



Left to Right: Hugh C.M. Ross, John D. O'Brien, and Richard B. Westbrook

Photo: 11x14"



Hugh C.M. Ross (left) and Richard B. Westbrook

Photo: 11x14"

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Hugh Ross Obituary

The New York Times

Hugh C. M. Ross Is Dead at 91; Conductor of Schola Cantorum
By DENNIS HEVESI
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Dr. Hugh C. M. Ross, a choral director who, as conductor of the Schola Cantorum of New York, worked with some of the greatest figures in 20th-Century music, died of a heart attack at his home in Manhattan yesterday. He was 91 years old.

As recently as 1985, when Dr. Ross conducted "Liberte/Liberty," a celebration of the Statue of Liberty at Alice Tully Hall, The New York Times critic, Donal Henahan, wrote that he "led the program with a commanding vigor."

Dr. Ross, who took up the baton at the Schola Cantorum in 1927, had directed the chorus in association with every conductor of the New York Philharmonic for more than half a century. The list of his friendships in music was studded with names like Toscanini, Boulez, Stravinsky, Villa-Lobos, Koussevitzky, Mitropoulos, Stokowski and Bernstein.

"He was a tall, spare, scholarly looking person," Dr. Ross's friend and neighbor, Gay Pauley, said yesterday.

'A Tremendous Sense of Humor'

"He always had impeccable manners, an impeccable Britisher, although he had long since become a U.S. citizen," Mrs. Pauley said. "He was gentle, always thoughtful, reserved, but with a tremendous sense of humor, a wry humor."

Born in Langport in Somerset, England - what he called "King Arthur's country" - Dr. Ross was the elder of two sons of David Melville Ross, the canon of Wells Cathedral. His mother taught him piano from an early age.

One day, when he was 6, Dr. Ross later told an interviewer, his mother overheard him singing - on key - an aria from "The Messiah" in a room away from the piano. "Well," he said, "then she saw that I had some ability."

Before long, he had been introduced to the head of the Royal College of Music, studied organ, piano and violin and became a fellow of the Royal College of Organists at the age of 17 - the youngest student ever enrolled at the college. During World War I, he served as an artillery officer in France while simultaneously continuing his studies at the Royal College of Music and at Oxford University.

Summer Conductor in Canada

At 23, he was dispatched by Sir Hugh Allen, then head of the Royal College, to fill in for the summer as conductor of the Winnipeg Choir in Canada, a male ensemble that he took to Carnegie Hall in 1923. Dr. Ross remained in Winnipeg until 1927, when he came to New York to lead the Schola Cantorum. In 1933, he became a professor at the Manhattan School of Music, running the institution's chorus and madrigal groups and teaching musical history.



TO DIRECT

Hugh Ross, conductor of the Schola Cantorum of New York, will direct a performance of Benjamin Britten's Miracle of St. Nicolas when it is presented by the Inland Children's chorus and the Dayton Philharmonic orchestra next Sunday. The concert is scheduled for 2:30 p. m. at Memorial hall. The work will be repeated Monday night for Inland employes and their families.

Courtesy of Shirley Whiting