Elegy – In Memoriam
Rupert Brooke
For string orchestra
Gallipoli, April 1915 – Alexandria, 1915

Frederick Septimus Kelly
Sydney, 1881 – France, 1916

Edited by
Richard Divall

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Introduction

Australian F S Kelly’s brief life uniquely encompassed the highest levels in sport (he won gold for Britain as a rower at the 1908 Olympics) and music (as pianist, composer, conductor and patron). It ended with a hero’s death. Kelly was a Lieutenant-Commander in the Royal Naval Division’s Hood Battalion. He was twice at Gallipoli, where he was wounded, receiving the DSC for his bravery under fire. He was with the burial party when Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was interred on the island of Skyros, the poet having died as the Royal Naval Division was making its way to the Dardanelles. Devastated by this loss, Kelly wrote his Elegy: in memoriam Rupert Brooke. He was killed during one of the last great battles of the Somme at Beucourt-sur-Ancre, on 13 November 1916 when he was shot in the head while taking a machinegun post.

Kelly was born in Sydney on 29 May 1881, into a wealthy Irish family. Thomas Hussey Kelly, father of F S Kelly, was a wool broker and company director and a mining promoter. From 1893 he studied at Eton where he developed a precocious talent in both rowing and piano. I quote here from Thérèse Radic’s book Race Against Time.

There his musical talent flourished under the tutelage of Dr Charles Harford Lloyd. He came to the notice of the French pianist and teacher Antoine Francois Marmontel, a friend and pupil of Chopin. By then Marmontel was nearly eighty and no longer teaching at the Paris Conservatoire where he had been on staff for fifty years. His legion of students there included Albeniz, Bizet, d’Indy, Dubois, Guiraus and Wieniawski. Marmontel offered to teach the boy for nothing if he would devote himself to music. Kelly was fourteen, and though he may have wished to leave Eton and follow his chosen profession, his parents decided against it. As some kind of substitute for this thwarting of ambition, a passion for rowing temporarily replaced his passion for music. Sep set about the business with characteristic determination and discipline. He rowed in the Eton Eight in 1897 and was Stroke for that crew when it won the Ladies’ Plate at Royal Henley Regatta in 1899. In 1898 he was awarded Balliol College’s Nettleship Scholarship for music. What were to remain the two loves of his life were already making opposing demands on his time and attention.

Kelly went to Oxford and in 1898 was awarded a Nettleship Scholarship at Balliol College. Here he participated in the successful Balliol rowing team, where he was also a member of the Leander Club. His solo sculling record of 1905 stood unbeaten until 1938. In 1908 he was a member of the British Gold Medal winning eight in the London Olympic Games.

From 1903 to 1908 Kelly was a student at Das Hoch’sche Konservatorium at Frankfurt-am-Main where he studied composition under Iwan Knorr – Percy Grainger’s teacher, and piano with Ernst Engesser. Kelly kept a daily diary where he commented on his musical colleagues and activities, as well as his wide circle of acquaintances. These diaries, up to 29 April 1915 together with Kelly’s life are thoroughly documented in
Thérèse Radic's book *Race Against Time The Diaries of F.S. Kelly*. At the time of publication, the final volume of the diary, covering May 1915 until his death was missing. Recently a typescript of the last of these, with annotations by Arthur Asquith DSO, son of the British Prime Minister H H Asquith, was obtained by the National Library of Australia, and is currently being edited by Thérèse Radic. Arthur Asquith (1883-1939), also served in the Hood Battalion. In 2014 the NLA was able to buy one of the last original handwritten Kelly diaries from a British bookseller. It covers three months in early 1916. This, too, will be incorporated in the edited Kelly war diaries. A large collection of Kelly’s published works and manuscripts were also obtained by the National Library and some forty of Kelly’s works have been edited and published by The Marshall-Hall Trust. These are freely available on application to the Editor.

One of his influences in his life was a love and knowledge of poetry, ranging from the Hellenistic poets to modern American works. Ten of his songs set to imaginative poems were published in 1910 and 1913 by Schott and Co, but there are seven further songs that have remained unpublished, and the songs in this series are some of them. His newly forged friendship with the English poet Rupert Brooke (1887-1915) was to have a special effect on him. Kelly describes in his diaries his meeting Brooke, as they enlisted in 1914 in the Hood Battalion. On the sea voyage to the Dardanelles on the troopship H.M.T. *Grantully Castle*, Kelly spent some time with Brooke, and was deeply moved when the young poet died of an infection on 23 April 1915, only two days before the landings on what became Anzac Day. Kelly together with Asquith, the critic-composer Denis Browne, Charles Lister, Patrick H. Shaw Stewart and the New Zealander, Bernard Freyberg, took part in the burial on the island of Skryos. Kelly added an inscription in Greek of the Hellenistic poet Callimachus, which is given in Thérèse Radic’s first volume of the Kelly Diaries.

The poem by Callimachus (c.305-240BCE), reads in English:

Someone spoke to me of your death, Heractitus,
And it led me to tears as I remembered
How often we two had put the sun to sleep with talking.
But you, my guest-friend from Halicarnassus,
Long, long ago became a heap of ashes somewhere.
Still, your poems live on;
And Death, the universal Snatcher,
Cannot lay his hand on them.

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2 These include the 24 Monographs and 12 Studies for solo piano, the incomplete Sonata for piano, two works for organ and the Elegy for Rupert Brooke for solo violin, harp and strings. The violin sonata composed for Jelly d’Arányi will be published in this series.
The *Elegy In Memoriam Rupert Brooke* is scored for solo violin, divided string orchestra and harp, and exists with some revisions. The harp part was particularly altered by Kelly and it is these final revisions that this edition of the work is based. Kelly began to conceive the work on the day following Brooke’s death and proceeded to write it whilst recuperating from a wound in Alexandria, Egypt. After a preliminary performance in a piano version, the full orchestral version of the *Elegy* had its premiere at a Memorial Concert to Rupert Brooke in the Rugby School Speech Room on 28 March 1916, conducted by the composer Frank Bridge. Kelly in his final diary in late 1915 describes the work as suggesting the rustling of the leaves of the grove of olive trees that stand around Brooke’s lone grave on Skyros. The BBC Symphony Orchestra has recorded the work as has the Tasmanian Symphony for a Commemorative ANZAC CD being issued for the Centenary of the April 25 landings in 1915.
Frederick Septimus Kelly 1881 – 1916
Photograph courtesy of the Leander Club, Oxford

Rupert Brooke’s Grave – Skyros, Greece
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Richard Divall
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CRITICAL NOTES

There are differences between the original and the revised harp part by Kelly. I have used the revision version, believing that Kelly favours these changes.

The Editor
Frà Professor Richard Divall AO OBE is a Vice-Chancellor’s Professorial Fellow at Monash University, an Honorary Principal Fellow in Music at The University of Melbourne, and Visiting Professor at The University of Malta. He is Chairman of the Marshall-Hall Trust and is a Knight of Malta in Solemn Religious Profession. He was awarded a D.Lett. (Hon Causa) in 1992 by Monash University, and a Doc. Univ. (Hon Causa) by the Australian Catholic University in 2004. He holds a PhD in Theology from the University of Divinity on eighteenth-century sacred music on Malta that includes an edition of the complete sacred works of Nicolò Isouard (1773-1818), and is an Honorary Research Fellow at the same university. Richard Divall has edited early Australian music since 1967.
Solo

Vln/O

1/I

1/II

2/I

2/II

Vla 1

Vla 2

Vc 1

Vc 2

Cb

Hp

pp teneramente

mf

mp

ppp

mf

1/10
Poco piu lento

Solo

Vln/O

1/I

1/II

2/I

2/II

Vla 1

Vla 2

Vc 1

Vc 2

Cb

Hp

p sosten

mp express

p

p sosten

pp

PP

p sosten

Poco piu lento