

Cellists' Corner

Brief Career Details of Important Cellists

prepared by David Johnstone from public information

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COLIN HAMPTON

By Celloheaven

Colin Hampton was born on June 6th, 1911. His father was an organist, woodworker and musical director. Colin spent much of his childhood in convents outside of London, due to the dangers of WWI. He took up the cello at the age of 12, and made rapid progress. He studied with Herbert Walenn at the London Violoncello School, and then with W. H. Squire at the Royal Academy of Music.

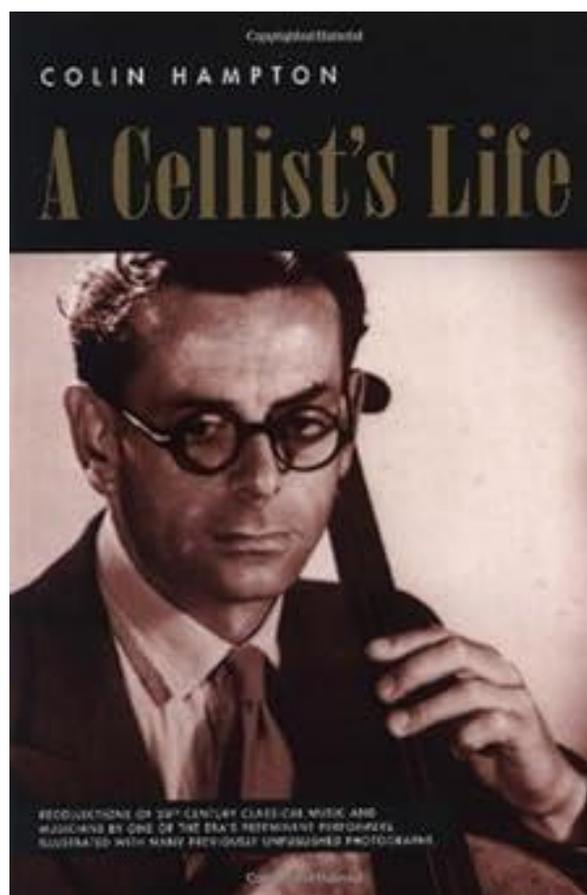
He quickly became deeply in love with chamber music, and found himself in the Griller Quartet, which became relatively well-known in the music world of the mid-twentieth century. In 1947 the Griller Quartet took up residency at the Berkely campus of the University of California.



*The Griller Quartet with Hephzibah Menuhin (1953), Sidney Griller, Philip Burton.
Crediting the Chamber Music New Zealand archives*

Hampton was a co-founder of the California Cello Club, and an arranger of dozens of pieces for various sizes of cello ensembles. He died in 1996 at the age of 85.

His autobiography: *A Cellist's Life*, was published in 2000 by String Letter Publishing, and has been reviewed at the Cello Heaven website.



The Following is an excerpt from Tim Janof's interview with cellist Bonnie Hampton:

"TJ: You mentioned that you studied with Colin Hampton, who is also known for his cello compositions. What was it like studying with him?"

"BH: Colin was very much a quartet cellist, and he saw "quartet cellist" as his role in life, so to speak. He always referred to himself as the bass of the quartet. He was a wonderful cellist and people were constantly asking him to play other things, but he wouldn't. He was from an older school of quartet players where, when one was labeled as a quartet musician, that's all one did. Today, everyone diversifies much more, and, frankly, I think it's probably more healthy.

"One of the things that was so strong with him was how he was able to delve beneath the surface of someone's playing and look right into the character of the music. He had no use for the idea of mere instrumental playing, or virtuoso playing per se. He admired and loved virtuoso playing, of course, but he said, unless one really loves music, there's no point in playing the instrument."

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