



Ray Alston — editor

Of central European ancestry, British concert pianist Ray Alston was born and educated in London. At a very early age, through Mark Hambourg and his assistant, he was introduced to the outstanding methods of the Polish pianist, composer and pedagogue Theodor Leschetizky. In his late teens he studied with Lamar Crowson and Cyril Smith at the Royal College of Music followed by an invitation to Paris, working with Pierre Sancan, Vlado Perlemuter and Marcelle Heuclin. Further studies took him to Guido Agosti in Siena and then to Budapest (with Péter Solymos who was recognised as an important exponent of Debussy and Bartók), obtaining the prestigious Performing Diploma of the Franz Liszt Academy.

Vlado Perlemuter's family settled in France in 1907 and, after studying at the Paris Conservatoire with Moritz Moszkowski, Lazare Lévy and Alfred Cortot, he studied all of Ravel's piano solo works with the composer who was present when he performed the complete piano works in two public recitals in 1929. In 1951 he joined the teaching staff of the Paris Conservatoire, where he remained until 1977. In 1958 Perlemuter was invited to the Dartington Summer School of Music in Devon, where Ray studied

with him in 1966, meeting at the same time his future wife, Marie-Thérèse Loing. In the following years Vlado often visited their home whenever he was in London.

At the conservatoire, Perlemuter's teaching assistant was Marcelle Heuclin, an ideal collaborator, having studied herself in Lazare Lévy's class at the Conservatoire. Their constant quest for intelligent fingering was one of the most fascinating and practical aspects of their teaching. Searching for the best finger and hand distribution was not only to facilitate the performance of a technically difficult passage but to underline the musical shape of a phrase, and Ray is always grateful to have studied with them and for their original and pianistic insight.

Interest in music editing evolved while directing the piano school founded with his wife in North London, during which time he produced and edited volumes of teaching material for students. For a number of years he taught in the Far East and adjudicated at the Hong-Kong Schools Music Festival. He now lives in central France and plans to complete further working editions of music by Ravel, Albeniz, Schumann, Debussy and Rachmaninoff.

