

Ifor James

Biography

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Ifor James was born in 1931 in Carlisle, England. His father was a top cornet player and his mother was a famous soprano. At the age of 4 years he began playing cornet in a Brass Band. Only three years later he became a "professional," playing trumpet frequently in the theatre. After serving as assistant cathedral organist in Carlisle, he took up the horn in 1951. He studied privately and then at the Royal Academy of Music under Aubrey Brain. He began his career with the Halle Orchestra and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra. Additionally he played concertos, recitals, chamber music and broadcasts.

Later Ifor James moved to London where he played as principal horn with many orchestras and also many well known chamber groups. There he became professor of horn at the Royal Academy of Music, principal horn of the English Chamber Orchestra, and horn player in the world famous Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. With this group he toured the world and made no fewer than 30 recordings. He also became professor for horn at the Royal Northern College (Manchester). Ifor James left Philip Jones and RNCM to become professor for horn at the Staatliche Hochschule für Musik in Freiburg, Germany.

He is one of the world's most successful teachers, having put over 60 people into the profession, among them several who are now following solo careers and over 20 principal horns. The orchestras with which Ifor James has played are too numerous to name, as are the countries he toured. Many famous composers have written for and dedicated works to him. He is also a composer who has written both for the horn and many other combinations. Ifor James says about himself: "I play the horn because I can't sing. If I could sing, I would not play the horn. "

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