

Frank Bridge

(1879 - 1941)

Sir Roger de Coverley

(1922) for string quartet

arranged for Wind Quintet (Clarinet in A) by Toby Miller (2017)



Thanks to [Trevor Bray: Frank Bridge – A Life in Brief](http://trevor-bray-music-research.co.uk/Bridge%20LinB/contents.html) for the biographical details below.
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Frank Bridge was a musician who surely deserves more than most the title 'professional'. He played violin and viola professionally; was known as the 'emergency conductor' of professional orchestras (Henry Wood was one of many who always called on Bridge as a deputy); was the teacher and mentor of the most famous English composer of the twentieth century, Benjamin Britten; and he was a composer – professional after 1923 thanks to support from the American heiress Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. Yet Bridge fell out of favour, increasingly isolated later in life as he moved away from the 'English school', the compositional establishment dominated by fellow alumni of the Royal College of Music (RCM), and is still under-represented in concert programmes today, overshadowed by pupil and peers. Some of his key formative influences were:

- his father William. Stern disciplinarian and hard taskmaster, he gave up his printing profession in middle age in favour of music: peripatetic violin teacher in private schools (and of his son), and musical director of a theatre orchestra in Brighton, in which Frank began playing and later also deputising for his father as conductor.
- his musical siblings (he was the 10th of 12 altogether, from William's three wives); though only two others were notably musical, they joined in a family string quartet, shaping Frank's lifelong preference for chamber music from an unusually early age.
- the RCM, where Frank went aged 17 to study the violin and piano. In 1896 its building next to the Royal Albert Hall was only three years old, and it had existed for just ten years before that. Hubert Parry was the director and music historian, C V Stanford the rigorous, unbending composition teacher ('*it won't do, me bhoy*') and orchestral conductor, and Achille Rivardo Frank's violin professor. Both Rivardo and especially Stanford stood for hard work and a 'no nonsense' practical approach without affectation: attitudes which rubbed off on Bridge (and through him on Britten), even while he resented Stanford's musical conservatism.
- W W Cobbett, amateur chamber music enthusiast who published a *Cyclopedic Survey* in 1929 which has remained a standard work ever since. In 1905 he started a composition competition designed to revive the Elizabethan 'Phantasy', a single movement with contrasting sections and looser rules than classical forms like the sonata. Bridge's Phantasy (String) Quartet won second prize in 1906, and his Piano Trio took first prize in 1907. All five prizewinners were pupils of Stanford. Cobbett later commissioned Bridge's Phantasy (Piano) Quartet.

Bridge made the most of his time at the RCM, studying, practising, conducting, joining chamber groups and meeting his future wife. By the time he officially left in 1903 (he returned regularly), he was playing in three professional string quartets, two on viola and one on second violin. This period of Bridge's life, continuing up to the First World War, was also his most prolific and successful as a composer. His early music is accessible, drawing not only on the Romantic German tradition that he was exposed to at the RCM but also French and more contemporary influences, yet distinctly original from the start. By the time *Sir Roger de Coverley* was written in 1922, Bridge was beginning to move in new compositional directions. This piece however is in the lighter vein of the arrangements of *Sally in our Alley* and *Cherry Ripe* that he had made for string quartet in 1916, with versions also for orchestra and for piano. In October 1922 Bridge arranged the new piece for full orchestra: Henry Wood included it in the last Queen's Hall Promenade concert, where it was an immediate hit. Bridge also made a string orchestra version (revised 1938). He may well have written first for his own quartet, and with performances at end-of-year parties and barn dances in mind: 'Roger de Coverley' is often the last dance on such occasions, and Bridge includes *Auld Lang Syne* as a counter-melody towards the end. Arrangers have a habit of showing off by cramming too many competing folk tunes into their versions, but here is a piece that is not to be confused with such attempts, as witness the success of the orchestral version and the number of subsequent rearrangements. As a wind quintet it is certainly demanding and will need thorough rehearsal, but I hope that in this form too you may find it a rewarding and exciting encore piece.

26

Fl

Ob

Cl

Hn

Bn

[arco]

p

f

f

33

Fl

Ob

Cl

Hn

Bn

pp *espress.*

pp

mp *leggero*

p

40

Fl

Ob

Cl

Hn

Bn

p

p *espress.*

mf

p

mf

p

arco

p

47

Fl

Ob

Cl

Hn

Bn

mf

f

mf

f

f

mf

f

f

mf

54

Fl *f* *mf* *f* *f sempre*

Ob *f* *mf* *f* *f*

Cl *f* *mf* *f*

Hn *f* *f* *f* *f*

Bn *f* *mf* *f* *f*

60

Fl *p leggiero*

Ob *marcato [pizz.] f* *ff* *[arco] pp*

Cl *marcato [pizz.] f* *ff* *[arco] p*

Hn *f* *mp espress.*

Bn *f* *f* *pp*

66

Fl

Ob *[pizz.] p* *mp* *[arco] p*

Cl *p*

Hn *mf espress.*

Bn

76

Fl *mf scherzando* *mf*

Ob *[pizz.] p* *p* *mf*

Cl *mp*

Hn *mf espress.*

Bn *mp* *mf*

83

8

Fl *ff* *mf*

Ob *ff* *mf*

Cl *f* *ff* *mf*

Hn *ff* *mf*

Bn *ff* *mf*

91

9

Fl *f* *mf* *f* *cantando*

Ob *f* *mf* *f*

Cl *f* *mf* *f* *cantando*

Hn *f* *mf* *f* *pizz*

Bn *f* *mf*

98

Fl *f*

Ob *f*

Cl *f*

Hn *mf*

Bn *f*

105

10

Fl *f brillante* *f*

Ob *f brillante* *f*

Cl *f* *f*

Hn *f* *f*

Bn *f* *f* *[arco]*

112 *poco a poco cresc.*

Fl *f* *ff* *pp*

Ob *ff* *p* [pizz] 2

Cl *f* *pp* [pizz] 2

Hn *pp* [pizz]

Bn *pp* [pizz] *p*

120

Fl *f*

Ob *f*

Cl *f*

Hn *f*

Bn *f*

11 [11]

128

Fl *f sempre*

Ob [arco] *f sempre*

Cl [arco] *f sempre*

Hn *f sempre* [pizz]

Bn [arco] *f sempre* [pizz]

12 Tempo risoluto [faster]

135

Fl *f* *p* GP GP GP GP

Ob *f* *p* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p*

Cl *f* *p* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p*

Hn [arco] *f* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p*

Bn [arco] *f* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz] *p*

144

Fl *f* [pizz.] *p* [arco] *f* *p* *p sempre*

Ob [arco] *f* [pizz.] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz.] *p* *p sempre*

Cl *f* *p* *f* [pizz.] *p* *p sempre* [arco]

Hn [arco] *f* [pizz.] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz.] *p*

Bn [arco] *f* [pizz.] *p* [arco] *f* [pizz.] *p* *p sempre*

152

Fl [pizz.] *p*

Ob [arco] *mf*

Cl [pizz.] *p* 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2

Hn [arco] *p*

Bn 2 *p*

13

159

Fl [arco] *f* *f*

Ob *f* *f*

Cl 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 [arco] *f* *f*

Hn 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 [arco] *f* *f*

Bn 2 2 2 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 4 *pp leggiero* *f*

14

165

Fl *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Ob 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 2 *f* *p* *f* *p*

Cl *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Hn *f* *f*

Bn [pizz.] 2 2 [arco] *f* [pizz.] 2 2 [arco] *f* [pizz.] 2 2 [arco] *f*

15 (Cl counter-melody)

170 Fl *f* *mf scherzando*

Ob *f* *p marcato*

Cl *f* *mf marcato*

Hn *p marcato*

Bn *f* *p marcato*

16

176 Fl *f mf* *fp [saltando]* *[pizz.]*

Ob *f* *p* *mf* *f* *[pizz.]*

Cl *f* *mp* *mf* *[pizz.]*

Hn *f* *p* *f* *[pizz.]*

Bn *f* *p* *f* *[pizz.]*

17 (Cl - Auld Lang Syne)

183 Fl *f* *brilliant p*

Ob *fp [saltando]* *f* *p*

Cl *f* *espress.* *[arco]*

Hn *f* *[arco]*

Bn *f* *p* *[arco]*

189 Fl *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Ob *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Cl *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p*

Hn *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

Bn *f* *p* *f* *p* *f* *p* *f*

196

Fl *f p f p f p*

Ob *p f p f p*

Cl *2*

Hn *p f mf p*

Bn *p f p f p*

202

Fl *f p ff*

Ob *ff*

Cl *ff*

Hn *ff*

Bn *ff* (2) (4)

208

Fl *f pp*

Ob *f pp*

Cl *f pp*

Hn *f pp*

Bn *f pp*

213

Fl *f ff* [poco sost.] [a tempo] GP (F)

Ob *f ff*

Cl *f ff*

Hn *f ff*

Bn *f ff*