

RICHARD HILL – A MUSICAL ADVENTURE

Born: Renfrew, Scotland, August 22, 1942

Education: Mitcham County Grammar School for Boys, Royal College of Music, London



🎵 PLAYER

Richard Hill's musical career began when he won a *Foundation Open Scholarship* to the *Royal College of Music*, London at the age of 17. There he studied under *Morris Smith* [trombone], *Millicent Silver* [piano & harpsichord], *Philip Cannon* [composition], and under the world-renowned English conductor, *Sir Adrian Boult*. At the *RCM* Richard became a founder member of the *London Gabrieli Brass Ensemble*. He also started his own rock band [with minor chart success] and played professional jazz with the *Dave Keir Jazz Band*. After leaving the *RCM* Hill played in a number of symphony orchestras on a freelance basis including the *Royal Opera House Orchestra*, the *London Philharmonic* and the *Philharmonia* amongst others. The orchestral experience gained under such conductors as *Sir Adrian Boult*, *Sir Georg Solti*, *Leonard Bernstein*, *Sir Roger Norrington* and *Rudolf Schwarz* was broadened by playing *Duke Ellington's* music, under *Billy Strayhorn*, in a production of Shakespeare's *'Timon of Athens'*. With an already developed interest in jazz and rock, Hill's career underwent a sea change when he was asked to join *Polydor Records* as a producer and studio arranger at the height of the sixties. He stopped playing and began to compose.

🎵 COMPOSER

The opportunity to work in the music industry during such an exciting period led on to a career as a media composer and studio arranger in recording, television, film and theatre. Film scores included *'To Kill a Clown'* starring *Alan Alda* and *'Baffled'* starring *Susan Hampshire* and *Leonard Nimoy*. In television, as well as writing many programme themes for *BBC*, *ATV* and *TVS*, plus station promos and advertising jingles, scores for major TV drama series included *Arnold Bennett's 'Clayhanger'* trilogy starring *Janet Suzman*, *John Mortimer's 'Will Shakespeare'* starring *Tim Curry* and *Don Shaw's 'Sounding Brass'* starring *Brian Glover*. Throughout this period Hill enjoyed worldwide success as co-writer, with *Professor Nevill Coghill* [Merton Professor of English Literature, Oxford University], *Martin Starkie* and *John Hawkins*, of the musical based on *Chaucer's 'Canterbury Tales'*, which ran for over 5 years in the *West End* and became a *Broadway* production for *Frank Loesser*, before embarking on two tours of the USA. *'Canterbury Tales'* enjoyed major productions all over the world, but particularly in Australia, South Africa and Germany as well as in many other European countries – and a small, touring version is still performed today.

🎵 PRODUCER

As a producer, a wide variety of musical adventures coloured Hill's career, including his production of contemporary composer *Cornelius Cardew's* legendary avant garde work for *The Scratch Orchestra*, *'The Great Learning'*, on the *Deutsche Gramophon* label. A collaboration with the *Choral Scholars* of *Gonville & Caius College, Cambridge University*, led to the successful formation of the *Polydor* recording group *The Gentle Power of Song*, led by *Marcus Bicknell*. With them Hill produced and orchestrated the classic poetry and music Christmas album *'Peace'*, [since re-issued as *'The Holly & The Ivy'* on *DGG*] – and the beautifully conceived album *'Circus'* from which came the single *'Constant Penelope'* which became somewhat of a cult production on the Internet. The *GPOs* were much influenced by the Beach Boys, Mamas & Papas and other West Coast vocal folk rock bands. From *'California Dreamin'* then, to Sussex in England, where Hill became fascinated by the folk music of *The Amazing Catsfield Steamers*, producing the folk charting album *'United Friends'* as well as the highly popular television oriented chart album *'Songs of Joy'* with the choir of the *Pestalozzi International Childrens Village*, who went on, under Hill's leadership, to enjoy *No.1 chart success* on *Paul McCartney's* single *'Pipes of Peace'*.

🎵 COMPOSITIONS AND PROJECTS

The influence of such a wide spectrum of musical experience, underpinned by a classical training, shines through Hill's current cross over compositions for concert hall and theatre, which have attracted such generous reviews. In his world of sound, jazz musicians naturally integrate with symphony orchestras, lieder singers perform to synthesizer tracks, actors narrate poetry to music and the arts of visual imagery and drama are never far away. The *'Symphony of Jazz'* orchestral concert series with *Chris Barber's Jazz Band* [performing over 50 concerts around Europe], *'The Rime of the Ancient Mariner'* music drama [Hill's setting, for an *Oxford University* company, of *Coleridge's* epic poem, nationally acclaimed at the *Edinburgh Festival*], and the ballet/concert work with narration by *Ben Kingsley 'Images from Kubla Khan'*, [now released, conducted by the composer and after stunning reviews, available as a digital download album on the *Academy Recordings* label] – all reflect the accessible and original style which defines Richard Hill's contemporary music. As a performer, his download album *'Baroque Sounds'*, also released on *AR*, demonstrates his ability to combine musically sensitive performances of baroque classics with the capabilities of the modern music synthesizer. His narration of his own poetry, set to his own musical soundscapes on the *Worlds Within Worlds Vols 1 & 2* album series, marks the start of another creative adventure for this multi-talented artist.

🎵 WORK IN PROGRESS

Hill's latest project is the forthcoming release of his beautiful, multi-layered music/spoken word album *'A Winter Dream'* for *Academy Recordings*, which again features him reading his own poetry set within his own, fascinating musical soundscapes. A *'Concerto for Trumpet'* is also on the drawing board. Visit the website at <http://www.richardhillmusic.co.uk>