

WILLIAM LEONARD REED

compiled by David C F Wright, DMus

William L Reed was born in South London on 16 October 1910 and was a classics pupil at Dulwich College (1922 – 1929). He played piano there at College including solos and also accompanying. He gained an Exhibition in Classics at Jesus College, Oxford 1929, and gained a B.A. in Classics 1933. He was awarded an Education Diploma at Oxford in 1934. In January 1933, spent a term in practice teaching at Emmanuel School, Wandsworth and met the music master Norman Newell there, and attended many of his music classes.



On the return for his last term at Oxford, a prize was offered (the John Lowell Osgood Prize) for a composition of chamber music. He submitted a Sonata for Violin and Piano, although he had little experience in composition, and was not a music student at the University, but to his surprise the Prize was awarded to him! Sir Hugh Allen, the Professor of Music at Oxford, interviewed him and suggested he applied for a scholarship at the Royal College of Music in London where Allen was Director, which he did, and was accepted as a pupil of Dr Herbert Howells. He was with Howells for two years (1934-1936), during which time he wrote many compositions, many of which were to feature on the BBC. In 1936, he was given a travelling scholarship at the R.C.M. and decided to go to Scandinavia and Finland. There he met Sibelius at the composer's home in Jarvenpaa, who very kindly signed a copy of the miniature score of the Fifth Symphony for him. Reed worked freelance for the British Council in Scandinavian countries and Finland in 1936 and again in 1937. He was taught conducting by the great Constant Lambert (1905-51)

Returning to London in 1937, he worked full time with the Oxford Group. He received his Doctor of Music degree in 1939 from Oxford University.

During the Second World War, he helped with a musical play, Giant Otherfellow, which was given many performances at the Headquarters of Moral Re-Armament to packed audiences which had developed from the Oxford Group in 1938. Recitals for two pianos were also given there by Delphine Becker and Reed. In 1955, the musical play The Vanishing Island with a libretto by Peter Howard, and music by both George Fraser and Will Reed was devised at Deelwood, New York State, and launched in California, Santa Barbara, April 27th. It toured the world by air on three planes with full cast, conducted by Will Reed, from pre-recorded orchestral accompaniment.

Probably his best work was the Piano Trio of 1941-44 and his Piano Quintet of 1935 was admired,

After the death of Frank Buchman in 1961, he was appointed Director of Music at the Westminster Theatre and arranged many concerts there, given by distinguished artists such as Joseph Cooper, Nelson Freire and Robert Layton.

After relinquishing his post as Director of Music at the Westminster Theatre, he began taking classes in Adult Education with the Workers Educational Association, which he continued for many years, before retiring in 1997.

Will made a solo world tour in 1965, giving lectures on British Music, using long playing records. He travelled by ship via South Africa owing to the war in Egypt. He was in Australia, travelling there by

train, including a visit to beautiful Tasmania. This was followed by a flight to New Zealand, where he toured extensively by coach and made a day trip to Stewart Island.

In 1983, Will moved to Morden College retirement home, arranged concerts by well known artists there, and himself gave several lecture recitals there, which concluded in 1997. Will Reed kept a daily diary since 1 January 1942.

He never married.

His favourite composers were Chopin, Elgar and Rachmaninov.

He died on 15 April 2002

WORKS

Opus	Title Written	
1	Recitative and Dance, for Orchestra	1934
2	Fantasy in G Minor, for Piano Quartet	1934-5
3	Jig, for Orchestra	1935
4	Siciliano, for Orchestra	1935
5	Pantomime, for Orchestra	1935
6	Saraband, for Orchestra	1935
7	Idyll, for small Orchestra	1935
8	Waltz Fantasy, for Orchestra	1935
9	Concert Rhapsody, for Violin and Orchestra	1935
		Revised 1942
10	Three Surrey Impressions, for Two Pianos	1935
11	Concert Piece, for Two Clarinets (in A) and Piano	1936
12	Fantasy in A Minor, for String Quartet	1936
13	Six Facets, for Orchestra (Originally for Piano)	1936
14	Suite, for Organ	1936
14a	A Reflection, for small Orchestra	1936
15	Pavane Caprice and Child Portrait, for Piano	1937
15a	Pavane Caprice and Child Portrait, for Piano, arranged for Orchestra	1937
16	Scherzo, for Orchestra	1937
17	Two Short Pieces, for Orchestra	1937
18	Hornpipe, for Orchestra	1935
		Revised 1939
19	Three Songs for England	1939-40
20	Five Spiritual Songs for Baritone and Piano	1939-40
21	Four Songs – Building the Future	1940-42
22	Six Pieces, for Piano	1938-42
23	Variations on a Theme, for Two Pianos	1942
24	Suite, for Clarinet and Strings	1942
25	Toccata, for Two Pianos	1942
26	Triumphal March, for Organ	1936
		Revised 1942-3
27	Trio in A Minor, for Violin, Cello and Piano	1941-44
28	Tarantelle Fantastique, for Piano and String Quartet	1943
29	Doctor Johnson's Suite, for String Quartet	1944
30	Country Piece and Scherzo, for String Orchestra	1944-47
31	Waltz, for Piano and String Quartet	1944
32	Elegy, for Piano and String Quartet	1935/44

33	Clive's House, for Piano	1944
34	Festive March, for Piano	1945
34a	Festive March, arranged for Orchestra	1978
35	Suite No 1, for Violin and Piano	1945
36	Peter's Prelude and Anne's Gavotte, for Piano	1945
37	Christmas Piece, for Reciter, Chorus and Piano	1945
37a	Christmas Piece, for Reciter, Chorus and Piano with Orchestral Accompaniment	1981
38	Two Pieces, for Organ	1946
39	Concert Suite, for Piano	1946-47
40	Three Miniatures, for Piano	1943, 46
41	Suite (the Top Flat), for Viola and Piano	1947
42	Suite No 2 (On the Road), for Violin and Piano	1947-48
43	Suite No 3 (Mountain House) for Violin and Piano	1949-50
43a	Suite No 3 (Mountain House) for Violin and Piano, arranged for Orchestra	1949
44	Concert Overture, for Orchestra	1943/50
45	Rhapsody on Christmas Carols, for Violin and Piano	1951
		Revised 1978
46	Easter – Sequence for Mezzo-soprano SABT Chorus and Piano	1959
47	Four Child Portraits, for Piano	1943-49
48	Personal Pieces, for Piano (Set 1)	1970-91
49	Concert Waltz, for Piano	1977
50	Four Airs, for Bass Horn and Piano	1979
51	Arrangements, for Male Voice Quartet	1990-91
52	Waltz for Barbara	1994
53	Personal Pieces (Set 2)	

Works without Opus numbers

Six German Folk Songs	1930
Ye Mariners of England - Song	1930
	Revised 1934
Variations on "On Ilkley Moor Baht 'At", for Piano Duet	1933
Sonata in A Minor, for Violin and Piano	1934
Homage to Delius, for String Sextet	1934
Fantasy, for Flute Viola and Harp	1934
A Reverie for Clarinet (in B Flat) and String Orchestra	1934
A Widow Bird - Song	1934
Sonata Rhapsody, for Organ (in one movement)	1934
Sonata, for Bass Clarinet and Piano (in three linked movements)	1934
Toccata – Schrezo for Organ	1935
	Revised 1978
Carol – When Christ was born of Mary free	1935
Pilgrim Song	1935
Te Deum in C Major, for Chorus and Orchestra	1935-36
Father – forgive the cold love of the years - Anthem	1939
You and I and America - Song	1940
Song of Spring - Song	1941
The Glow within - Song	1941?
A Serenade, for Connsonata Organ	1948
Penelope's Pavane, for Flute and Piano	1948
O Perfect Love – Wedding Anthem	1949
L'Anno Santo - Anthem	1950
Two Pieces for String Quartet	1957

A Song for the G.P.O.	1981
Duet for Lucy and Jacob* (Clarinet and Cello)	
(*Lucy & Jacob Thompson, Reed's great-nephew and niece)	1983
Early Works	
Waltz, for Piano 1917 or 18	
My Garden - Song	1928
Remembrance - Song	1928
Dance Gracieux, for Piano Duet in B Minor	1930
Children's Pieces – for Piano	1931-32
A Summer Scene - Song	1931
The Watchers - Song 1931	
I Strove with none - Song	1931
The Rover's Adieu - Song	1932
Impromptu, for Organ in F Minor	1932
Morceau, for Organ in E Major	1932
Hey Nonny No - Song 1932	
Mit Einem Gemalten Band - Song 1932-33	
Cradle Song - Song	1933
Music – When Soft Voices Die - Song	1933
Two Pieces, for Organ	1933
Tints of Evening - Song	1934
A Summer's Call - Song	1934
Autumn Woods - Song	1934
Woods in Winter - Song	1934

Will Reed also wrote many informal pieces for friends and family. Most of his works are small and apart from the Piano Quintet and Piano Trio and a few other pieces there are no substantial works.

His manuscripts and other documents have been given to the library of the Royal College of Music where they are publicly available.

(1484)

AUTHOR'S NOTE Almost all of this article was written by Nick Thompson of Sidmouth who was related to Mr Reed who has been very kind and generous in allowing me to use his material and has helped in many other ways which are deeply appreciated. I wanted to write about Mr Reed since he was known to a friend of mine.

© COPYRIGHT David C F Wright DMus 2014. This article or any part of it, however small, must not be copied, quoted, reproduced, downloaded or altered in any way whatsoever nor stored in any retrieval system. Failure to comply is in breach of International Copyright Law and will render any offender liable to action at law.