 1977. (See my separate article about [Liza Fuchsova](#))

Frank Merrick was born in Bristol in 1886. He made his London debut in 1903. He won the Diploma of Honour at the Rubinstein competition in St Petersburg in 1910. He was professor of piano at the Royal Manchester College of Music (1911-1929) and on the staff at RCM from 1929-1956 and at Trinity College of Music from 1956-1975. He completed Schubert's Unfinished Symphony although one wonders why. He revived interest in the music of John Field. It is reported that Merrick did not like the music of Rachmaninov. Merrick composed much music including two very attractive piano concertos (1905 and 1936) and a Concerto in A minor for two pianos, a piano trio, a piano quartet, a symphony in D minor, songs and psalm settings. Some songs are in Esperanto which he learned while he was in prison as a conscientious objector in World War I. He was also a male suffragette. There are sonatas for violin, viola and cello respectively, and a piano sonata in A minor dating from 1902 which I am currently deciphering for possible publication. There appears to be three other piano sonatas, one in E flat of 1936, another in B and "no. 2" in E minor. He recorded his sonatas in E flat and E minor and two movements from the sonata in B. As a performer, he specialised in the music of Bax, Ireland and Rawsthorne and was made a CBE in 1976. Among his very many pupils were two future directors of RCM the ultra fussy and infuriating David Willcocks (1974-1984) and M Gough Matthews (1984-93). Frank Merrick died in 1981

Eileen Broster has told me that Frank Merrick was a Father Christmas figure, gentle, cultured and kindness itself and, when he was a boy, he lived with his teacher Theodor Lescheitzky, as did many other of his students.

There were other notable piano professors such as Arthur Alexander and Harold Craxton. Craxton was born in London in 1885, married in 1915 and had six children of whom Janet was the most brilliant oboist of her generation. He taught at the Matthay Piano School (1914-1940) and also at RAM (1919-1961). Not only was he a fine pianist but a truly superb accompanist working with Nellie Melba, Clara Butt, John McCormack and Lionel Tertis. With Tovey, he edited the Beethoven sonatas and Chopin works for the Associated Board. He was a well-loved and splendid teacher, a composer and his songs need to be revived. He died in 1971.

Arthur Alexander was born in Dunedin, New Zealand in 1891 and studied at RAM. He won the McFarren Prize and the Chappell Gold Medal and then taught at the Matthay School. He was professor of piano at RCM from 1920 and gave the premiere of Bax's Piano Sonata no. 2. In 1921 he married Freda Swain and among his other pupils were Ruth Gipps, Elisabeth Maconchy and Helen Perkin, a very fine pianist who specialised in contemporary works.

Another pianist of note was David Parkhouse and, sadly, one wonders how many will remember him. He was born in Teignmouth, Devon in 1930, studied at RCM with Herbert Fryer and Lance Dossor, won the Chappell Medal in 1948 and married the cellist Eileen Croxford. He served in the RAF and won many more prizes for his musical prowess. As a soloist he gave performances of profound commitment and moving power. He was an outstanding pianist and somewhat revered. He devoted most of his life to being the pianist in the Music Group of London. He died in 1989.

The Parkhouse Award was set up in his memory. It is an international chamber music competition for piano trios and piano quartets.

Lamar Crowson also studied at RCM and with Arthur Benjamin. Benjamin dedicated his Twelve Studies to him and among Crowson's pupils are Howard Shelley and the late lamented Clifford Benson.

John Lamar Crowson was born in Tampa, Florida in 1926 and attended Reed College (1943-1948) in Portland, Oregon studying art, literature and history. At the invitation of Arthur Benjamin, he came to London in 1948 and Benjamin dedicated his Etudes Improvisées to him. Later, Crowson became a member of staff at RCM. In the 1950s he won many prizes and established himself as a concert pianist performing with Boult, Monteux, Colin Davis and Pierre Boulez. Crowson was the pianist with the Melos Ensemble for many years

and Brendel said that he was one of the finest chamber music pianists of the day. In 1963 Crowson moved to Cape Town as an examiner for the Associated Board and lectured at the South African College of Music and at the University of Cape Town. He was married three times and had two sons from his first marriage. He died in August 1998.

James Gibb is an exceptional performer, born in Monkseaton, Northumbria in 1918 and studied both in Edinburgh and London. He studied privately with Mabel Lander, a pupil of Leschetizky, before and after the war, in which he served with the Royal Artillery in Germany. He made his London debut in 1949 at a Promenade Concert playing Dohnanyi's Variations on a Nursery Song. Having met Hans Schmidt-Isserstedt during the war, he was invited by this conductor to play concertos in Hamburg and in Dublin when Schmidt-Isserstedt conducted the RTE Orchestra. Gibb has performed with the top orchestras and conductors and a performance of Beethoven's Piano Concerto no 3 with Guilini still lives in the minds of those that heard it. Gibb was contemporary with Geraldine and Mary Peppin the famous piano duo, and, with another fine pianist, Edith Vogel at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, with whom he sometimes performed piano duo works. He gave the British premiere of Balakirev's Piano Concerto no 2, Rawsthorne's Sonatina at the Wigmore Hall and Bernard Stevens wrote his Five Inventions for him. Gibb, Stevens and Alan Bush shared the same political views.

It is a rare thing to say today but, in days gone by the BBC served him and many other pianists well.

It was in Czernowitz in 1912 that the Austro-Hungarian pianist, Edith Vogel, was born. She made her debut in Vienna at the age of ten. When she settled in the UK, she was also well served by the BBC. She specialised in Schubert and Beethoven. Whilst Schubert's music can be over long and tedious, Vogel's Beethoven was masterly.

It was [Humphrey Searle](#) who recommended the study and performance of the works of Alkan way back in the 1930s and he was responsible for introducing the world to Alkan's music. One of the first and most brilliant exponents of this music was Ronald Smith who was a close friend of Searle. Smith gave the British premieres of many of Alkan's works and lectured on the composer. He was a pianist of colossal energy and possessed that rare quality of stamina. He also specialised in the romantic concertos of the 19th century having about forty in his repertoire and his performances of the Chopin etudes were masterly. Despite failing eyesight, his last recital, which was in Brighton, was stunning but he died a few days later on 27 May 2004.

He was born on 3 January 1922 and studied at RAM. He also studied in Paris with Marguerite Long and achieved a BMus from Durham University. He taught for forty years at the King's School in Canterbury. He wrote a book on Alkan and composed a Violin Concerto.

We have already referred to Eileen Broster, who has given some valuable insights into her teachers, but it must be remembered that she is a fine pianist in her own right. She was born in 1935 and was a pupil at RCM studying with Frank Merrick and Cyril Smith. Later, she taught at RCM. She had a wide repertoire and gave the first broadcast performance of Castelnuovo-Tedesco's Sonatina Zoologique and the lovely Piano Concerto by Ruth Gipps. She was always in demand with the BBC, broadcasting almost every week and was held in high esteem by other pianists and orchestras. Cyril Smith and Ruth Gipps both said that her performance of Rachmaninov's Paganini Rhapsody was the best they had ever heard and, on one occasion, the Daily Telegraph reported from a Liszt festival in the 1960s that John Odgon would have his work cut out to beat her glittering performance. There was a time when she had to learn Rachmaninov's Piano Concerto no. 2 in a week and, apart from meals, would sit at the piano from 8am to midnight. She speaks of the fine conductors that she worked with such as, Boult, Groves, Bryden Thomson and especially Hugo Rignold who was the man who made the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra into a fine ensemble.

Another pianist born in 1935 was Ian Lake whose story is tragic. He was born in Quorn in Leicestershire to working class parents. He was a precocious child and his mother worked as a chambermaid to finance his education. He won a scholarship to Trent College. While on national service he played the clarinet and viola in an Army band. He studied at RCM with the great Kendall Taylor and made his London debut at the Royal Festival Hall in 1961 playing Rachmaninov's Rhapsody on a theme of Paganini. He had a teaching post at RCM for about thirty years until 1995. He was a deeply sensitive man but, sadly, convicted of sexual offences in 1995 and was later smitten with cancer. He died on 12 August 2004, but will people remember his very fine playing as I certainly do?

Both Eileen Broster and Ian Lake would have known Neville Bower who was a very fine pianist as his recording of Liszt's Piano Concerto no. 1 testifies. He was also a conductor who, at one time, worked with

Antal Dorati, but he concentrated on composition and left many notable compositions.

Another tragic pianist was the extremely talented Terrence Judd who was born in London in 1957 and won the National Junior Piano Competition in 1967. He won first prize in the British Liszt Competition in 1976 and fourth place in the Tchaikovsky Competition in Moscow in 1978. His performances of Liszt, Tchaikovsky and Balakirev's Islamey were amazing. He committed suicide at Beachey Head in 1979.

Dame Moura Lympany was also a very fine pianist who was born in Saltash in 1916 and made her public debut in 1929. She gave the British premiere of Khachaturian's Piano Concerto. She was a well-loved pianist excelling in the romantic repertoire. She died in Menton, France in 2005 where she had made her home.

The other two female pianists who deservedly enjoyed popularity were, firstly, Nina Milkina, born in Moscow in 1919 (she shared her birthday with Mozart). She studied with Leon Conus and Glazunov who referred to her as his granddaughter. She once played for Rachmaninov. She left Russia in 1926 and lived in Paris before coming to London in the 1930s and studying with Harold Craxton. She was described as 'a very beautiful woman who played Mozart beautifully.' She died on 22 November 2006.

The other pianist is Katharina Wolpe who was born in Vienna and recorded all the piano works by Schoenberg and works by her father Stephan Wolpe (1902- 1972). Elizabeth Lutyens wrote three works for her and Iain Hamilton wrote his Piano Concerto no. 2 for her, and how well she played it. But her Mozart and Beethoven, particularly Opus 111, were both eloquent and superb. She remains a wise person and identifies a good pianist as one who accurately realises what the composer wrote.

One of the most outstanding exponents of Beethoven was Denis Matthews who was born in Coventry in 1919 and studied with Harold Craxton at RAM. He made his successful debut in 1939 and served in the RAF but, when available, assisted Myra Hess in her London lunchtime concerts during the war. In 1971 Matthews was appointed professor of piano at Newcastle University. Not only was he a very fine pianist but also a brilliant lecturer and writer. He wrote an introduction to the music of Michael Tippett. Among his pupils are Rhondda Gillespe, John Ogdon and Alan Schiller.

Another student of Craxton was John Bingham who was born in Sheffield in 1942 and was a child prodigy giving his first recital at the age of nine and his first broadcast at the age of thirteen. He went to RAM and spent two years in Neuchaus. He won the Busoni Competition and made his adult London debut in 1967. He won a prize at a BBC Music Competition in 1971 and has taught at Trinity College of Music in London. Among his pupils is Ronald Brautigan.

Harriet Cohen (1895-1967) was, sometimes, a maligned pianist and maybe for her life style (she was a notorious name-dropper). Piano concertos by Vaughan Williams and Fricker were both dedicated to her and first performed by her. Sadly, she is remembered for being the mistress of Sir Arnold Bax. When Harriet Cohen eventually found out about the death of Bax's wife on 23 September 1947 (she found out about this in May 1948) she expected and hoped for a proposal of marriage and to become Lady Bax. When this did not happen, she cut her wrist on a wine glass, and severed an artery although it was said that this was an accident and that she had dropped a tray of glasses and cut herself in picking up the fragments. Such a serious injury was hardly the result of an accident. As a penance, Bax wrote the Concertante for piano, left hand, and piano for her in 1949. She also discovered that Bax had a second mistress, Mary Gleaves with whom he had been associated for twenty years. However, there are good reports of some of Cohen's performances before the war including that of Falla's Fantasia Betica. Cohen always made a gorgeous sound with her playing and one recalls her exemplary recording with William Primrose of the Bax Viola Sonata.

Clifford Curzon (1907-1982) was a very fine pianist but sometimes it was difficult to watch him with his eccentric moves and histrionics rather like Lang Lang of today. Curzon was an exceptionally kind man adopting the two sons of the great soprano Maria Cebotari who died in 1949. He also gave budding pianist free lessons. His generosity and kindness knew no bounds. Curzon was a fine player of Beethoven and Mozart but it must not be forgotten that he performed many British works by such composers as Lennox Berkeley and the totally ignored William Wordsworth whose music has a spirituality second to none. All his life Curzon was pursuing perfection.

Another pianist with eccentric moves at the piano was the German born Peter Wallfisch, born in 1924 in Breslau, who settled in England becoming a professor of piano at RCM. He won the Bartok Prize in 1948 and enjoyed many worldwide tours. He died in 1993.

John Ogdon (1937-1989) was a virtuoso pianist with an amazing memory, versatility and a command of

the piano. He won joint first prize with Ashkenazy at the Moscow Tchaikovsky Competition in 1962 and between 1976- 1980 taught at the Indiana University School of Music in Bloomington. He was a brilliant player of Liszt, Busoni and Alkan and had a wide repertoire of concertos. He was certainly gifted and composed over two hundred compositions including four operas, a Stabat Mater, cantatas, chamber music including a string quartet, about 16 piano sonatas, sonatas for unaccompanied violin, cello and flute respectively and innumerable works for piano including variations, pieces written in the style of others and about fifty transcriptions. There are two piano concertos and an unfinished symphony. One cannot imagine Ogdon ever being forgotten.

There are some wonderful true stories about Ogdon. He once played a concerto with Barbirolli conducting and his conducting was always erratic and unreliable. He was not a good conductor. Ogdon had to watch the conductor all the time and never once looked at his hands which tells us two things that the conductor was poor and that Ogdon was truly superb. It was such a pity that he was blighted by mental illness and there were unkind people who treated him badly because of his affliction..

As for Barbirolli, he once told Solomon how to play a cadenza!

However, for all his brilliance, there are some who regard Ogdon's playing as clinical, mechanical and cold.

A pianist that was absolutely sensational and is almost forgotten was Susan Bradshaw, who was born into an army family in Monmouth on 8 September 1931 and died in London on 30 January 2005. She was a specialist in contemporary music, much of which is the most difficult music to play, and yet she was slight, demure and socially awkward. She studied at RAM with Craxton and composition with Matyas Seiber and Howard Ferguson. On a French scholarship grant, she studied with Boulez in Paris. She supported composers setting out on their respective careers such as Giles Swayne, Robert Saxton and Brian Elias. She championed Soviet composers such as Schnittke, Smirnov, Firsova and the hugely talented Edison Denisov. She had a phenomenal technique. She never married or had children and positively hated pomposity. Her dedication to contemporary music brought about that shallow and foolish remark made by many people who state that something is not music unless it has a tune.

Valerie Tryon was born in Portsmouth in 1934 and broadcast on the BBC before she reached the age of 12 and appeared as a teenager on many concert platforms. She was one of the youngest pupils to be admitted to RAM where she received the highest awards. She also studied with Jacques Fevrier in Paris. She taught at McMasters University in Hamilton, Canada for many years and she is rightly acclaimed for her performances of Liszt. She has been dubbed the finest female interpreter of Liszt. But her repertoire extends from Bach to Alun Hoddinott and John McCabe and she loves the sonatas of Scarlatti. She is excellent in the romantic repertoire as well and has performed duo works with Campoli (violin) and George Isaac (cello)

The female pianist who, like Liza Fuchova, deserves the most admiration is Margaret Kitchin, a formidable performer who premiered many new works. She was born in 1913 and studied at the Lusanne Conservatoire before moving to London studying at RAM. She had a remarkable capacity for learning the most difficult works and Alexander Goehr wrote his Piano Sonata, Op 2, for her in 1953. In 1954 she revived Alan Bush's Piano Concerto. Tippett wrote his Sonata no. 2 for her. I recall her British premiere of the Roger Sessions's Piano Concerto in 1956 when the audience booed, showing how ignorant and fickle the listening public can be. If I were to boo a public performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto there would be an outcry, and yet a great and formidably difficult piano concerto can be booed. To play anything by Sessions is to take on a Herculean task. She championed Iain Hamilton, William Wordsworth and Humphrey Searle playing the most difficult works in the repertoire with a brilliance that was spell-binding, and some fellow pianists who dismissed her, did so because of their jealous admiration of her. A truly great pianist, she died in June 2008. (See my separate article about [Margaret Kitchin](#))

These are only thumb nail sketches and this is not a work of literary skill. There are many other pianists that I could have mentioned, but there is sufficient information here to encourage music lovers to pursue and discover these eminent pianists.

## RECORDINGS

At the time of writing this article, I understand the following recordings are available:

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| Horsley     | Piano works by Lennox Berkeley   |
| Smith Cyril | Arnold Concerto for three hands, Dohnanyi Nursery Variations, Rachmaniniov Concerto 3, G minor Prelude, Delibes Intermezzo |

Scharrer	Scarlatti, Chopin (Etudes and Scherzi), Liszt Scherzo.
Hess	Bach, Haydn, Schumann, Beethoven Concerto 4, Mozart Concertos 9,14, 21, 23. Beethoven Concerto 4, Concertos by Grieg and Schumann, Brahms 2.
Kingsley	Sonatas by John White
Kitchin	Tippet, Wordsworth etc.
Greenbaum	Rio Grande (Constant Lambert)
Katin	Chopin Mazurkas, Sonata 3, Ballade 4 etc., Finzi Eglogue, Walton Sinfonia Concertante, Mathias Concerto 3, Schubert Impromptus, Scarlatti, Mozart complete sonatas
Smith Ronald	Alkan, Bach Chaconne, Chopin Etudes, Beethoven/Liszt Symphony 7, Schubert Wanderer Fantasy and Sonata 14, Beethoven Sonatas 21,23 and 32
Lympany	Rachmaninov preludes, Chopin Waltzes and Nocturnes, Mendelssohn 1, Falla Nights in the Gardens of Spain, Liszt Scherzo, Liszt 2, Poulenc, Balakirev, Khachaturian, Dohnanyi, Mendelssohn.
Matthews	Mozart 23, Beethoven Sonata Op 109, Britten and Rubbra Concerti
Bingham	Chopin Etudes, Beethoven 4 and 5, Schubert/Liszt Lieder, Chopin Sonata etc.
Cohen	Bach '48', book 1
Curzon	Brahms 1 and 2, Delius Concerto, Mozart 20, 23, 24, 26, 27 Beethoven 4 and 5, Schubert and Schumann
Wallfisch	Phantasm (Frank Bridge)
Ogdon	Rachmaninov 2 and Paganini Rhapsody, Faure Ballade, Liszt Scherzo Tchaikovsky 1, Bartok 1, Glazunov 1, Shostakovich 2, Scott 1 and 2, Brahms 2, Liszt 1 and 2, Mendelssohn 1 and 2, Beethoven 5, Franck Symphonic Variations, Liszt Fantasia and Sonata, Busoni Concerto, Sorabji, Schubert D958, Beethoven 5, Rachmaninov Etudes Tableaux, own works.
Tryon	Scarlatti, Ravel, Liszt, Chopin, Mendelssohn, Hodson.
Clegg	Mathias, Ferguson, Leighton, Self, Poulenc, complete solo piano works of Rawsthorne etc
Judd	Tschaikovsky, Liszt, Balakirev.

There may be others. If you live in the UK and want to know more, or order any discs call Record Corner, Godalming, Surrey 01483 422006

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