

PARROTT, HORACE IAN (1916-2012), teacher and composer

Name: Horace Ian Parrott
Date of birth: 1916
Date of death: 2012
Gender: Male
Occupation: teacher and composer
Area of activity: Education; Music
Author: Rhidian Griffiths

Ian Parrott was born on 5 March 1916 in Streatham, London. His father, Horace Bailey Parrott (1883-1953), was an engineer who worked for the British Oxygen Company, and his mother, Muriel Annie (née Blackford, 1883-1958) was a talented pianist. Ian was given early instruction on the piano by his mother, and studied privately with the composer Benjamin Dale. He was educated at Harrow (1929-31), the Royal College of Music (1932-4) and New College, Oxford (1934-7), then taught at Malvern from 1937 to 1939 and graduated D. Mus. (Oxon.) in 1940. Service in the Army Signal Corps during the Second World War and a sojourn in Egypt inspired his compositions for orchestra, *El Alamein* (1944), and *Luxor*, which won the first prize of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1949. In 1946 he had been appointed a lecturer at Birmingham University, and in 1950 he succeeded to the Gregynog Chair of Music at the University College of Wales Aberystwyth, a post he held until his retirement in 1983. He oversaw considerable growth in the Music Department, and among his pupils there were the composers **William Mathias** and David Harries.

Ian Parrott took a lively interest in the musical traditions of his adoptive country; he learnt Welsh and insisted that he should be regarded as a Welsh composer. He was one of the founders of the Guild for the Promotion of Welsh Music in 1959. He revived the Gregynog Festival and conducted there for ten years. He made extensive use of Welsh folk-tunes in his opera *The Black Ram* (1957), based on a tale from Ffynnon Bedr, near Lampeter, and his setting of the communion service, *A Welsh Folk Mass*, also makes use of traditional music. His numerous orchestral compositions include the overture *Seithenyn* (1959), commissioned by the BBC, and *Arfordir Ceredigion*, another commission, performed at the National Eisteddfod in Aberystwyth in 1992. He produced five symphonies and five string quartets, and a large number of choral and instrumental pieces. He received a number of prizes and honours, including the Harriet Cohen Musicology Medal in 1966.

He also wrote works on music appreciation for young people: *Pathways to Modern Music* (1947) and *A Guide to Musical Thought* (1949); a volume, *The Spiritual Pilgrims*, on musical life at Gregynog in the days of **Gwendoline** and **Margaret Davies**, and studies of the composers Edward Elgar, Peter Warlock and Cyril Scott. An autobiography, *Parrottcisms*, was published in 2003.

He married in 1940 Elizabeth Cox (died 1994), and they had two sons. He married again in 1996 Jeanne Peckham, who died in 2010. He died on 4 September 2012 and his funeral was held at Llanbadarn Fawr church on 12 September. His remains were interred in the cemetery at Llanbadarn church.

Author

Rhidian Griffiths

Sources

The Times, 5 October 2012

The Daily Telegraph, 9 October 2012

The Independent, 3 December 2012

Welsh Music, 5/2 (1976)

Further Reading

Wikipedia Article: [Ian Parrott](#)

Additional Links

VIAF: [37082534](#)

Wikidata: [Q3138404](#)

Published date: 2014-06-04

Article Copyright: <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/>

LGC
NLW

LLYFRGELL
THE NATION

