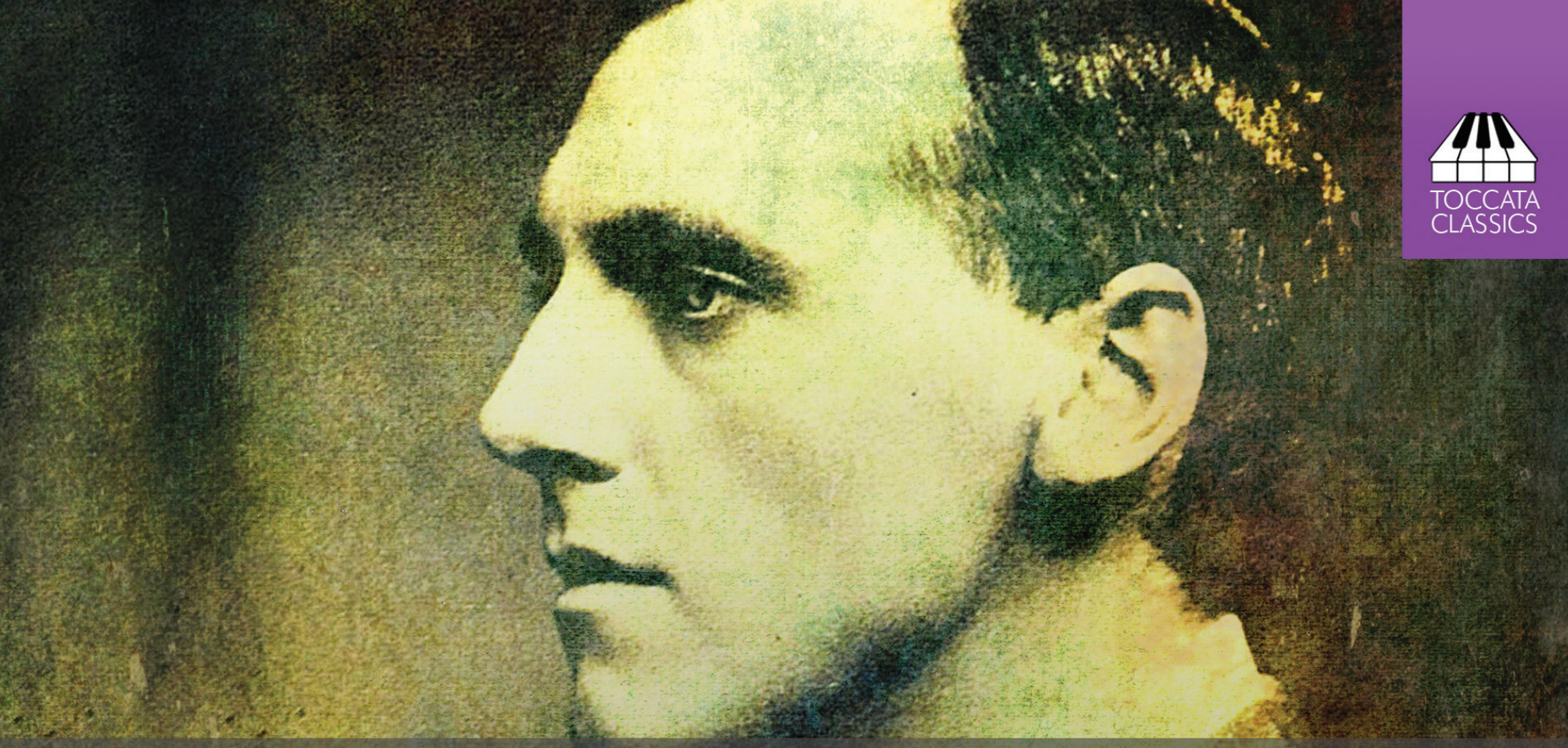


TOCCATA CLASSICS

Frederick Septimus KELLY

PIANO MUSIC

24 MONOGRAPHS, OP. 11
12 STUDIES, OP. 9

Alex Wilson

FIRST RECORDINGS

FREDERICK SEPTIMUS KELLY Piano Music

***Twelve Studies*, Op. 9** (1907–13)	**40:44**
1 No. 1 in F major *Allegro maestoso*	3:23
2 No. 2 in B flat minor *Scorrevole*	0:45
3 No. 3 in F sharp major *Allegro grazioso*	2:49
4 No. 4 in E flat minor *Allegro non troppo*	3:01
5 No. 5 in B minor *Adagio espressivo*	4:06
6 No. 6 in D major *Tempo rubato*	3:19
7 No. 7 in G minor *Allegro molto*	1:47
8 No. 8 in E flat major *Poco allegretto*	4:25
9 No. 9 in G sharp minor *Vivace e molto leggiero*	2:33
10 No. 10 in E major *Allegro moderato*	2:42
11 No. 11 in C minor *Allegro commodo*	4:26
12 No. 12 in D minor *Allegretto*	5:02
13 No. 12a in A major *Allegro*	2:26
***24 Monographs*, Op. 11** (1911–16)	**38:42**
14 No. 1 in C major *Allegro*	1:44
15 No. 2 in E minor *Andante quasi allegretto*	1:36
16 No. 3 in B major *Poco allegretto*	0:42
17 No. 4 in G sharp minor *Maestoso*	1:35
18 No. 5 in E major *Adagio sostenuto**	1:55
19 No. 6 in A minor *Espressivo**	1:47
20 No. 7 in A major *Allegro maestoso*	2:04
21 No. 8 in C sharp minor *Allegro molto*	0:37
22 No. 9 in A flat major *Allegretto con grazia, ma semplice**	1:39
23 No. 10 in F minor *Molto agitato*	0:51
24 No. 11 in D flat major *Poco allegretto*	1:15
25 No. 12 in F sharp minor *Allegro agitato*	1:35
26 No. 13 in G flat major *Semplice, senza rigidità**	1:14
27 No. 14 in B flat minor *Vivace ma non troppo presto*	0:44
28 No. 15 in F major *Allegretto pastorale*	1:14

29	No. 16 in D minor *Andante con moto e sempre ben marcato*	2:51
30	No. 17 in B flat major *Allegretto grazioso*	1:23
31	No. 18 in E flat minor *Allegretto sostenuto**	1:31
32	No. 19 in E flat major *Maestoso**	1:05
33	No. 20 in G minor *Sofferente e sovento mancando – Allegretto*	0:43
34	No. 21 in D major *Grandioso e non troppo presto**	1:07
35	No. 22 in B minor *Allegretto dolente**	5:36
36	No. 23 in G major *Con amore ma non senza sentimento**	1:34
37	No. 24 in C minor *Allegro largamente**	2:20

Alex Wilson, piano TT **79:30**

ALL EXCEPT * FIRST RECORDINGS

F. S. KELLY: GENIUS INTERRUPTED

by Christopher Latham[1]

The Australian pianist and composer Frederick Septimus Kelly ('Sep' to his friends) was born in 1881 into an affluent family which valued music highly. A child virtuoso, he quickly outstripped his teachers in Sydney and at age twelve was sent to join his two older brothers at Eton. There he received excellent training under Dr Charles Lloyd, and followed that with studies at Balliol College, Oxford, as the Nettleship Music Scholar, where he was mentored by Donald Francis Tovey (who was only six years older than he was). As Tovey was already the leading British authority on Brahms, it is not surprising that he would pass that enthusiasm onto Kelly, leading to further studies at the Frankfurt Conservatoire, where Clara Schumann had taught. Kelly studied both piano and composition there from 1904 to 1908, along with members of the 'Frankfurt Gang' (which included Balfour Gardiner, Percy Grainger, Roger Quilter and Cyril Scott). On his return to London he quickly became a leading figure in the London Concert Society, where he met the man who was possibly England's finest pianist, Leonard Borwick. Borwick would become a dear friend and trusted musical confidant – and possibly his intimate companion.

Kelly was killed in the final battle of the Somme in 1916. That aspect of his life has defined him, as it has George Butterworth, who followed him at Eton – two of twelve hundred alumni killed. I believe that future music-lovers will come to know Kelly as a far broader composer than Butterworth. His last major flowering of works, finalised only in 1916, contained an enormous set of piano preludes

[1] This essay is a summation of the latest research on the life of F. S. Kelly and draws heavily on *Race against Time: The Diaries of F. S. Kelly* (National Library of Australia, Canberra, 2004), edited by Therese Radic, whose biography of Kelly, jointly written with the Olympic gold-medallist rower Martin Cross, will be published shortly. It also acknowledges the considerable debt owed to Richard Divall, whose pioneering work, funded by the Marshall Hall Trust and other philanthropists, paved the way for all the subsequent cultural-recovery work on F. S. Kelly's compositions.

(which he later called *Monographs*) and a set of etudes, modelled on those by Chopin and Skryabin, which he dedicated to Lloyd and Borwick respectively. These two sets, recorded in their entirety here for the first time, are the first serious contributions to the Romantic virtuoso piano repertoire by an Australian composer – and are rare examples even in the British canon. They are proof of his standing as a pianist and a composer, and of his deep love for Chopin, whose works he played in almost every recital he gave.

Kelly as pianist and composer

Kelly's fate was to be a genius in three different activities: he was a pianist, composer and rower, with those three roles competing for space and light in his short lifetime. He was considered the most important amateur sculler of the era, winning the Diamond Sculls three times at Henley in 1902, 1903 and 1905, on the last occasion setting a record that stood until 1938. In 1903 he also rowed in the Oxford eight and won the Wingfield Sculls. From 1903 he rowed for the Leander Club, winning in the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley in 1903–5 and in the coxless 'four' that won the Stewards' Cup in 1906. These distinctions meant he was already a famous rower even before he won gold in the eights at the 1908 London Olympics.

His rowing hobby made him so well known that his obituary was run in almost every newspaper in the British Commonwealth, but his fame as a rower obscured his career as the recital partner of musicians of the standing of Pablo Casals and Jelly d'Arányi – the three of them even briefly forming a piano trio before the outbreak of war. D'Arányi, indeed, was in love with Kelly, and often played his works; he in turn loved her playing and even conducted her in concerto performances. Although Kelly was an important figure in concert life in England, he was unable to win over the London critics, who described him constantly as a 'paddler' who played the piano on the side, when the truth was the reverse. One of Kelly's last reviews as a pianist was in *The Times*:

> he is such a good pianist, that we wish he were better. He plays like a scholar; as if he liked the clear, metallic ring of word or phrase, and would continue to like it for many years. But

> the true literary sense is of slow growth, and only emerges when the effervescences have had time to subside and all heady matter has been refined away.[2]

That gift of time – to develop further, which the reviewer felt would benefit Kelly – was not in his stars. It became increasingly clear his future would not be as a soloist, and he gradually shifted his focus to his other musical love: composing.

On 8 July 1911, *The Sun* in Australia published a long article on Kelly, who was interviewed about his forthcoming debut concerts in Sydney:

> It may justly be said that during the past few weeks the musical public of Sydney had been entertaining an angel unawares. Mr Kelly unostentatiously made his debut with the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and in his playing of the Beethoven 'Concerto in G Major' sprung a surprise on art lovers. His musical attainments were previously known to but a few in this part of the world, and his advent was not heralded by any elaborate or extravagant fanfare.

In the article, Kelly stated he had begun studying composition at the age of thirteen under Charles Lloyd, and that before he left school had composed piano pieces, songs, partsongs, a sonata for violin and pianoforte and an anthem which was included in the repertoire of the Eton choir. Lloyd gave him 'excellent training in harmony and counterpoint', and the 'thorough grounding […] saved him much preliminary drudgery' when he studied composition under Ivan Knorr at the Frankfurt Conservatoire. At Oxford he 'added to his list of compositions with piano pieces and songs, writing also a more ambitious violin sonata and a couple of movements of a trio for piano, violin, and cello'. In a search for technique he transferred to Frankfurt, where he began 'a whole-hearted study of music […] from the very beginning'.

In Frankfurt Kelly had to endure the agony experienced by many musicians, of having practically to start over. His piano professor, Ernst Engesser, ordered three months of 'scales, arpeggios, etc', followed by 'a thorough course of Bach, beginning with the two-part inventions', but with composition the outlook was more optimistic. Knorr started him on fugues, later stating to Tovey that he never saw anyone grasp the

[2] *The Times*, 7 October 1912.

technique of contrapuntal writing so quickly. Kelly studied orchestration and wrote a number of valuable works, including his impressive *Theme, Variations and Fugue* for two pianos, which would be published as his Op. 5.

Kelly's time in Frankfurt culminated in a kind of graduation concert in May 1908, which started with his Suite in E flat for orchestra; in the second half he appeared as soloist in the Brahms Second Piano Concerto – which, according to *The Sun* article, was the first performance of the work at the Conservatorium concerts. During these student years Kelly also heard Joseph Joachim perform with his quartet, exercising a powerful influence on Kelly's musical development. He heard Joachim's series of complete Brahms chamber works in 1902 and his last concert appearance in London on 5 May 1906 in the Bechstein Hall (now the Wigmore Hall) with Borwick.

The article in *The Sun* continues: 'at this time Mr Kelly had the unforgettable experience of playing Brahms's great G minor pianoforte quartet [No. 1, Op. 25] in a friend's house with Dr Joachim, Professor Hausmann, and Karl Klingler' – the latter two the cellist and violist of the Joachim Quartet. Kelly goes on in the article to express his admiration for Borwick, for Tovey and for Casals, and stated that 'he wished to postpone his debut into the musical world of London until he had satisfied himself that he had […] matured his talent'.

The Sun then went on to answer the unstated question:

> Mr Kelly's London debut has been fixed for the spring of 1912. It has always been his deeply-felt wish that he should appear in the land and city of his birth [Sydney] before his great London debut. No doubt his fellow-countrymen deeply appreciate the fulfilment of the wish, and his career in England will be followed with much interest. It may be mentioned that Mr Kelly is now engaged upon a set of 12 studies for the pianoforte, two of which were heard on Tuesday evening, which he is writing for Mr Leonard Borwick.

As a composer, Kelly clearly sits perfectly in the Schumann–Brahms lineage, a path that his friend and compatriot Percy Grainger would largely reject. Kelly's specific genius is not that of the maverick trailblazer; instead, he achieved a remarkable fluency in the established forms of the classical canon, which he infused with unusually deep feeling

and a personal harmonic language, which is both innovative and unusually supple. He was touched from his earliest years by death, giving him unusually powerful experiences of grief. He was named Septimus since he was his parents' seventh child. Two of his older siblings died in infancy, followed by his favourite brother, Carleton, when 'Sep' was eighteen; two years later he lost his beloved father, and his mother the following year.

The capacity for embedding and articulating fine sentiment distinguishes him as a composer, along with his prodigious musical imagination. The stylistic range of his work is considerable, although the emotional intimacy so obvious in his miniatures would work against him in public, where his piano-playing was often criticised for being too reserved and understated. Even Borwick admitted to Kelly that his playing sometimes didn't achieve a sense of climax, something that one can't say about his music.

Kelly's best early piano works are his *A Cycle of Lyrics* (premiered in 1911 in Sydney in his debut recital series), his *Waltz Pageant* (from his time in Oxford) and the *Allegro de Concert* (written during his studies in Frankfurt and dedicated to Grainger) – but they are all dwarfed by his *Twelve Studies* and *24 Monographs*, on which he had started work in seriousness in 1911, finally notating them in 1913.

That year, 1913, was the golden summer of Edwardian England. Kelly, increasingly busy with the Classical Concert Society in London, brought over Ravel for an important portrait concert of his compositions. Clearly, both Ravel and Debussy were sources of inspiration in Kelly's ever-expanding harmonic language. He was also attending a huge number of performances, often more than one a day, as part of his role of assessing and securing artists and repertoire for the concerts of the Classical Concert Society. He heard all the leading pianists, instrumentalists and composers of his generation, as well as presenting his own concert programmes. His diaries, moreover, reveal he led a very active social life, and yet somehow also found time to compose extensively and finalise the two enormous sets of his *Twelve Studies* and the delightful *24 Monographs*.

The model for both sets must be the Chopin *Études* and *Preludes* respectively, though Skryabin seems also to have been an important source of inspiration. The incubation period for these works stretched back over a number of years, and – to make the exact

dating of the works even more complicated – Kelly often performed his works from memory long before he wrote them down.

***Twelve Studies*, Op. 9**

Kelly's earliest foray into writing studies is an Etude in A flat, dated 28 December 1897, written at Eton when he was sixteen years old. This juvenile work has survived in manuscript in Kelly's papers at the National Library of Australia (NLA) but never belonged to the Op. 9 set. From ten years later there is a far more ambitious Study in A major, completed on 23 January 1907, composed towards the end of his studies in Frankfurt. Further revised on 20 August 1912, it was for a time the intended finale of the set, but later replaced by the current No. 12 in D minor. It is recorded here as Study No. 12a.

Following his gold-medal-winning race in the London Olympics, which prompted his retirement from competitive rowing, Kelly writes in his diary on Christmas Eve 1908: 'I further perfected my little F minor Etude on which I had been working yesterday, but wonder whether it will be playable when complete'. That study seems to have disappeared (since there is no F minor Study in the final set), but there is an early draft of Study No. 11 in C minor, which is dated a month later, from 23–26 January 1909.

Kelly next describes how on 19 February, Ferdinand Speyer, who had also been a Nettleship Music Scholar at Balliol, came to dinner. 'I showed him [my song] "Aghadoe" which he particularly liked and my Etudes in C minor, F♯ minor and in F' (Studies Nos. 11, 3 and 1). He mentions working further on Study No. 11 in C minor on 10 June 1909, and on 26 July he played what he called this 'chop-stick' etude to Percy Grainger, subsequently noting that Percy 'seemed to like it'. Later that year in October, Kelly noted down ideas for a group of studies which he had 'improvised'; they are also in the NLA collection of Kelly's manuscripts.

In early 1910, he invited Balfour Gardiner, one of his old Frankfurt friends, to tea and to hear Kelly's latest works, including the Study in E flat minor (No. 4), dated 16 January 1910. To Kelly's relief, Gardiner liked them 'a good deal better than he usually likes my compositions'. At the end of that year, on 26 December 1910, in circumstances

which could hardly have been more different, Kelly writes in his diary, while sailing down the Nile: 'This was one of the happiest days I have ever spent'. He had taken a sailboat through the black rocks of the lower second cataract and up to Abusir rock, the crew's faces and outlines reminding him of reliefs in the tombs. He climbed the rock for its views over the desert, the river to the north and the swirling cataract. On his return he visited two small temples on the west bank about three miles above Halfa: 'I was conscious of being far away from civilization, a feeling which the desert and the wilderness of the cataract stimulated, and as my mind was full of musical ideas, mostly concerning my set of studies for the piano, I passed an exceptionally happy day'.

On 28 December 1910 he was in Luxor, where he noted that he was still mentally composing his studies and the Piano Sonata in F minor (which he never finished writing down before his death). He would perform the Studies in E flat major (No. 8) and in C minor (No. 11) in his first recital at St James Hall in Sydney on 4 July 1911 – in the first of his six concerts there. He made a two-page sketch of Study No. 2 in B flat minor on 27 July, and a clean two-page copy on 29 July in the Wentworth Hotel in Sydney, where he was staying (his family having forced him to relocate to a hotel due to his incessant practising).

He continued to compose both Studies and *Monographs* on his return journey to England, noting in his diary on 25 August 1911 that he travelled down the Brisbane River on the S. S. *Wodonga*, watching pelicans in flight, and walked the deck composing, as the ship passed by Moreton Island, off the coast of south-eastern Queensland, opposite Brisbane, all the while being rocked by a light ocean swell. On 26 August he stopped in Gladstone to explore the bush and town, where he had 'a dozen ideas for composition'. Then from Cairns he took a berth on the S. S. *Mataram*, sleeping on deck because of the heat, continuing to compose throughout the voyage. On 12 September, he visited Thursday Island (in the Torres Straight), where he found gum trees, and Japanese and indigenous men engaged in the pearling trade, a town of 'the usual Australian weatherboard' construction and shallow beaches, where he bathed. He then 'did some composition during my walk round the island'.

Life on board by this stage had settled into a rhythm of bridge, deck quoits, reading and composition. He sailed from Darwin to Java, composing a number of studies en route, between 15 and 20 September. Finally on 28 October, he disembarked at Genoa. While staying at the Hotel Savoia there, he wrote in his diary, 'the voyage from Java was fairly satisfactory on the whole – certainly from a musical point of view, as I was constantly composing'.

Kelly gave the first performances in London of his Studies in E flat major (No. 8) and C minor (No. 11) in a recital at the Aeolian Hall on 27 February 1912 and performed his Study in E major (No. 10) later in the Classical Concert Society recital series of that year. Later in the summer of 1912 Kelly would finalise a number of the Studies at The Grange, the house he shared with his sister Maisie in Bisham, near Henley. The manuscripts give the dates of 17–18 July for Study No. 1, 23 July for No. 6, 6 August for No. 10, 7 August for No. 7, 19 August for No. 3, 20 August for the final version of No. 12, now in D minor, and finally 22 August for Study No. 5.

In early December that year, Kelly was at Eton, where he played to Sir Walter Parratt his Studies in F major (No. 1), B flat minor (No. 2), F sharp major (No. 3) and B minor (No. 5), 'which he seemed to like'. By Sunday, 12 January 1913, while reading through a 'good deal of music' with friends at Ridgehurst, Edward Speyer's house in Hertfordshire,[3] he records that he also played eleven of his Studies and his *Waltz Pageant*. He premiered Study No. 9 in G sharp major on 6 May in the Aeolian Hall, London. Kelly felt 'I was in my best form and had a considerable success with the second group in which I had to repeat my study. […] I did not suffer at all from nervousness'. *The Daily Telegraph* noted of his 'Study' that it 'proved to be a brilliant but not over-elaborated composition chiefly composed of arpeggios that wander from one key to another. The piece was encored'.

Kelly made 'a fair copy' of his *Twelve Studies* early in July 1913, finishing it on 23 July during another visit from Balfour Gardiner. Kelly subsequently sent them to Borwick

[3] Ridgehurst was an estate and house in Shenley, a village in Hertfordshire only seventeen miles outside London (it lies between Barnet and St Albans). It was owned by Edward Speyer (1839–1934), the scion of a Frankfurt banking family. Speyer settled in London in 1859 and retired in 1890, moving to Ridgehurst four years later. He was a close friend of Edward Elgar and his wife, who were frequent visitors to Ridgehurst, and a co-founder and chairman of the Classical Concerts Society.

for comment on 1 August. Borwick liked No. 11 in C minor and No. 12 in D minor, but thought that the one in E flat major (No. 8) was too overtly reminiscent of Chopin. Kelly walked in the nearby Quarry Woods over the following days trying to find a new idea to replace it, until finally sketching a possible alternative in his diary.

On 27 August he sent the whole set off to his publisher, Schott, stating in his diary that 'it is the result of about 5 years work, on and off, and it is satisfactory to [have] finished it. I have only discarded one complete study (in A major) in making the set, but about 5 or 6 ideas for studies proved abortive'. (The discarded Study in A major is the one recorded here as No. 12a.)

During the three years he had spent writing them, he and Borwick had shared an apartment in London. In fact, there was little in Kelly's life that did not involve Leonard Borwick. They visited galleries and collected art together, attended concerts and always gave honest criticism of each other's performances. They were partners in each other's lives, regardless of whether that was only in the realm of music or went further. Of all his friends, it was Jelly d'Arányi and Borwick who seemed to take Kelly's death hardest, d'Arányi never marrying and lying to friends that she and Kelly had been engaged, and Borwick seeming to wither after Kelly's death, dying prematurely only nine years after him, in 1925.

Borwick and Kelly were separated in 1913 when they had trouble securing a new apartment where they both could practise. Kelly was therefore especially glad when Borwick came to stay at The Grange in Bisham over the weekend of 27 September 1913. During this time they went through the Studies, with Borwick offering a good deal of useful suggestions. They finished their weekend together going round the nearby Abbey Garden, where they 'enjoyed a glorious feast of mulberries off the large tree in the centre of the garden'.

The next mention of the Studies in the diary occurs in early April of 1914, with a visit from the Australian pianist Jessie Middleton, who had studied in Leipzig and in Weimar, and whom Kelly had known in Sydney. The two pianists spent the weekend playing for each other, with Kelly performing both his *Monographs* and his Studies. Then from 15 to 21 April Kelly returned to Frankfurt, where he played them both for his former teachers

Knorr and Engesser, who were warm and generous in their comments, taking much interest in both sets of compositions. Kelly spoke fluent German, loved Germany and its music, was warmly admired and respected in Germany (even his publisher, Schott, was German), and yet he would soon be fighting German troops and eventually be killed by them. Within five months of his final trip to Germany, with the outbreak of war he would enlist in the Royal Naval Division.

On 23 May 1914 Kelly formally premiered four of his Studies (Nos. 1, 5, 10 and 12) at Balliol College in Oxford. By 1 January 1915, it was clear he would soon see active service overseas, and so he began to revise his works, including Studies No. 5 in B minor and No. 8 in E flat major. On Saturday, 20 February, shortly before leaving for Gallipoli, he went to Schott's at 48 Marlborough Street (where they are still), to leave his *Monographs* and Studies to be copied. Finally, on 4 May 1916, he corrected the publisher's copy during his final leave in London. He had returned to London following the Gallipoli campaign, and before leaving for the Western Front he finalised the Studies, the *Monographs* and his String Trio, clearly conscious that he might not have another chance.

Kelly's war diaries record performances of his studies on the troopship S. S. *Grantully Castle*, while waiting to land at Gallipoli on the following day. Then on 16 June 1915, recuperating in Alexandria, Egypt, from a wound to his foot, he played, on a fairly good Bechstein grand in a music shop called Hugo Hack, his D minor Study (No. 12) and his brand-new *Elegy for Strings in Memoriam Rupert Brooke*. Just before the evacuation from the Gallipoli peninsula, he writes of his satisfaction with the Studies in F major and D minor (Nos. 1 and 12). He even found a piano when they were stationed on Mudros (in the north Aegean), where he played through the first six Studies from memory. Then during his London leave he played Studies Nos. 1, 5 and 12 on 16 March 1916, at a house concert hosted by Violet Bonham Carter (daughter of Herbert Asquith, who was then Prime Minister), which also included chamber works that Kelly played with Jelly d'Arányi and her sister Adila.

Along with Tovey's performance of selections from Kelly's Studies and *Monographs* at a memorial concert for Kelly in Balliol Hall in 1919, those were the last public performances of these works in Kelly's own time. Borwick's early death in 1925 meant

that the works lost their dedicatee and most probable champion, so that it is almost certain that this recording is the first performance of the two cycles since then. In 2005 the Australian musicologist Richard Divall, assisted by Bruce Steele, produced a typeset edition of the *Twelve Studies* as part of the publications programme of the Marshall Hall Trust, although, surprisingly, no performances seem to have resulted before now, when one of Kelly's most ambitious creative endeavours can finally be assessed. As a set, they are uncompromisingly massive in scale and ambition, and by nature of their virtuosity tend towards harmonic density, though many display considerable tenderness and beauty, and a clarity of sonic colour that produces a sensation of light that is almost Nordic in its purity.

***24 Monographs*, Op. 11**

Kelly wrote his other important set of piano works, the *24 Monographs*, in parallel with his *Twelve Studies*. They are similar to Chopin's *24 Preludes*, Op. 28, in that both sets cover all 24 major and minor keys and with an emphasis on brevity and heightened contrasts in mood and texture between movements. Although individually each movement is a work in its own right, Kelly designed the full set of 24 as four groups of six works: Nos. 1–6, 7–12, 13–18 and 19–24.

In October 1909, Tovey had played through some of Skryabin's *24 Preludes*, Op. 11, for Kelly, which 'Sep' found to be very Chopinesque, but also 'undoubtedly the work of a man who understands the piano to an exceptional degree and in addition has a style'. Inspired by this discovery of the Preludes, Kelly drove straight to Augener's in London to buy manuscript paper and the music for Skryabin's *24 Preludes* (plus everything else that they had of his). Skryabin's piano works thereafter were to become regular fixtures in Kelly's recitals and he was probably the first pianist to play Skryabin's works in Sydney, when he included some of his works in his 1911 recitals. The influence of Skryabin can be clearly heard in the 22nd *Monograph* amongst others, and Skryabin's *24 Preludes* (also in every major and minor key) were clearly an equally influential model. Overall, the *Monographs* display enormous stylistic variety, a prolific imagination and a magpie-like eye for colour.

Just as with the Studies, most of the *Monographs* were composed between 1911 and 1913, though at first Kelly described them as Impromptus or Preludes. On 3 September 1911, on his way back to London from his concerts in Sydney, he took advantage of his journey to see the sights of Queensland and stopped off in tropical Herberton. He describes a whole day's expedition on a horse-drawn sulky into the rainforest; the outing gave him 'an idea for an impromptu or prelude in F♯ minor after we started, and [he] worked at it as well as some other ideas, throughout the drive' (that was probably the *Monograph* No. 12). He continued working on them on 4 and 5 September in nearby Kuranda, all the while struggling to find an overall title for the works. Backtracking to Cairns, he boarded the S. S. *Mataram*, where on 12 September 1911, visiting Thursday Island, he writes that he had an idea for another impromptu. On 22 September, he noted in his diary that as he climbed up to the summit of Mount Bromo, an active volcano in East Java, at over 2,300 metres, 'I had several musical ideas during the expedition and worked at my set of impromptus'. The set was clearly beginning to take shape.

His expeditions in Indonesia, at that stage under Dutch control, proved richly stimulating. They included a visit to Borobudur in central Java, the world's largest Buddhist temple complex. Later, on 27 September, he was up at 4 a.m. to get to the crater of Mount Papandayan, a large composite volcano with a summit at over 2,000 metres; he described it as being similar to volcanoes he had previously visited in Japan. He also noted that 'on the way up to Papandajan I also composed a complete Impromptu in E flat min' (*Monograph* No. 18).

Back in England, Kelly had dinner with Balfour Gardiner on 8 December 1911, and played him his impromptus in A flat major and G major (Nos. 9 and 23 respectively). He continued to work on them in 1912, a year which was dominated by the Studies and important piano performances: his London debuts as a recitalist (where he performed his *A Cycle of Lyrics* numerous times) and as soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra. The critical reception to his performances was mixed, with the exception of his performances of his own works, which were generally admired.

In 1913 the title '*Monographs*' first appears in the diaries. By 10 May Kelly was able to play over most of his *24 Monographs* from memory for the pianist, singer and conductor, Georg Henschel. According to his custom, Kelly would wait until the works were finalised in his head before writing them down. As a result, most of his works exist only in one copy, and over two hours of music was left un-notated, existing only in his head when he was killed in 1916.

On 11 May 1913, he notes in his diary that he was setting down ideas for both his sets of *Monographs* and Studies. By 22 May, he was already able to play through the set. He invited Balfour Gardiner to stay over a weekend in Bisham in July. Tennis and rowing were capped with Kelly's playing his *Monographs* through for Gardiner. He also made time to make a fair copy of his *Twelve Studies*.

Spurred on by Gardiner's enthusiastic reaction, by 1 August Kelly was making a clean copy of the first and second *Monographs*, writing most of the rest of them out over the course of the next month – with a minor setback on 9 September, when he doubted the rightness of the *Monograph* in E flat major (No. 19) and began working on a new idea to replace it. When he had completed the set, he recorded his view that 'they are a more original piece of work, as a whole than most of my compositions and I feel quite satisfied with them at present'.

On 6 November Jelly and Adila d'Arányi visited Kelly's flat in London to rehearse a recital programme. 'Sep' took advantage of the opportunity to play them eight of his *Monographs*, which were repeated at a concert in Haslemere two days later. On 22 November Kelly played at Eton as soloist in Schumann's Piano Concerto in a concert conducted by Dr Lloyd. Kelly took advantage of the occasion to play a few of his *Monographs* after dinner, and the next morning he played the rest of the set for his old teacher – to whom he had dedicated the set so as to acknowledge his extraordinary good fortune to have had him as a high-school composition teacher.[4]

[4] Charles Harford Lloyd (1849–1919), an unusually prominent musician in England, had initially been appointed organist of Gloucester Cathedral in 1876, directing its Cathedral Choir School and also the triennial Three Choirs Festival. He then served as organist at Christ Church Cathedral in Oxford from 1882 to 1891 before being invited in 1892 to teach music at Eton College. As Instructor of Music, he supervised six music-teachers, and played the organ in the Eton College Chapel every morning and afternoon, as well as on Sundays (when he often gave evening organ recitals), in addition to rehearsing the choir.

The next mention of the *Monographs* in Kelly's diary is on 20 February 1914, when he played them and some recent songs for the composer and critic, W. Denis Browne, a close friend of Rupert Brooke. Kelly would soon serve with both of them in the Royal Naval Division – and both Brooke and Browne would be dead within fifteen months, casualties of the Gallipoli campaign. Browne liked No. 22 the best, and felt the second set of six (Nos. 7–12) were strongest overall.

The *Monographs* were sufficiently well developed by early 1914 for Kelly to include them in a concert on 19 March at the Aeolian Hall in London: he performed Handel's Eighth Suite, his own *24 Monographs*, Beethoven's Sonata No. 12 in A flat major, Op. 26, and Schumann's *Études Symphoniques*, ending with Mendelssohn's 'Spring Song' (Op. 62, No. 6) as his encore.

The Times reviewed them as follows:

> he played for the first time a set of 24 'Monographs' of his own composition, a formidable-looking series of pieces in all the keys [...]. They were not as formidable as they looked in the programme, for each takes only about one minute to play. [...] They are very varied; some, like the first in C major and the last, in C minor, have a boldness of design which was unexpected; others, like the Allegretto in A flat, the Pastorale in F, and the Allegretto dolente in B minor, have great delicacy and charm; while others again explore problems of technique with considerable enterprise. The playing of them, too, was delightful, for with his own music Mr Kelly is freed from the sense of duty and the reference to precedents which sometimes encumber his playing of the classics.[5]

After the performance, Borwick gave Kelly his criticisms of the concert, nearly all of which Kelly agreed with: Borwick particularly liked the *Monographs* and put gold stars against Nos. 2, 12, 15, 20 and 22.

On 14 September 1914, Kelly was informed that he had been accepted as an officer into Winston Churchill's Royal Naval Division, an infantry division made up of Royal Navy and Royal Marine reservists and volunteers. Churchill sent his private secretary, Eddie Marsh, to Oxford and Cambridge to select the best and brightest to be his officers,

[5] *The Times*, 20 March 1914.

including such figures as Brooke, Browne, the pre-eminent Classics scholar Patrick Shaw Stewart (who was fluent in Ottoman Turkish), Arthur 'Ock' Asquith, the son of the British Prime Minister, Charles Lister, the son of Lord Ribblesdale, and finally the remarkable New Zealand adventurer Bernard Freyberg, who would win a VC, command the New Zealand Army in World War II and become the first New Zealand-born Governor General of his own country. All but Asquith (who lost a leg) and Freyberg (who was wounded three times) would die either in Gallipoli or in France.

Kelly's wartime diaries record him doing further work on his *Monographs*. On 11 February 1915, at Pimpernel Camp in Blandford, Dorset, he notes that 'I had a fairly slack day and managed to get in a rest from 3 to 4.30pm. I revised my D minor, B♭ major, E♭ minor, E♭ major and G minor Monographs before dinner and before going to bed'. Two days later he records that he 'finished revising my 24 Monographs before dinner'.

On 18 April he notes that, while alone one evening on board ship off the island of Skyros, he played his *Monograph* No. 22. Indeed, for most of the voyage to Gallipoli his fellow officers, including Rupert Brooke, would have heard him playing the piano in the stateroom of the troopship during his free time, often performing four-hands duets with Browne.

On 31 December 1915, having spent almost eight months on the Gallipoli peninsula, he notes in the lead-up to the evacuation that 'in lyric form I feel I have every now and then said something good and original, for example my Monographs in no. 19 in E Flat Major, no. 22 in B minor and no. 24 in C minor'. Then, on 5 February 1916, with the Hood Battalion having been evacuated to the island of Tenedos, 'it was a wet day and [...] I played for about an hour or more in the morning in the headquarters bell tent a number of pieces, including my Monographs Nos. 13 in G♭ Major and 24 in C minor'. The following day he notes that he played his *Monographs* Nos. 13–18 and his *Waltz Pageant* after dinner. Finally, on 26 February, while aboard the H. M. Troopship *Olympic* off Mudros, he repeated his *Monographs* Nos. 13–18 and his *Elegy in Memoriam Rupert Brooke*.

Again, as with his *Twelve Studies*, he sent a corrected version of the *24 Monographs* to his publisher, Schott, on 4 May 1916, just before he rejoined his regiment in France –

where, on 13 November, he would be killed, in the battle of Beaumont-Hamel, the final battle in the Somme campaign. He died storming a machine-gun emplacement, shot in the head from behind. The original manuscript has not surfaced; what remains is the version prepared by an unknown Belgian copyist, whom Schott had hired as a recently arrived refugee, and who Kelly complained was both inaccurate and even changed his music.

Some of the *Monographs* were heard after Kelly's death in a memorial concert at Wigmore Hall in 1919: Leonard Borwick played his own arrangement of the Second Organ Prelude (written off the coast of Gallipoli), the 'Idyll' and 'Caprice' from *A Cycle of Lyrics* (1907–8) and five of the *Monographs*. Tovey played some of them at the Kelly memorial concert in Balliol Hall later that year. There would be no further mention of them until Richard Divall and Bruce Steele typeset the works in July 2002, which led to recordings of nine of the *Monographs* in Great War centenary projects between 2014 and 2018. This recording is the first complete presentation of all 24 of them.

Richard Divall notes in the end of his preface to his edition: 'these 24 remarkable little pieces will do more to enhance Kelly's reputation than any other works. They certainly call in question the view, expressed in *Grove*, that he rarely rose "above the limitations of Edwardian complacency"'. Kelly as a pianist seemed unlucky with critics, partly because of his high profile as a rower, partly because of his German training as a pianist which emphasised an unfashionably refined and reserved style of performance, and perhaps his colonial roots and private wealth also worked against him. As a composer, however, the truth is that before the First World War, the vast majority of his works were known to only a few in his inner circle. Once Kelly was killed, Schott lost interest and never printed either the Studies or the *Monographs*. With Borwick dying soon afterwards, and with cultural aesthetics changing so quickly, there was little interest or attempt to revive or study the works until now.

It is my wish that through this recording pianists and audiences in Britain, Australia and elsewhere will be able to evaluate this body of work, and that the best of these pieces will have a chance of entering the canon. It is past time for the reclamation of Kelly's works, and for a deeper appreciation of the sensibility embodied in them. It is now only

a matter of time until more of his music, beyond the *Elegy in Memoriam Rupert Brooke*, which has clearly made an impression, is heard and recognised by serious musicians and music-lovers. For those who wish to get to know 'Sep' better, the qualities of his genius are clearly on display here.

Christopher Latham is Director of The Flowers of War, a project that explores the impact of war on music (www.theflowersofwar.org), and is Artist in Residence at the Australian War Memorial in Canberra.

KELLY CONSIDERED FROM THE KEYBOARD

by Alex Wilson

It would be easy to dismiss Kelly's music as stylistically derivative of the many composers he admired – the mere product of his education and of those with whom he worked in close contact: no creative spirit of his own, cutting and pasting the sounds he liked into a collection of works full of disparate ideas with little progression. The sound-worlds of other composers are certainly detectable in the *Monographs* and Studies, after all. Study No. 8 in E flat major [8] is full of flowing Chopinesque quavers, and is melodically reminiscent of the man himself. Kelly's fondness of the German Romantic school is present in the rich chordal harmonies of Study No. 11 in C minor [11]; and the beautifully elegiac melody in *Monograph* No. 5 [18], the restrained chorale-like quality of *Monograph* No. 13 [26] and the declamatory, triumphant chordal writing in *Monograph* No. 19 [32] all recall a compositional style present in Britain in the early twentieth century. On the more experimental side, the harmonic mysteries of *Monograph* No. 22 [35] would happily reside in a magical Skryabin soundscape, and the enigmatic qualities of *Monograph* No. 20 [33] recall Ravel. *Monograph* No. 12 [25] and Study No. 12 in D minor [12] are almost Lisztian in their virtuosity.

Even so, I believe that Kelly's compositional output in general, and certainly the *Monographs* and Studies, are much more than merely a collection of ideas from a man who avoided innovation. His harmonic language in particular, although sometimes reminiscent of his influences, is notably fluid in the journey it takes through a work, creating unexpected sonorities and touching a variety of tonal centres and yet always remaining connected to the original key. Study No. 1 in F major [1] and Study No. 9 in G sharp minor [9] are perfect examples of works that take such journeys: only a couple of minutes in length but full of harmonic exploration – the creations of a supremely talented composer.

One can certainly draw parallels between the *Monographs* and both Chopin's and Skryabin's sets of 24 preludes, at least in terms of the basic structure. But, much as they all travel through all the major and minor keys and cover a wealth of styles and sonorities, Kelly's *Monographs* can be related to these other sets of preludes only very loosely and should perhaps be regarded as a homage to the works of his more illustrious predecessors. The arrangement of the keys within the overall structure is far less regimented than Chopin's series of majors and related minors and, as is inevitable with a composer who draws on so many contrasting influences, Kelly's sound-worlds are far more disparate. The harmonic language and depth of feeling in Skryabin's preludes (for example, his No. 10 in C sharp minor and No. 22 in G minor) are comparable to Kelly's more mysterious *Monographs* – No. 18 [31], for instance. This affinity demonstrates the respect Kelly felt for the work of his contemporary, and yet the combination of the enigmatic harmony with a sense of drama, virtuosity and melodic simplicity ensures that Kelly's sound-world is very much his own.

The *Monographs* are a set of beautifully crafted miniatures that cover a range of characters and flow effortlessly from one to another. *Monograph* No. 1 [14] starts the collection with a virtuosic whirlwind of running semiquavers. Two delicate, light *Monographs* [15] [16] then lead onto a grand, pompous chorale: *Monograph* No. 4 [17]. The simple beauty of *Monograph* No. 5 [18] then darkens into the fragility of No. 6 [19]. The 40-minute span of the *Monographs* follows this stylistic rollercoaster, contrasting the simple and beautiful with the dark and dramatic. Sometimes deep profundity collides

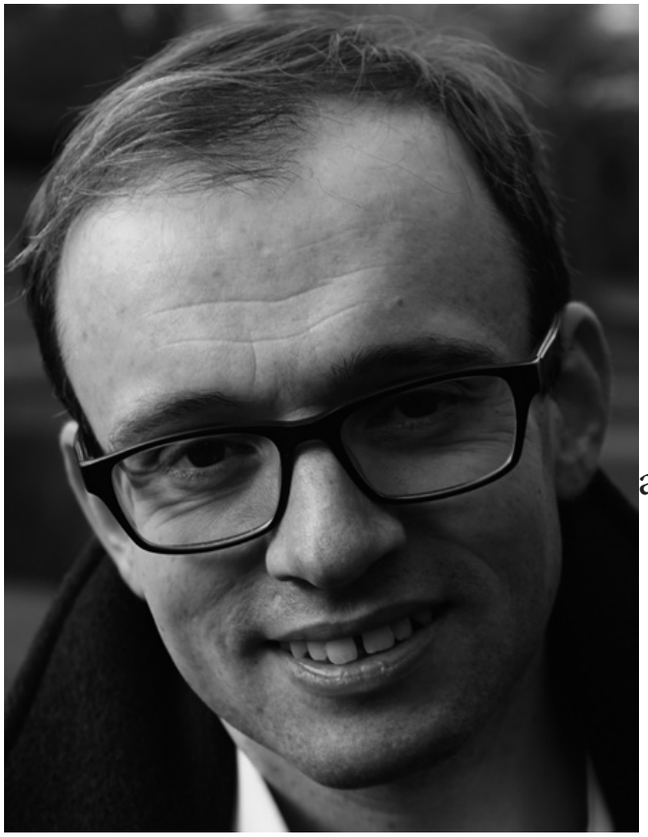
with the light-hearted, as when the charming, whimsical *Monograph* No. 15 28 leads straight into the funereal No. 16 (written in D minor, the traditional key of death) 29. Each *Monograph* is perfectly placed within the overall structure, with the halfway point marked by the passionate Romanticism of No. 12 25; *Monograph* No. 22 35, the most substantial and most perfectly crafted of all, is placed towards the end, before a heroic, dramatic conclusion in No. 24 37.

As a set of technical challenges, the *Twelve Studies* are certainly comparable to Chopin's own celebrated studies. Each set addresses a particular aspect of a pianist's technique with beauty, elegance and virtuosity. Comparing Kelly's to Chopin's Op. 10 set, one finds both composers testing a pianist's ability to play running arpeggios (Kelly in No. 1 1, Chopin in his No. 1), skittish chromatic semiquavers (Kelly in No. 2 2, Chopin in his No. 2), ever-shifting harmonies (Kelly in No. 8 8, Chopin in No. 3) and the control and beautiful shaping of dense chords (Kelly in No. 10 10, Chopin in No. 11). Kelly also experiments with contrasting rhythmic figurations: No. 3 3 presents different time-signatures for the two hands ($\frac{6}{8}$ in the right hand and $\frac{10}{8}$ for a left hand in chromatic thirds), and in No. 7 7 there are five quavers per bar for the right hand while the left hand starts with three crotchets per bar, before increasing to seven quavers per bar at its conclusion. Kelly also demonstrates a mastery of stillness, poise and elegance in No. 5, a trill study 5. After their extravagant start, Kelly's Studies end dramatically with the virtuosic No. 12 12, and Chopin finishes his own set just as dramatically, with the ever-popular 'Revolutionary' Étude. Both composers push a pianist's technique to the extreme with their sets of studies. Chopin's set is justifiably revered, and it is my hope that Kelly's offering may one day be as widely celebrated.

This recording of Kelly's *Monographs* and Studies came about as a result of a chance e-mail to their editor, Richard Divall: I had previously discovered Kelly's *A Cycle of Lyrics* and merely wanted to know if he had written any more music for piano – the 80 minutes of piano music I was presented with therefore came as quite a surprise! Interpreting this body of work – with no previous recordings to use as points of reference – has presented a unique challenge, as has the discovery of a number of seemingly obvious errors in

the scores: picking through what Kelly actually intended to be heard and what were his own mistakes or those of an unreliable Belgian copyist has necessitated some educated guesswork on my part. The journey towards this final recording has been immensely musically rewarding, providing the opportunity to present some forgotten music to the world, for the first time in 100 years.

Alex Wilson is a musician with a passion for the unusual, new and unexplored, a versatile pianist with interests ranging from cutting-edge new music to fascinating repertoire by forgotten composers. A native of Gloucester, where he grew up, Alex took a music degree at York University, studying piano with Joan Dixon, and graduated from the Royal College of Music with a MA (distinction) in piano performance in 2011, following studies with Andrew Ball. He was a finalist in the British Contemporary Piano Competition and Park Lane Group Young Artist and won the prestigious college concerto competition whilst at the Royal College of Music. He has performed new music across Britain and Europe as soloist, accompanist and chamber musician. He has appeared on BBC Radio 3 and Radio 6 Music as a champion of contemporary music, and performs regularly with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the London Sinfonietta.



a Photograph: Julie Mullen

His exploration of music by the lost composers of World War One began as a trio of charity concerts in 2014 and has developed into a countrywide concert tour, 'The Banks of Green Willow', which has attracted large audiences to hear Alex introduce the piano music of Ivor Gurney, George Butterworth, Cecil Coles, Ernest Farrar – and, of course, F. S. Kelly.

Alex directs, manages and performs with the Dr K. Sextet, curated the inaugural Cheltenham Music Festival Composer Academy and co-founded the music and visual-arts collaboration 'The Pierrot Project'. He moved from London to Exeter in 2013 and, believing

strongly in taking professional, ambitious music-projects out of the big cities, he is committed to developing the music scene in his home region, creating performance opportunities and performing regularly with musicians around the south west. He teaches piano at Colyton Grammar School in Devon.
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TOCCATA CLASSICS

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