

A.E. Brain (1860-1929)

Alfred Edwin Brain (known later in life as A.E. Senior) was the father of Alfred Edwin Junior and Aubrey Brain, grandfather of Dennis Brain, and great-grandfather of Tina Brain – all horn players. He was the first horn player in the Brain family who achieved distinction as an orchestral horn player and soloist.

A.E. Senior was born in Turnham Green to William Brain and Sarah Ellen (Brown) Brain. He began his musical training in the Scots Guards in 1872 at the age of 12. When he left the military, he had achieved the rank of Corporal. Perhaps as a result of his military training, A.E. was known to be strict with his sons.

A.E. normally played fourth horn; occasionally, second or third. He was a member of the Queen's Hall Orchestra under Sir Henry Wood, then, beginning in 1904, with the London Symphony Orchestra. The LSO horn section is listed as Borsdorf, Busby, A E Brain, and van der Meerschen. A.E. also played for the Royal Philharmonic Society, the Royal Opera Orchestra (Covent Garden), and for the Coronation of George V and Queen Mary in 1911.

He also played chamber music, including the Brahms Trio, the Beethoven Sextet Op. 81,b and the Thuille Sextette in 1896, and the Beethoven Sextet and Septet in 1906. He was engaged by the Royal Academy of Music to play concerts and "practice" sessions in 1893.

In addition to his famous sons Alfred Junior and Aubrey, another son, Arthur, played horn for a few years before becoming a police officer. His daughter Rebecca played bass with the Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam. Helena performed on the long F trumpet, and Letitia (named after her mother) played violin.

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