**Mary Morton, 1879–1965**

Mary Morton, sculptor and watercolour painter, was born at Stroud, Gloucs., on 21 March 1879. Her father, George Morton, is noted in the 1881 census (at Bisley Old Road) as a retired surgeon, born in the East Indies in about 1839. Mary trained at the Bristol School of Art and, in 1911–13, in the Modelling School of the Royal College of Art. She exhibited widely in Britain beginning in 1907, including at the Royal Academy in 1909, 1912–19, 1921–22,1927–28, 1930–35 and 1940–41. Morton also exhibited in France and won a gold medal at the Paris International exhibition of 1925. She retained connections with Bristol and became a Royal West of England Academician in 1913, an associate of the Royal Society of British Sculptors in 1928 (and Fellow, 1948) and was an Associate of the Society of Women Artists with whom she showed 105 works between 1913 and 1960. In 1948 she also contributed sculpture to the art competition helping mark the London Olympics.

According to Sara Gray’s *Dictionary of Women Artists* (2009), she produced reliefs, plaques and medals as well as freestanding pieces, her media including marble, bronze, silver, ivory, plaster, lead and a variety of woods. The only works by her noted on Art UK are a ‘Study of a nude girl beneath a tree with carved foliage’ (in wood) in the RWA collection and a bronze bust of the organist, choirmaster and teacher Charles Kennedy Scott (1876–1965) in what is now Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance, Greenwich.

Scott, who founded and trained several notable choirs and was a pioneer in the reinterpretation of early choral music, was on the staff of Trinity College of Music at its original home in Marylebone from 1929 to 1965. The bust predates this: it was modelled in 1925, first exhibited in Royal Society of Portrait Painters annual exhibition at the RA (13 Nov. –11 Dec. 1926, no. 287) and then at the Royal Glasgow Institute of Fine Arts annual show in 1931. In the latter it was priced at £50 which suggests it may not have been a commission (unless there was more than one version), so the circumstances of its making and how it reached Trinity are not yet clear. It is possible that Morton was musical and knew Scott, whose handsome appearance could have prompted a request to sit as model, since a Mary Morton appears in the list of sopranos in his Phoebus Singers at a choral concert at Trinity on 14 February 1945. The Phoebus group was one that Scott set up to perform throughout the Second World War, often at Trinity, so also likely to have included people not in active war service for age reasons. Morton was 60 when it broke out and is listed in the 1939 register as then living in Oakfield Street, Kensington and being an ARP warden at the nearby Princess Beatrix Hospital. She died at Sopworth House, 4 Rosecroft Avenue, Hampstead, on 15 June 1965 leaving estate of £22,900 at probate.

*Summarised from Art UK discussion on the identity and authorship of the bust at Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance. For a list of Morton’s exhibited work see* [*https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib1\_1218543334*](https://sculpture.gla.ac.uk/view/person.php?id=msib1_1218543334)

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