

CHAPTER TWO - THE NINETEEN THIRTIES

Joyfully and thankfully, in the summer of 1930, at the age of twenty one, Gordon entered the Teacher Training Department of Nottingham University on a two year course. Music was only one of the five subjects that he was taking, but that was enough for great happiness. He spent as much time as he could in the Music Department, and at the end of the two years received his Teaching Certificate.

CERTIFICATE
FOR TEACHERS IN TRAINING
ISSUED BY THE DELEGACY APPOINTED BY
NOTTINGHAM UNIVERSITY COLLEGE
AND THE
ASSOCIATED TRAINING COLLEGES

THIS IS TO CERTIFY
that
Charles Gordon Phillips
after following a Two Year course of training
from 1930 to 1932
at the
Nottingham University College Training Department
has been successful in

THE FINAL EXAMINATION CONDUCTED BY THE DELEGACY
and has in other respects completed the course of training satisfactorily.

The above-named student satisfied the Examiners in the following subjects :-

Subject	Grade
<u>English</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>History</u>	<u>Advanced</u>
<u>Mathematics</u>	<u>Ordinary (Credit)</u>
<u>Drawing</u>	<u>Ordinary</u>
<u>Music</u>	<u>Advanced (Distinction)</u>
<u>Physical Training</u>	<u>—</u>
<u>& in the</u>	
<u>Principles & Practice of Teaching</u>	<u>—</u>

J. Linnell
Secretary of Delegacy.

C. Huntman
Chairman of Delegacy.

31 August 1932

H. S. Wootton
Principal of Training College.

With this certificate firmly in his possession, Gordon was now qualified to teach in a school and be paid a teacher's salary.

But music was more important, and he stayed on at University for a third year to study only Music, having gained a scholarship for this. He did as much work as he possibly could and after only one term, sat for his A.R.C.O. examination, and passed.

This very ornate certificate, more decorative than the later F.R.C.O. one, was ready for presentation to him on the 20th day of January 1933. The Examiners were an impressive list:

- C.C. Palmer (organist of Canterbury Cathedral)
- Hubert S. Middleton (Trinity College Cambridge)
- Ernest Bullock (Organist of Exeter Cathedral)
- Edgar T. Cook (Organist of Southwark Cathedral)
- Reginald S. Thatcher (Teacher at Harrow School and Deputy Director of Music BBC)
- Harvey Grace (Organist of Chichester Cathedral)

The Chairman of the college was Henry G. Ley, who at the time was Precentor at Eton College and the Hon. Secretary was Frederick G. Shinn, a post he held for many years.

Gordon was living in lodgings and he recalls, at a talk which he gave at All Hallows on September 5th 1984, that his widowed landlady introduced him to a wealthy lady, and in due course he had dinner with her and her husband at the Langham Hotel in London, right outside the BBC. She and her husband had hired the hotel ballroom so that Gordon could play the piano. He impressed them and was offered the choice of attending the Royal Academy of Music or the Royal College of Music. He chose the College and for two glorious years, from 1933 to 1935. he lived in London and studied music without having to worry about money.

At the Royal College of Music he studied organ with Sir Ernest Bullock, Bach with Arnold Goldsbrough, and composition with John Ireland, who had been taught by Stanford.

Gordon gave his first London organ recital in 1934, on a 3 manual, tracker action Walker organ, at the church of St. Mary-Le-Bow, on Cheapside.

His first London appointment was assistant organist at St. John's, Smith Square, on the north side of the Thames near Lambeth Bridge. Robert Ashfield was the organist.



THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS.

INSTITUTED 1864

INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER 1893

Patrons,
 His Grace The Lord Archbishop of Canterbury
 His Grace The Lord Archbishop of York,
 The Right Rev. The Lord Bishop of London.

We the Board of Examiners appointed by
THE COUNCIL OF THE ROYAL COLLEGE OF ORGANISTS
Hereby Certify that we have duly examined

M^r. Charles Gordon Phillips _____

*in the Theory and Practice of Music and
 declare him to be qualified to exercise the
 Profession and Duties of an Organist.*

<i>C. N. Abner</i>	<i>Edw. D. Cook</i>	} Examiners
<i>Hubert S. Middleton</i>	<i>Reginald S. Thatcher</i>	
<i>Saml. N. Dill</i>	<i>Harvey Price</i>	

M^r. Charles Gordon Phillips _____ *is hereby*
admitted to Associateship in this College.
Signed and Sealed on behalf of the Council

A.R.C.O. Examination Certificate

The Royal College of Organists.

INSTITUTED 1864.
INCORPORATED BY ROYAL CHARTER 1893.

We the Board of Examiners appointed by
the Council of the Royal College of Organists
herby certify that we have duly examined
Mr. Charles Gordon Phillips
in the Theory and Practice of Music according
to the highest standards adopted for the
College Examinations and we declare him
to be fully qualified to exercise the Profession
and Duties of an Organist.

<i>George Thalben Ball</i>	<i>Ivor Atkins</i>
<i>Stanley Marchant</i>	<i>V. Dyson</i>
<i>Percy Carter Buck</i>	<i>Harold E. Darke</i>

Mr. Charles Gordon Phillips is hereby
admitted to Fellowship in this College.

Signed and Sealed on behalf of the
Council this 18th day of January 1935.



Ivor Atkins Chairman.
Red G. Shinn Hon. Secretary.

Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists Certificate

Two years after passing his A.R.C.O. examination, he passed his Fellowship of the Royal College of Organists. The examiners were George Thalben Ball, Stanley Marchant, Percy Carter Buck, Sir Ivor Atkins, V. Dyson and Harold E. Darke. Gordon was awarded the certificate on the 18th day of January, 1935.

In April of that year, when he was living at 40 Avonmore Road, W14, near West Kensington underground station, he took the A.R.C.M. examination in Organ, Solo Performance and the subjects relating thereto and received the certificate below.



A.R.C.M. Examination Certificate

In the same year he first composed pieces which were accepted for publication by the Oxford University Press.

In 1936 Gordon played for his friend Dennis Howe's wedding. They had met some years previously at the Baptist church where Gordon's father was minister. Later, Dennis moved to Germoe Crossroads, Penzance, and was living there when I spoke on the telephone to him, after Gordon's death.

The first of the compositions was "Lullaby" which was written in July and dedicated "To my Mother". It was published in 1937 and reviewed in May 1937 in "Musical Opinion".

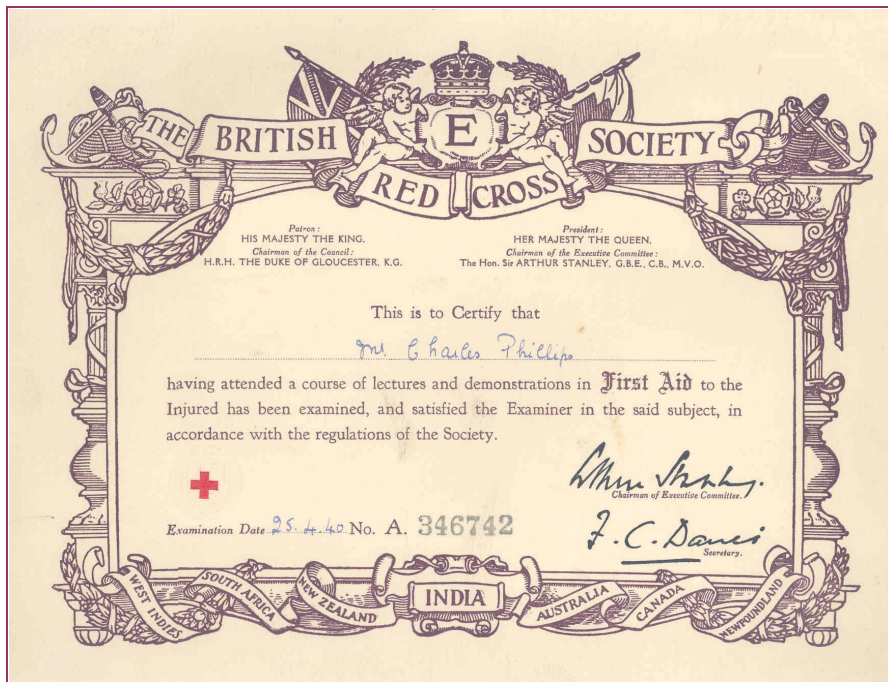
The "Three Miniatures" were composed in September 1935 and dedicated to Frank Wright. They were also reviewed in "Musical Opinion" in May 1937.

His musical talent was now being revealed and he had no fewer than eight compositions, some with several movements, published by the Oxford University Press in the two years between May 1937 and July 1939.

"Three Pastoral Pieces" were published during 1937 and reviewed in "Musical Times" in March 1938. They included "Meditation", composed in October 1936 and dedicated to Reginald Jevons, "Scherzo" composed in November 1936, dedicated to W.S. Lloyd Webber and "Pastoral Sketch" composed in February 1937 and dedicated to Harold Fairbairn.

Gordon became Organist and Choirmaster at the fashionable Knightsbridge church, All Saints, Ennismore Gardens, from 1938 to 1940, and it was during that period that he married Brenda Cooper. The wedding took place on 7th October 1939, six days before his 31st. birthday. Sadly the marriage did not work and they lived together for only three years. But they were never divorced, and Gordon continued to pay Brenda an allowance until her death on 11th. September 1978. She remained friendly with his parents and, after their death, inherited most of their wealth and possessions.

Gordon may have met Brenda through the Red Cross Society, because, by the time that they were married, the country was already at war with Germany. War had been declared on 3rd September 1939. Both Brenda and Gordon received certificates from the British Red Cross Society.



Red Cross Society Certificate



**Kathleen Cozens and Hilary Sewell
at All Hallows in October 2000**

Both Gordon and Brenda were known to one of the founder members of the Gordon Phillips Society, Mrs Kathleen Cozens, of Redbridge, Essex, who was also a member of the Red Cross Society.

Kathleen remained a friend of Gordon and was an enthusiastic member of the Society. She attended the annual memorial recitals as long as she could until her death in 2005. She will be remembered as a tiny lady who always wore a hat.

Recognising his musical talent, the Oxford University Press agreed to publish all the organ music that he could write, so 1937 until the outbreak of war became a very busy period for him. He composed the "FUGUE for ORGAN in F Minor" for W.S. Lloyd Webber in April 1937, while still assistant to Robert Ashfield at St.Johns, Smith Square. He gave recitals at this church and others including St George's, Bloomsbury and St. Magnus the Martyr, London Bridge. This organ at St. Magnus the Martyr was a tracker action organ built in 1712 by Abraham Jordan and restored at least six times before Gordon played it. The organ had three manuals and thirty one speaking stops.

The "Six Carol Preludes" was published in 1937 and reviewed in Musical Times in both March and May 1938 editions. It was dedicated to Harry E. Wall, organist of St. Paul's, Covent Garden. It became the best known of Gordon's publications and the only book to have remained in print.

Handwritten musical score for "5. See amid the winter's snow." by Gordon Phillips. The score is for organ and includes a "Manual" section with "Sw p stringtone." and dynamic markings like "mp." and "mf." The tempo is marked "Andante tranquillo (♩ = ♩)". The score is written on four systems of staves, with a treble and bass clef on each system. The key signature is one flat (F minor).

From the Carol Preludes (Second Set)

Next followed the "Suite in F minor", dedicated to Dr. George Thalben Ball, and published in 1937, about the same time as the Carol Preludes and reviewed in the same two editions of Musical Times. It consisted of three movements, "Pontifical March", "Minuet" and "Toccata". The "Pontifical March" was often performed without the other two movements, but Herbert F. Ellingford played the whole Suite at least three times at recitals that he gave at St. George's Hall, Liverpool. The Suite is judged by Robert Cruden to be the best work of Gordon's pre-war compositions and it certainly sounds very impressive. Gordon played the Pontifical March with reasonable frequency but, according to his repertoire notebook, does not appear to have played the whole Suite. Although Gordon admired Thalben Ball, and was glad to dedicate the Suite to him, he felt a trifle over-shadowed by him. Thalben Ball, being the older man, took all the best positions that the organ world of the day could offer, which seemed a bit unfair to the aspiring thirty year old Gordon.

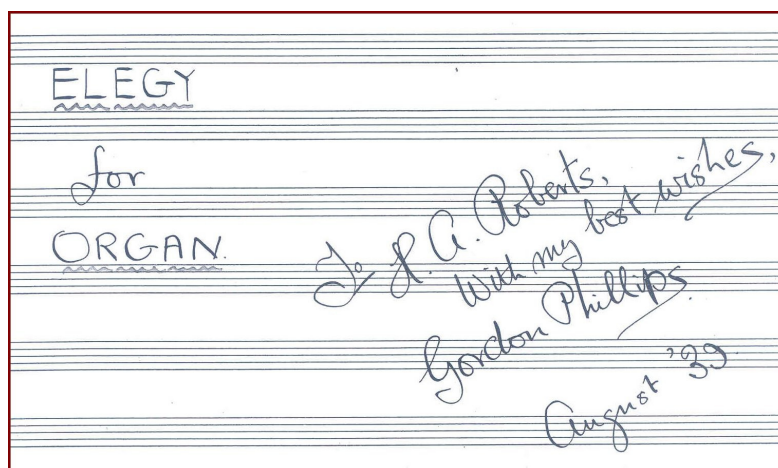
The "Suite in F minor" was followed by "Five Meditations on Evening Hymns", published in the early part of 1938 and reviewed for "Musical Times" in August and October 1938. These hymn meditations were dedicated to Ben Jones and are pleasant both to listen to and to perform.

Then Gordon wrote a large work, just entitled "SONATA", dedicated to Frederick Herbert Ellingford. It consisted of three movements, "Allegro Moderato", "Minuet" and "Rondo". It was published in 1939 and reviewed in July in both the "Musical Times" and "Musical Opinion". Harvey Grace wrote in the "Musical Times":

"I maintain that eighteen pages of unrelieved dissonance is as monotonous (and therefore as inartistic and miscalculated) as the same amount of unrelieved consonance."

However, Ellingford was not put off by this and performed it at recitals in October 1939 and then in January 1940.

Gordon's last work in 1939, which has remained unpublished probably due to the outbreak of war, was named "ELEGY for ORGAN" and inscribed as shown below.



The "Elegy" is in ternary form, the first and third sections being in the key of F minor, with a recognisable tune, but the middle section in C major, with many accidentals, is quite dissonant. Gordon has marked it as "Adagio non troppo" and he might either have played it himself, or taught a student, because it has detailed instructions for registration and dynamics, in red ink.