

CONDUCTORS AND COMPOSERS OF POPULAR ORCHESTRAL MUSIC

A BIOGRAPHICAL AND DISCOGRAPHICAL SOURCEBOOK



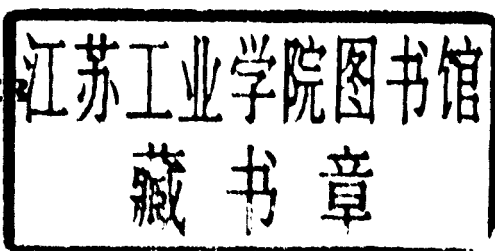
REUBEN MUSIKER AND NAOMI MUSIKER

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A Biographical and Discographical Sourcebook

**REUBEN MUSIKER
AND NAOMI MUSIKER**

FOREWORD BY
DAVID ADES



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Cover photo: Robert Farnon and his orchestra.

Foreword

In many respects, popular orchestral music can be considered the Cinderella of the music scene. It is rarely taken seriously, yet appeals to millions who seldom realize that it is a clearly distinguishable art form in its own right. It is a sad fact that musical snobbery still exists to an astonishing degree and, for some inexplicable reason, popular orchestral music is often on the receiving end of such bigotry.

Perhaps one reason is that many so-called classical composers have, at times, written music that might be considered part of the light and popular music repertoire. This particular aspect of their work would be regarded as something akin to worthless by those musical elitists who seem to think it criminal to write music that can be appreciated by the masses. Light music could be described as 'serious music that is approachable'; in other words, it can be enjoyed for what it is, rather than endured, the lasting impression created by some of the more obscure classical works.

By now, you will have realized that I have an axe to grind and it is simply this: music in all its forms is to be enjoyed by us all and none of us should feel ashamed, or indeed guilty, if our choice of listening pleasure fails to meet with the approval of others. It is self-destructive to suggest that a particular type of music is beneath one's dignity. It is equally astonishing that anyone could state that a particular style of music was the only kind to be enjoyed, to the exclusion of others. A highly respected critic (respected, that is, by his own blinkered colleagues), recently admitted that he knew little of the works of George Gershwin. Such an attitude can only

have resulted from a self-imposed exclusion from the enjoyment of the music of a twentieth-century genius.

Happily, people who appreciate and understand popular orchestral music seem mercifully free of such petty and stupid hang-ups. They are usually music lovers who embrace catholic tastes, often reflecting their mood at a particular time; sometimes revelling in the glorious sounds created by Frederick Delius, Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel, yet on other occasions equally appreciative of Duke Ellington and his contemporaries.

The twentieth century has given music lovers a wonderful choice of material to sample. Never before have we all had the opportunity to listen to such a wide variety of performers; the greatest singers, musicians and orchestras and, equally, the talented writers whose compositions they bring to life.

Popular orchestral music is difficult to define. It also goes under the heading 'concert music' and, in German-speaking countries, it has the wonderful title 'Gehobenes Unterhaltungsmusik'. People who love popular orchestral music have no problem in identifying it; other music lovers may be aware that it falls somewhere between classical and popular music.

By the time the reader reaches the end of this book, it will be clear that popular orchestral music is the province of the most talented composers, arrangers and conductors of this century. It is no criticism to describe it as 'popular' simply because it appeals to millions. In the early years of long-playing records, albums of popular music sold in vast quantities, making conductors such as Mantovani, Percy Faith and George Melachrino household names around the world.

Light music was, however, around long before the 1950s. In Britain, Eric Coates, Edward German and Haydn Wood were creating music to enliven public concerts that conveniently transferred to one side (and occasionally two), of a 78 rpm record. Some analysts of the genre, consider that the 78 record was largely responsible for imposing a discipline on composers and arrangers, forcing them to develop their ideas concisely and without waste of time.

Whatever the reasons, it is a fact that we have witnessed the emergence of a kind of music that encompasses original works, (Robert Farnon and Leroy Anderson being the preminent examples) and also clever arrangements of popular songs. I hesitate to use the once common phrase 'popular symphonic', but some readers will understand that description.

Thanks to sound recording, music lovers are no longer restricted to current fads. Anything that has ever been recorded during the past 100 years can be enjoyed whenever we wish, and there is no doubt that the invention of the compact disc has been beneficial in extending the available repertoire to a degree unobtainable during the LP era.

Popular orchestral music can take its place as an important art form of the twentieth century. Many musicians famous in other spheres have at

times contributed to the vast quantities of riches to be discovered. More importantly, many gifted writers have established their own distinguished careers in this fertile area of the music scene.

They have long deserved the kind of tribute which this book provides. Professor Reuben Musiker has made a lifelong study of this style of music, and there is no one better qualified to take an overview of popular orchestral music as a worldwide phenomenon. Indeed, it has been my pleasure to count him as a friend and to witness his diligent researches over a forty-year period, even though we have been separated by two continents, half a world apart. His painstaking studies will delight music lovers already familiar with the famous names whose work he describes. Others will be encouraged to investigate this area of the music scene, which is happily seeing a significant resurgence of interest as this exciting century draws to a close.

David Ades
4 November 1996

Preface

ORIGINS

This book was born out of a passion for popular orchestral music, which has lasted for half a century, from the mid-twentieth century onward. It has been reinforced and abetted by an equally strong passion for collecting 78s, long-playing records and more recently, compact discs, an assemblage which now totals some 2,500 records, all in the popular orchestral field and gathered from all over the world. At the same time, an extensive library of literature of popular music was built up to support the music collection.

As it proved impossible to achieve comprehensiveness, however, the compilation of the present work has necessitated intensive use and consultation of a number of discographical sources. It is primarily a book about records, that is, long-playing 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm discs (LPs), as well as compact discs (CDs) but not 78 rpm and 45 rpm records.

As far as the authors are aware, this is the first work of its kind, bringing together biographies and discographies in a single tool. No collector or librarian has the time to consult half a century of such important discographical sources as the Schwann catalogues (U.S.A.) or the Gramophone catalogues (U.K.). Although the discographies in the present work are selective, they nevertheless span half a century in a single sequence. It is the authors' hope that the book will be useful to collectors, music and record librarians, disc jockeys and radio stations throughout the world.

SCOPE

In this book, the terms 'light' and 'popular orchestral music' are used in a generalized way, to cover many aspects of popular music for orchestra. Included are the various forms of popular music that stem from folk and jazz sources and which include such forms as palm court music, music excerpted from operettas and musical comedies, as well as theater and show music, in fact, almost anything in an undemanding mode of musical address.

The term 'operetta' is defined as a light opera with spoken dialogue. Nowadays operetta has become almost synonymous with musical comedy, which is the term applied to any sentimental-humorous play containing plenty of light music. The music is generally light and lively (never serious) and frequently interrupted by dialogue.

'Palm court music' is the term applied to authentic arrangements of salon, theater and dance orchestra music, popular in the first half of the twentieth century. The music was generally sweet and sentimental but could also be robust, syncopated, sparkling and even humorous. The music frequently included singing, whistling, tap dancing, fox trotting and 'wicked' tangoing.

The term 'middle-of-the-road' is generally and loosely applied to any genre of music falling between serious classical music and popular music.

The concept certainly includes the serious composer writing in a lighter vein than normal. However, the best and most typical popular orchestral music is that which is written by composers specializing in the idiom. The concept of popular orchestral music, as employed in the making and writing of this book, is seen to be derived from various types of music and musical activity.

The focus of the present work is on the 1940s, 1950s and 1960s. Popular orchestral music, as it is understood in this book, reached its zenith in these years. In the case of the United States, the first half of the twentieth century was a golden age for popular music, and it was a period dominated by great composers of popular song.

In the 1970s and beyond, 'pop music' largely took over the popular music scene and this influence immediately became apparent in film and 'mood' music. On the other hand, the 1970s also witnessed a great vogue for the use of so-called classical themes. The period from 1930 to 1960 relates to more 'middle-of-the-road' music, which is the trend followed in this book. Unfortunate terminology has crept into music literature, especially among purveyors of light orchestral music, namely the term 'easy-listening' music.

In *Elevator Music*, his entertaining book on Muzak, easy-listening and mood music, Joseph Lanza draws attention to the widespread but wrongly held belief that this kind of music has frequently been condemned by many

critics as boring, dehumanized, vapid, cheesy, elevator-type music. Such reactions, he states, appear to be based more on cultural prejudice than honest musical appraisal.

After decades of rock, rhythm and blues, folk, heavy metal and rap, a desensitized population seems to assume that if music is not hot, heavy, bubbling with jackhammer rhythms and steaming with emotion or anger, it is somehow less than good, or (worse), less than art. (2)

This ill-deserved reflection, held by so many regarding popular orchestral music, is a myth that needs to be dispelled. It is one of the principal reasons that this present book came into being, for as Lanza asserts:

Muzak and mood music are, in many respects, aesthetically superior to all other musical forms: they emit music the way the twentieth century is equipped to receive it. They have so successfully blended genres and redefined music appreciation that they have become the music world's Esperanto. (5)

Popular orchestral music as we know this genre today, may be said to have been derived from a number of very different streams of musical forms and activities, including the following distinct categories:

1. The activities of the select group of classically trained conductors who devoted themselves to the promotion of popular music in the symphonic idiom. Notable examples of such maestros are Morton Gould and Andre Kostelanetz, who are dealt with comprehensively in their respective sections of the book. They did not abandon classical music but operated in both genres.
2. The role played by conductors and arrangers who emanated from dance band, 'big band', swing and even jazz environments and formed large orchestras while continuing to play band music. Many of these conductors and arrangers did the backing arrangements for leading popular singers but also went on to make orchestral arrangements in their own right.
3. The contributions of composers who wrote music for films. Film music is background music that has become an integral part of the film's sound track and which includes the work of specialist composers. Some of these composers were trained in a classical tradition, while others came from the Broadway theater. Film music included major orchestral themes that were subsequently extracted from the film score for performance by individual orchestras. An-

other type of score included the use of a brief but persistent theme, which became a continuing motif throughout the film.

In the 1950s, film theme songs became almost as important as the films themselves and often outlasted the original film. There are numerous examples of this trend because in the 1950s, the film theme song became more or less mandatory, the screen becoming one of the main outlets for quality songs and music.

4. The activities of composers who composed mood music in the specific context of the term. Mood music has come to be known as easy-listening music; however, it does have a far more exact connotation. In the strict sense of the term, mood music means background music written for radio and television programs (including 'commercials'), as well as feature, documentary and news-reel films. Mood music originated in the era of silent movies, when cinema pianists were required to accompany silent films. Commercial libraries of sheet music were established before World War I by the De Wolfe Organization in Great Britain and Giuseppe Becce in Germany. Subsequently, mood music was publicly performed (with copyright permission) on gramophone records and more recently on compact discs. In the years 1936–37, Decca manufactured mood music discs for the English music publishers Bosworth and Boosey and Hawkes. Smaller firms in Germany and Australia established similar libraries, as did Brunswick in the United States. Later, in England, His Master's Voice issued a mood music catalogue. Chappell & Co. established what was to become one of the finest mood music libraries, described in the main body of the text (see p. 42). By the mid-1950s, an increasing number of mood music publishers had entered the field. More recently the genre has come to be known as production music.
5. Composers who wrote for the musical theatre, including Broadway, and for musical comedies. Their contributions were not always focused specifically on the orchestra, but this book deals with their work in terms of the orchestra. The authors feel that this is an original contribution, not well covered in the extensive literature on these composers.

A central theme of this book is the role of the conductor in the development of popular orchestral music through the years. In the 1930s, the 'symphonic-pop' tradition was continued on network radio by classically trained arranger-conductors, such as Arthur Fiedler, Morton Gould, Andre Kostelanetz and Percy Faith, all of whom explored the abundant resources of strings. The big string orchestras were used to accompany the new school of crooners after World War II. In the late 1940s and 1950s, lush arrange-

ments of popular songs by large, concert-sized orchestras came into vogue. These orchestras were prolific in record terms. Much of this type of light orchestral music survived beyond the eras of the 78 rpm records and 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm long-playing records into the current compact disc era. Only a small fraction of the LP popular orchestral repertoire, however, has found its way onto compact disc.

The authors have attempted to adhere to the theme that forms the main trend of the book, which is popular music as seen through orchestral interpretations. Consequently, discographies appended to composers' biographies are limited largely to popular orchestral repertoire. Vocal sound tracks and classical works of popular composers such as Gershwin are excluded.

It was the authors' original intention to confine the book to conductors. However, it soon became apparent in the course of compilation that many conductors were also composers and that the work of composers arranged for orchestra could not be ignored. Consequently, a selection of leading American and British composers in the popular field has been included. In the case of conductors, a broader, more universal selection was made. There has been an attempt to maintain a balance between British and American varieties of popular music and their composers.

EXCLUSIONS

The following genres of music are, as a general rule, excluded from the scope of the book:

Classical and serious music

Light classical music, such as Viennese waltzes, palm court and salon music

Military and brass band music

Jazz

Dance band music, except in those instances where the dance band was enlarged by the addition of strings to create a light orchestral texture and effect

Vocal music, including jazz, popular and classical, written for individuals and chorales

ARRANGEMENT

The book is arranged in two sequences:

1. Biographies and select discographies, both arranged alphabetically, of the well-known and better-known conductors and composers about whom biographical information could be obtained. The birth and/or death dates of some conductors could not always be ascertained, even in the case of those in the main biographical sequence, despite intensive reference searches. It has taken many years to assemble this information, particularly in view of the fact that biographical information is more often than not elusive and covered only to the barest, minimal extent by the existing encyclopedias of popular music, such as Faber, Guinness, Oxford and Penguin (see Select Bibliography).
2. Select discographies of conductors about whom little or no biographical information could be found. It has not always been possible or feasible to provide record numbers, although these are given wherever possible.

Many of the records and CDs listed in the discographies are available in different parts of the world, even though not always included in catalogs. The authors have access to these resources and will readily assist collectors in obtaining elusive records and CDs mentioned in the book.

All the conductors and composers mentioned throughout the book are brought together in a single, combined name index, to facilitate information retrieval. A select bibliography is appended to highlight the principal sources used to compile the information given in this book.

A book of this nature will inevitably be found to have omissions of both conductors and composers. There was a time, particularly in the 1950s, when the pages of the Schwann record catalogue were overflowing with the names of conductors, many of whom made only a few records. Quantity, however, has not been a criterion for selection. The authors hope that they have succeeded in including nearly all the popular orchestral conductors who made their mark in the United States and in Europe.

In a sense this is a pilot edition of the book. The authors hope that readers throughout the world will write to them with suggestions for improvement, as well as information, which will be incorporated into a subsequent edition, if such a development is necessitated.

The music world changes frequently; new compact discs appear constantly and the authors look forward to updating the present text as soon as circumstances warrant it.

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pleasure for the authors to correct the many inconsistencies and imperfections which she noted. She also made many invaluable suggestions which greatly enhanced the final text. A true *rara avis* in this field of musical reference book publishing!

Key to Record Symbols

Record manufacturers' names and numbers have been included in the discographies wherever possible and wherever known. This has not always been feasible. All LP records are 12" unless otherwise indicated. Mono refers to monaural or monophonic sound recordings. Stereo refers to stereophonic sound recordings. The discographies appended to the biographies of conductors and composers are orchestral only, not vocal.

Record Symbols

ABC (Mono), ABCS (Stereo)

ACL

AFSD

B

B

BBL

BS

BT

CAL

CAS

CDS

CL (Mono), CS (Stereo)

CLP

Name of Record Company

ABC Paramount

Ace of Clubs (Decca)

Audio Fidelity

Richmond (Mono)

Warner Brothers (Mono)

Philips

Warner Brothers (Stereo)

Bainbridge

RCA Camden (Mono) (U.S.)

RCA Camden (Stereo) (U.S.)

Command

Columbia

His Master's Voice

CRL	Coral
DL	Decca (U.S.)
DLP	Design
E (Mono)	Dot
ECS	Eclipse
EK, LN	Epic
FCS	Roulette
GGL	Golden Guinea (Pye)
H	Capitol (10")
INTS (Stereo)	RCA Camden
K, KL (Mono), KS (Stereo)	Kapp
L	Lion
LCS, LM (Mono)	RCA Victor
LK	Decca (U.K.)
LL	London
LMM (Mono)	Liberty
LPBR (Mono)	Everest
LPHM (Mono)	Polydor
LPM	RCA Victor (Mono) (U.S.)
LRP	Liberty
LSC (Stereo)	RCA Victor (Stereo)
LSP (Stereo)	RCA Stereophonic (U.S.)
LSS (Stereo)	Liberty
LST (Stereo)	Liberty
LX	Vik
LXA	RCA Victor
MC	MCA
MFP	Music for Pleasure
MG(Mono)	Mercury
MGM	Metro Goldwyn Mayer
MGV	Verve
ML (Mono), MS (Stereo)	Columbia
MS	Reprise
NPL	Pye
PC (Mono)	Pickwick
PDL	Felsted
PHM	Philips

PPS (Stereo)	Mercury
R	Roulette
RD	RCA Monaural (U.K.)
RDM (Mono)	Reader's Digest
RDS (Stereo)	Reader's Digest
REB	British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC)
RLP	Riverside
RM	Oriole
RS	Reprise
S	Alshire
S	Richmond (Stereo)
SCX (Stereo)	Columbia (U.K.)
SDBR (Stereo)	Everest
SDL	Felsted
SE (Stereo)	MGM
SF	RCA Stereo Fidelity (U.K.)
SFL	Fontana
SKL (Stereo)	Decca
SLPHM (Stereo)	Polydor
SML	Mercury
SP (Stereo)	Decca
SP, ST (Stereo), STAO, T (Mono)	Capitol
SPC (Stereo)	Pickwick
SR (Stereo)	Mercury
SRS	Regal
SRW	Mercury Wing
SS	United Artists
SW	Capitol (Stereo)
33SX (Mono)	Columbia (U.K.)
S	Time
UAL	United Artists (Mono)
UAS	United Artists (Stereo)
VL	Vocalion
VLP	Varsity
W	Capitol (Mono)
WB	Warner Brothers (Mono)
WDL	Disneyland