

Australian Music Series – MDAo10

In Memoriam Claude Achille Debussy

For Pianoforte
1918

Fritz Hart
Kent, 1874 – Honolulu, 1949

Edited by
Richard Divall

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Introduction

Fritz Hart was part of the extraordinary diaspora of British composers who, attracted to the various Dominions and colonies of the then British Empire, disseminated the influence of their British musical tradition and the fashionable Celtic revival to many parts of the world. Hart's contribution to music in Australia, and later Hawaii, is remarkable, and he distinguished himself as a composer, teacher and mentor as well as a conductor and writer. With the exception of Charles Edward Horsley, he was the finest orchestrator to work in Australia before 1930, and his musical influence in this country lasted for a considerable time, especially through his students, including Margaret Sutherland and Peggy Glanville-Hicks. Both as teacher and mentor, he was especially encouraging to female composers.

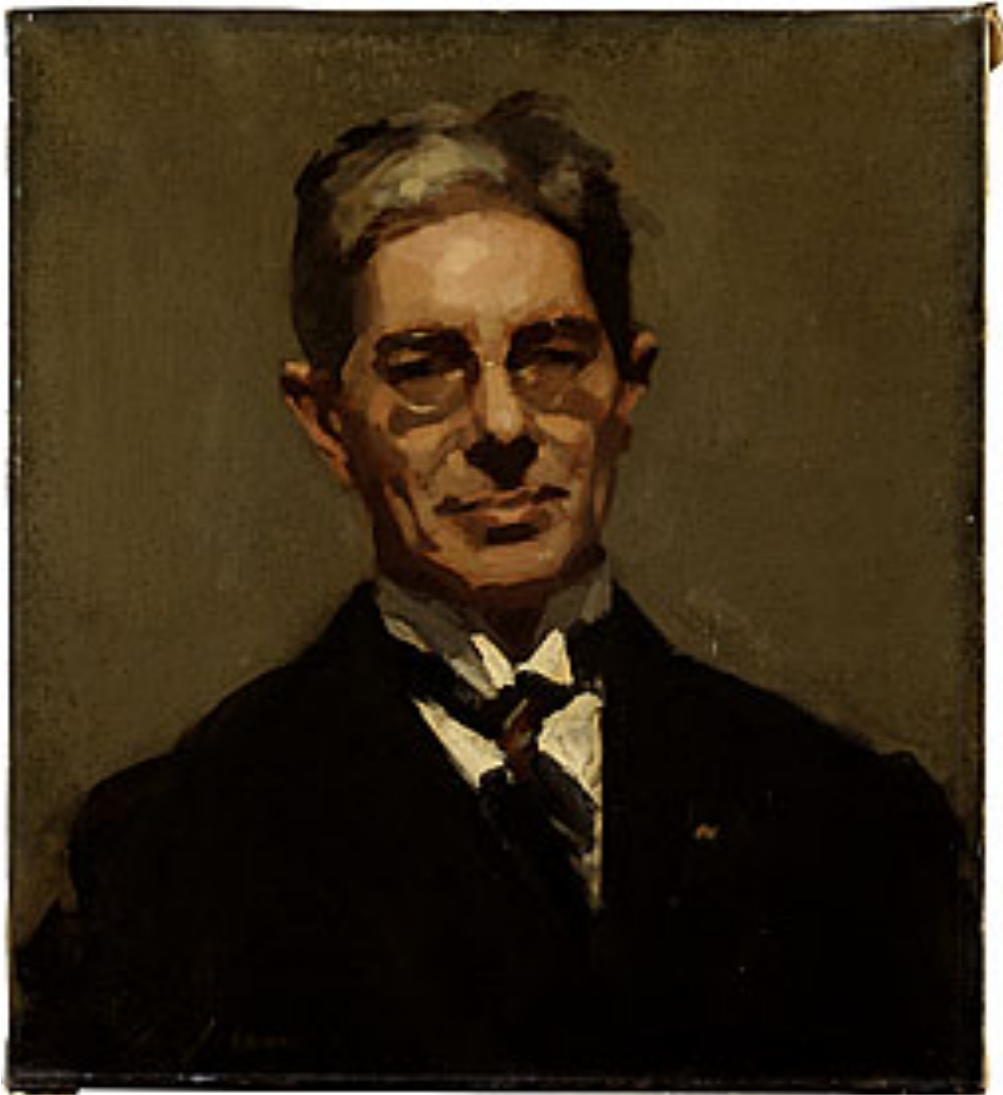
Born in Brockley, Kent in 1874, Fritz Hart was a chorister at Westminster Abbey and studied at the Royal College of Music, where he formed lifelong friendships with Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Granville Bantock. He migrated to Australia in 1909 and for many years was Director of the Albert Street Conservatorium of Music in Melbourne, in succession to G.W.L. Marshall-Hall. He was also a joint founder, with Alfred Hill, of the Australian Opera League. In 1937 he relocated to Honolulu, where he conducted the Honolulu Symphony Orchestra. After his death in Hawaii in 1949, all of his scores were returned to Melbourne, where they are held in the Latrobe Library of the State Library of Victoria.

Hart's output included twenty-two operas, two large-scale symphonies, two string quartets, several concertos and a *Symphonic Rhapsody* for violin and orchestra, three sonatas for violin and piano, and choral, organ, and other keyboard music. He is remarkable for his 500-odd songs, set to diverse texts, including poems of the Celtic revival and those of many Australian poets. These songs have not been forgotten: Stephen Banfield, for example, gives them serious consideration in his 1985 study of twentieth-century British song. Details of Hart's life and career, and a full catalogue of his works are found in Peter Tregear's excellent 'Fritz Bennicke Hart-An Introduction to his Life and Music', M.Mus. Thesis University of Melbourne 1993.

This short work, written at the end of March, 1918 on the news of the death of Claude Debussy is in two versions – one for violin and pianoforte and the other for solo pianoforte. Both appear in this series as numbers nine and ten. The composer's manuscript of the piano version of the 'In Memoriam Claude Achille Debussy' is held in the State Library of Victoria, Latrobe Library, LaTL 9528/11-12. There are no editorial notes for either version.

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Richard Divall
April 2014.



Fritz Hart 1874-1949. Portrait of Fritz Hart c. 1925. Max Meldrum 1875-1955
National Gallery of Australia NGA 00. 148

The Editor

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In Memoriam - Claude Achille Debussy

1862 - 1918

Fritz Bennicke Hart 1874-1949

Version for solo pianoforte

Edited by Richard Divall

Andante, ma non troppo lento

Pianoforte

11

21

32 rit a tempo rit a tempo

42

50

mf *p* *mp* *mf*

RH

61

68

rall

pp *ppp* *lunga*