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Summary Article: **Bridge, Frank**

From *The Hutchinson Unabridged Encyclopedia with Atlas and Weather Guide*

English composer. His works include the orchestral suite *The Sea* (1911), and *Oration* (1930) for cello and orchestra. He taught the English composer Benjamin Britten.

Bridge was born in Brighton and studied at the Royal College of Music, London, where Charles Stanford was his composition master. He also learned the violin, viola, and conducting. He went on to play viola in various quartets and gained varied experience as an operatic and concert conductor, but later devoted his time to composition, under the patronage of Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge, though he also taught Britten privately. He won Cobbett Prizes for chamber music 1905–15 and honourable mention for his E minor string quartet at Bologna, Italy, in 1906. He won acclaim for such accessible works as *The Sea*, *Lament* (1915) for strings, and *There is a Willow* (1928). However, starting with the Piano Sonata (1924), his music explores dissonance to a greater degree, including bitonality. His third and fourth string quartets (1927, 1937) show an advanced harmonic idiom, not far removed from the music of Alban Berg. He was well known as a teacher; his pupil Britten's *Variations on a theme of Frank Bridge* (1937) are based on a theme from his master's Idyll no. 2 for string quartet (1906).

As a composer he possessed a formidably polished technique, and in his interwar compositions developed a radical cosmopolitan idiom, influenced by the atonality of Arnold Schoenberg. He is now recognized as one of the finest composers of his generation, particularly in the field of chamber music.

Works
Opera *The Christmas Rose* (1918–29; produced London, 1932).

Orchestral symphonic poem *Isabella* (1907), suite *The Sea* (1911), rhapsody *Enter Spring* (1927), tone-poem *Summer* for orchestra; *Lament* for strings (1915); *There is a Willow Grows Aslant a Brook* (on a passage in *Hamlet*; 1928); *Phantasm* for piano and orchestra (1931), *Oration* for cello and orchestra (1930), *Rebus* overture (1940) and *Allegro moderato* for strings (1941).

Chamber four string quartets (1901–37), two piano trios, Fantasy quartet and several smaller pieces for string quartet, piano quintet, Fantasy Trio and quartet for piano and strings, string sextet, Rhapsody for two violins and viola, *Divertimenti* for wind instruments, violin and piano sonata, cello and piano sonata; numerous piano works including sonata, four *Characteristic Pieces*, suite *A Fairy Tale*, three Improvisations for the left hand; violin, viola, cello, and organ pieces.

Vocal choruses; songs.

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