



Frederick Kelly, 1881-1916

Frederick Kelly – the composer

In addition to his rowing talents, Frederick was a very skilled musician and composer. In 1903, he won a music scholarship to Oxford University where he gained a reputation as a talented pianist. He also became president of the University Musical Club.

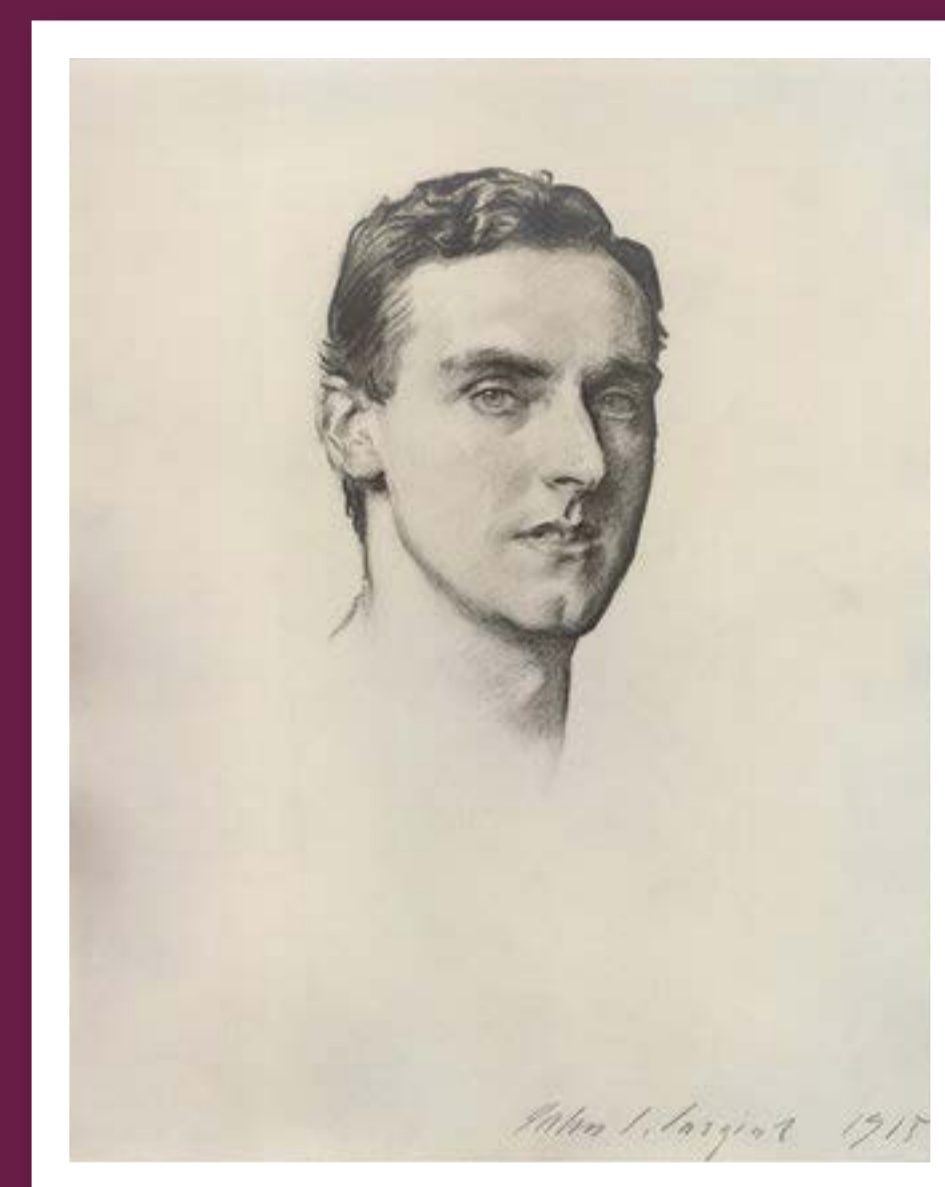
After finishing his degree at Oxford, Frederick studied the piano at the Hoch Conservatory in Frankfurt, and on his return to London acted as an adviser to the Classical Concert Society to promote the work of modern British composers. In 1911 he visited Sydney and gave a number of concerts, and in 1912 took part in chamber music concerts in London.

He began composing music around 1902 and continued to do so until his death in 1916. Most of his music at first was either mainly songs or pieces for the piano. From 1911, he increasingly composed chamber music, particularly for strings.

His most famous composition was the elegy for harp and strings that he wrote in 1915 in memory of this friend, the poet Rupert Brooke, who died at the start of the Gallipoli campaign. Frederick was present at Brooke's funeral on the island of Skyros.

Frederick continued to compose during his time serving in the trenches on the Western Front, despite frequent shelling and gas attacks. He also organised and conducted the regimental band of the Royal Naval Reserve Division, including for a performance of Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture to the sounds of British artillery guns.

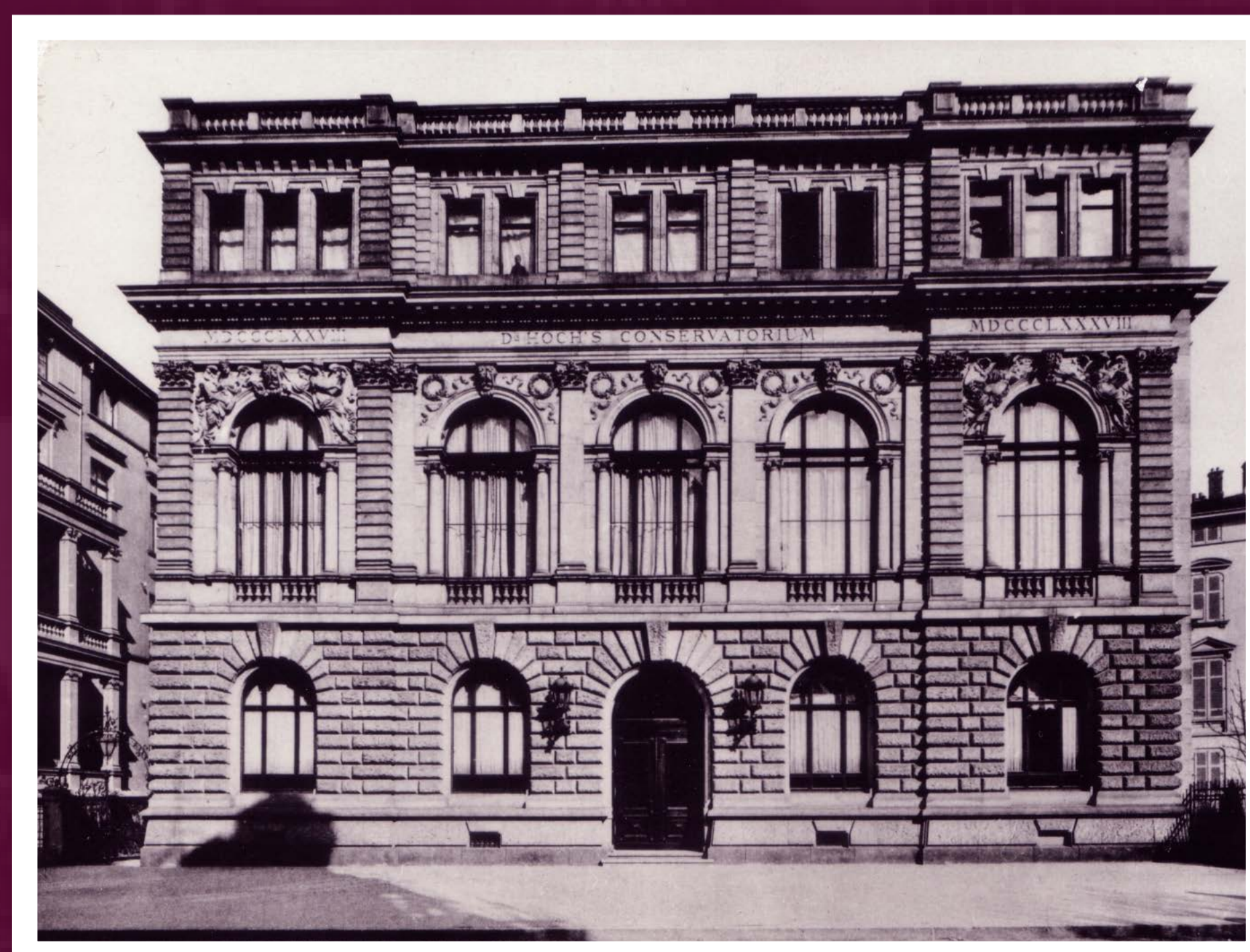
A memorial concert was held in Frederick's honour at Wigmore Hall in London in May 1919. In recent years, an increasing number of recordings have been made of his compositions and The Elegy for Strings, In Memoriam Rupert Brooke was played at the BBC Proms in 2014.



Drawing of Kelly by the portrait artist John Singer Sargent, 1915



Rupert Brooke's grave on Skyros



The Hoch Conservatory, c.1900.