

Royal Philharmonic conductor jailed for groping gifted teenage cellist at country cottage while his wife was having a bath upstairs

- **Nicholas Smith jailed 36 years after he assaulted teenage pupil**
- **The victim went to police after the suicide of a fellow pupil**
- **Frances Andrade killed herself after giving evidence in Michael Brewer case**
- **Former music teacher Brewer assaulted Miss Andrade when she was a teen**
- **Smith, 66, was a visiting conductor at the same school in Manchester**

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An internationally-acclaimed conductor who indecently assaulted a teenage girl has been jailed for eight months.

Nicholas Smith's victim went to police 36 years after the assault following the high-profile death of sex attack victim Frances Andrade, a fellow pupil at Chetham's School of Music in Manchester.

Smith, 66, was investigated in the aftermath of Mrs Andrade's death during last year's sex abuse trial of Michael Brewer, the former music director at Chetham's.

Brewer was jailed for six years for indecently assaulting ex-pupil Mrs Andrade, 48, when she was 14 and 15 in the 1970s.

Brewer's ex-wife Kay, 68, was also convicted of one count of indecent assault.

Mrs Andrade killed herself at her home in Guildford, Surrey, a week after giving evidence against him.



Nicholas Smith, an acclaimed conductor, has been jailed for eight months for indecent assault

Smith's victim told police the death of Mrs Andrade, whom she knew while at the school, was like the 'curtain of a stage lifted'.

The single indecent assault by Smith when his victim was aged 15 and he was 30, took 'minutes' but ruined her life, Minshull Street Crown Court heard.

Smith, a visiting conductor at Chetham's in the 1970s, at first denied the sex attack but later admitted one count of indecent assault against his vulnerable victim, now in her 50s, on a date between 1976 and 1978, at his country cottage in Derbyshire.

Smith went on to become an internationally-renowned conductor working across the world but his reputation now lies in ruins, the court heard.

Jailing him for eight months, Judge Peter Lakin told Smith, formerly of Macclesfield, Cheshire, but now living in Malestroit in Brittany, France: 'You breached the trust placed in you in a most serious way. She was highly vulnerable and you knew it.

'When you were alone with her, you cynically took advantage of her vulnerability and subjected her to a deeply unpleasant and frightening ordeal.

'You pushed her to the ground, dragged her clothes up and then fondled and kissed her exposed breasts.

'This was a forceful sexual assault by someone in authority.'



Loss: Frances Andrade killed herself at her home in Guildford, Surrey, a week after giving evidence against Michael Brewer, the former music director at Chetham's

Earlier, Vanessa Thomson, prosecuting, told the court that Smith's victim was a gifted cellist whose parents thought 'long and hard' about where to send her for schooling and to further her musical talents.

But, coming from the countryside, she felt very homesick and became deeply unhappy at Chetham's which had an 'appalling culture' and 'uncaring atmosphere' that 'pervaded' the school at the time.

She began to 'rebel', smoke cannabis and drink alcohol, the court heard.

Smith came into contact with the girl as he was the visiting conductor, though she described him as 'creepy, slimy, smirky and yucky'.

She missed the countryside and Smith, who owned a cottage near Buxton, Derbsyshire, 'latched on to this'.

He and his wife arranged to take the girl to the cottage for a weekend away - where he pounced on her while his wife was upstairs having a bath.

Miss Thomson said: 'The defendant simply pushed the complainant to the ground, dragged her clothes up, outer and underwear, exposing her breasts and started to fondle her breasts and kiss them, skin to skin, him kissing at her nipples.'

After a struggle the girl got away, but felt there was no-one at Chetham's she could trust to tell of the assault, which had a profound effect on the course of her life.



Smith came into contact with the girl as he was the visiting conductor, though the victim described him as 'creepy, slimy, smirky and yucky'

In a victim impact statement read to the court, the woman said: 'It was the death of Frances Andrade, who I knew, that catapulted me into phoning Greater Manchester Police in January of 2013.

'I knew what Nicholas Smith did to me was wrong, but I didn't know how wrong.

'I felt a deep sense of shame about it and part of me somehow cut off.'

The woman said she turned to alcohol and substance abuse and her musical talent was seriously affected during crucial years in her youth.

She went on: 'I have lived with what might have been for a very long time and, through the uncovering of what happened at Chetham's, know that things may have been very different both in my career and personally.'



Chetham's School of Music in Manchester. Smith's victim said the school had an 'appalling culture' and 'uncaring atmosphere' at the time of the offence

The victim's career floundered as she went into rehabilitation for drug and alcohol abuse, she has been on anti-depressants and is now in therapy, but would have 'coped with life very differently' but for the assault she suffered as a teenager.

The statement added: 'I hope that Nicholas Smith feels disgusted by his own abuse of power and that the amount of damage caused by behaviour such as his will lessen.'

Smith went on to become a music director in South Carolina in the United States between 1993 and 2007, and led the Kuopio Symphony Orchestra in Finland from 1982 to 1990.

According to his website, he performed as a conductor in Spain, Poland, Germany, France, Northern Ireland and England, including for the Royal Philharmonic Concert Orchestra.

He became principal conductor of the Northern Chamber Orchestra at the age of 22 and has conducted many productions at the Buxton Opera Festival.



Brewer's ex-wife Kay, 68, was also convicted of one count of indecent assault and jailed for 21 months

During the 1990s he was artistic and executive director of Performing Arts Management and produced more than 300 major outdoor concerts in Britain. Between 1972 and 1974 he was a lecturer in music history at the Royal Northern College of Music.

Neil Usher, mitigating, said Smith would have had 'thousands' of opportunities to repeat his behaviour over the years with youngsters - but this assault was a one-off, committed 36 years ago.

Mr Usher added: 'His reputation, internationally and domestically, was extremely high. His reputation lies in ruins.

'He's gone from being a celebrated and much sought-after conductor here and abroad, to someone who is unemployable.

'Personally he's extremely damaged.'

Detective Chief Inspector Jamie Daniels, of Greater Manchester Police, said: 'Following the publicity surrounding the conviction of Michael Brewer, this woman found the courage to report what had happened to her, and today she has seen justice finally served after close to three decades.

'I can also understand why people have drawn comparisons between Michael Brewer and Nicholas Smith.

'Both men were highly regarded musical scholars who had a responsibility and duty of care to young children.

'Smith, like Brewer, took advantage of a homesick young girl in a location away from school grounds while she was isolated and vulnerable.

'It is some small comfort that he has chosen to accept his guilt and at least spared the victim the need to give evidence at court, but this should not detract from the fact that he completely disregarded his duty to make sure no harm came to her at a time when, as a teacher, he should have been encouraging her obvious musical talent.

'Instead, he took the opportunity to abuse her for his own sexual gratification and I hope his sentence serves as another reminder that such offences are intolerable no matter when or where they are committed.

'A number of other investigations into allegations of historic abuse are ongoing and it would not be appropriate to comment on them at this juncture, suffice it to say any and all allegations of historic sexual abuse will be thoroughly investigated by specially trained and highly dedicated detectives.'

<https://www.dailymail.co.uk/news/article-2739947/Royal-Philharmonic-conductor-jailed-groping-gifted-teenage-cellist-country-cottage-wife-having-bath-upstairs.html>