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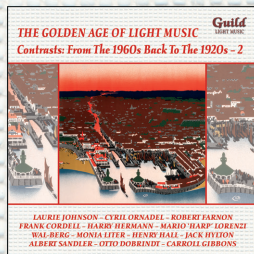
THE GOLDEN AGE OF LIGHT MUSIC

British Cinema And Theatre Orchestras - Volume 4

GLCD 5222



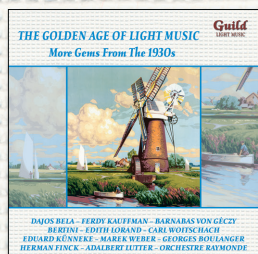
GLCD 5223



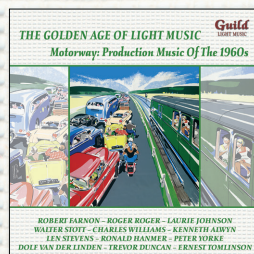
GLCD 5224



GLCD 5225



GLCD 5226



GLCD 5227



LONDON PALLADIUM ORCHESTRA - NEW VICTORIA ORCHESTRA
COMMODORE GRAND ORCHESTRA - REGAL CINEMA ORCHESTRA
PARAMOUNT THEATRE ORCHESTRA
LONDON COLISEUM ORCHESTRA

BRITISH CINEMA AND THEATRE ORCHESTRAS – 4

- 1 Ah! Sweet Mystery Of Life (from “Naughty Marietta”) (Victor Herbert) 3:18
ANTON AND THE PARAMOUNT THEATRE ORCHESTRA with MAURICE MEIER (Organ)
– HMV BD 585 1938
- 2 Kisses In The Dark (Baci Al Duio – Nocturne Op.33) (G. de Michell) 3:18
THE COMMODORE GRAND ORCHESTRA Conducted by JOSEPH MUSCANT
– Edison Bell Winner 5362 1931
- 3 The Illuminated Fete (From “In Holiday Mood” Suite) (Albert William Ketèlby) 3:48
THE LONDON PALLADIUM ORCHESTRA Conducted by CLIFFORD GREENWOOD
– HMV C 3024 1938
- 4 “The Gipsy Princess” – Waltz (Emmerich Kalman) 2:57
THE COMMODORE GRAND ORCHESTRA Conducted by JOSEPH MUSCANT
with HARRY DAVIDSON (Organ) – Edison Bell Winner 5422 1932
- 5 “Our Miss Gibbs” – Selection (Ivan Caryll; Lionel Monckton) 5:48
PRINCE OF WALES PLAYHOUSE, LEWISHAM, ORCHESTRA Conducted by FRANK WESTFIELD
– Parlophone E 6395 1930
- 6 Suite Of Serenades No.1 – Spanish (Victor Herbert) 1:58
THE REGAL CINEMA ORCHESTRA Conducted by EMANUEL STARKEY – Columbia DB 6 1930
- 7 Suite Of Serenades No.2 – Chinese (Victor Herbert) 2:42
THE REGAL CINEMA ORCHESTRA Conducted by EMANUEL STARKEY – Columbia DB 6 1930
- 8 Les Saltimbanques – Selection (Louis Ganne) 8:30
THE REGAL CINEMA ORCHESTRA Conducted by EMANUEL STARKEY
with QUENTIN MACLEAN (Organ) – French Columbia DFX 67 1930

GLCD 5185 Christmas Celebration
GLCD 5186 Light Music While You Work – Vol. 3
GLCD 5187 Light and Easy
GLCD 5188 The Art of the Arranger – Vol. 1
GLCD 5189 Holidays for Strings
GLCD 5190 Continental Flavour – Vol. 2
GLCD 5191 Strings Afire
GLCD 5192 Stereo into the Sixties
GLCD 5193 The Art of the Arranger – Vol. 2
GLCD 5194 Nature’s Realm
GLCD 5195 Great British Composers – Vol. 1
GLCD 5196 Melodies for the Starlight Hours
GLCD 5197 Melody Mixture
GLCD 5198 Light Music While You Work – Vol. 4
GLCD 5199 Three Great American Light Orchestras
GLCD 5200 A Glorious Century of Light Music
GLCD 5201 Fiddles and Bows
GLCD 5202 Cinema Classics
GLCD 5203 Great British Composers – Vol. 2
GLCD 5204 Salon, Light & Novelty Orchestras
GLCD 5205 Here’s To Holidays
GLCD 5206 Non-Stop To Nowhere

GLCD 5207 Ça C’est Paris
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GLCD 5214 Great British Composers – Vol. 3
GLCD 5215 Song of the West
GLCD 5216 Springtime
GLCD 5217 By Special Request: Faith & Farnon
GLCD 5218 Contrasts – Vol. 1
GLCD 5219 By Special Request: Rose & Torch
GLCD 5220 Grandstand: Production Music of the 1940s
GLCD 5221 A Light Music Smörgåsbord
GLCD 5222 Christmas Lights
GLCD 5223 Contrasts – Vol. 2
GLCD 5224 New Town: Production Music of the 1950s
GLCD 5225 More Gems from the 1930s
GLCD 5226 Motorway: Production Music of the 1960s
GLCD 5227 Table for Two

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 GLCD 5181 The Lost Transcriptions – Vol. 2
 GLCD 5182 A Second A-Z of Light Music
 GLCD 5183 A Return Trip to the Library
 GLCD 5184 The Lost Transcriptions – Vol. 3

9 Lovers Lane Minuet (Frank E. Tours) 3:19
 THE PLAZA THEATRE ORCHESTRA Conducted by FRANK TOURS – Columbia 9197 1927

10 Marche Symphonique (Domenico Savino) 3:19
 THE LONDON PALLADIUM ORCHESTRA Conducted by RICHARD CREAN – HMV B 8457 1938

11 “The Gypsy Baron” – Melodie (Johann Strauss II) 6:05
 THE COMMODORE GRAND ORCHESTRA Conducted by JOSEPH MUSCANT
 with HARRY DAVIDSON (Organ) – Edison Bell Winner 5422 1932

12 One Hour With You (Schenke Mir Eine Stunde) (Eisele) 3:13
 THE TROXY BROADCASTING ORCHESTRA Conducted by JOSEPH MUSCANT
 – Regal Zonophone MR 1480 1934

13 The Voice Of The Bells – An Alpine Fantasy (T.W.Thurban) 6:05
 THE LONDON PALLADIUM ORCHESTRA Conducted by HORACE SHELDON (with Organ)
 – Edison Bell Winner 4902 1929

14 Swabian Peasant Waltz (Hermann Krome) 2:59
 THE COMMODORE GRAND ORCHESTRA Conducted by JOSEPH MUSCANT
 – Regal Zonophone MR 1307 1934

15 Vivienne (Herman Finck) 3:11
 THE LONDON PALLADIUM ORCHESTRA Conducted by RICHARD CREAN – HMV B 3466 1930

16 Vienna Maidens Waltz (Karl Michael Ziehrer) 5:56
 DE GROOT AND THE NEW VICTORIA ORCHESTRA – HMV B 4134 1932

17 Waltz Viennese (Ruda Lakay) 3:01
 THE COMMODORE GRAND ORCHESTRA Conducted by JOSEPH MUSCANT
 – Edison Bell Winner 5514 1932

- 18 Wood Nymphs (Eric Coates) 2:57
 THE LONDON COLISEUM ORCHESTRA Conducted by REGINALD BURSTON
 – Decca MW 334 1945
- 19 Other Days – A Selection Of Popular Melodies (arr. Herman Finck) 8:44
 DE GROOT AND THE NEW VICTORIA ORCHESTRA – HMV C 2281 1932

All tracks mono

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This collection is dedicated to the memory of Malcolm Powell, who contributed many rare recordings to this series of CDs. His enthusiasm for Light Music knew no bounds, and his wise counsel and practical assistance will be sorely missed.

The Golden Age Of Light Music provides music lovers with superior collections of recordings from the 1920s to the 1960s. There is no duplication of tracks within the series and most are appearing on CD for the first time. Remastered to the highest standards, each plays for between 70 and 79 minutes.

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his enthusiastic participation in the rapidly growing business of producing gramophone records. As well as also being an arranger and conductor, he was an accomplished pianist and organist, and was proficient on oboe, cello, clarinet and horn. Once he had achieved his fame, and a style that became closely associated with him, he seemed unwilling to adapt to the new rhythms and influences that were gaining popularity – particularly during the 1930s. His own music gradually went out of vogue, and the previous age of romance, that had its roots in the self-confidence of the Edwardian age, seemed to be in terminal decline. But Ketèlbey was far from forgotten, and the LP era of the 1950s resulted in a renewed interest in his beautifully crafted melodies.

Herman Finck (who was born Hermann Van Der Vinck in London, 1872-1939) was a highly respected theatre conductor, having been at the Palace Theatre of Varieties for over twenty years, and the Theatre Royal in Drury Lane during the 1920s. He was in demand to compose incidental music and light pieces for musical shows, operettas, ballets and revues. Such was his popularity that his publishers persuaded him to compile a suite of some of his best-known works, which he called *Finckiana*, and it was the finale for Guild's 'More Gems From The 1930s' collection (GLCD5225). This time he is represented by a selection he called *Other Days*, although it has to be said that only a few of the titles he chose are likely to be familiar to listeners today.

All of the composers and conductors featured on this CD deserve special mention, but sadly there is insufficient room to do them all full justice. But Dublin-born Victor August Herbert (1859-1924) cannot be ignored, because he was responsible for three titles. He was an accomplished cellist, composer, conductor and orchestrator who made a profound impression upon the American popular music scene. Among his numerous achievements are two operas, forty-three operettas, incidental music for stage productions (including several *Ziegfeld Follies*), plus songs and compositions for band, cello, violin, flute and clarinet. He orchestrated the works of many of his contemporaries, but his musical legacy is founded upon his charming operettas such as *Babes in Toyland* and *Naughty Marietta*, which provides a superb opening number for this collection.

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Hammersmith cinema opened on 14 September 1929, and soon became popular throughout Britain thanks to its regular BBC radio broadcasts.

David de Groot (1880-1933) – the ‘David’ was always omitted professionally – was born in The Netherlands, but he became a naturalised British subject. Like many of his peers during the early years of the 20th century, he directed his light orchestras from the violin. From 1909 to 1928 he enjoyed great popularity with the Piccadilly Hotel Orchestra which numbered between six and ten players, usually strings. He often conducted larger orchestras (such as the New Victoria Orchestra featured in this collection), and toured widely in Britain. Apart from his many arrangements he also composed a number of original works.

Harry Davidson (1892-1967) enjoyed two successful, and different, careers before and following the Second World War. After various engagements around London and the north-east of England spanning the years 1914 to 1929, he finally secured the highly prestigious appointment as organist at the newly built Commodore Theatre at Hammersmith in London.

A slightly unusual inclusion in this collection is *Marche Symphonique* by Domenico Savino (1888-1973) who also composed as D. Onivas (his surname reversed). Born in Taranto, Italy, he moved to the USA in the 1920s where he was especially active in films for two decades, although much of his work was uncredited. He appears to have been an astute businessman who composed a vast amount of music which produced a comfortable income, allowing him to indulge his passion for more serious music in later life.

Among the many pieces in this collection reflecting the popularity of operetta during the early years of the last century there are exceptions – including a work by Eric Coates (1886-1957). He is widely regarded as the foremost English composer of light music of his time, and *Wood Nymphs* is one of numerous short works that seemed to flow so effortlessly from his fertile imagination. Although it has to be said that there were occasional periods during his lifetime when his numerous admirers were left wondering when something new from him would appear. A contemporary of Coates was Albert William Ketelbey (1875-1959), born in the Lozells area of Birmingham. He was a highly successful composer, who earned the equivalent of millions of pounds during the peak of his popularity. Pieces such as *In a Monastery Garden* (GLCD5182), *The Phantom Melody*, *In a Persian Market* (GLCD5120) and *Bells Across the Meadow* (GLCD5108) brought him international fame, no doubt assisted by

The three previous collections focussing upon this area of the music scene have prompted a steady flow of requests asking for more. It seems that a considerable number of music lovers retain a special affection for music mainly from the inter-war years of the 20th century, and this was a time when theatres and cinemas employed many musicians in their ‘house’ orchestras.

Once again the theatre organ makes several appearances accompanying a light orchestra. In the early years of the last century, silent films were usually shown to the accompaniment of music provided by a pianist or a small group of musicians. The larger cinemas gradually engaged bigger musical ensembles until, by the 1920s, a decent-sized orchestra would often perform music specially composed to accompany the film being screened. However the arrival of talking pictures towards the end of the 1920s (the first was “The Jazz Singer” starring Al Jolson in 1927) heralded the gradual demise of the orchestras, but the general public had become accustomed to an element of live musical entertainment on their frequent visits to the cinema. Partly as a cost-cutting exercise most orchestras were replaced by theatre organs, but in some cases the change-over was gradual, and for a few years both organs and orchestras co-existed in the larger venues. Some of the tracks on this CD reflect this gradual transformation.

It should be emphasised that there was no intention that these compilations should focus exclusively upon British orchestras, but considerable research has revealed that, although such orchestras undoubtedly existed in various countries around the world, it was mainly in Britain that record companies seemed to consider them worthy of inclusion in their catalogues. These ensembles offered record buyers a wide choice of light music from leading composers in Europe and America, as well as nearer home. Possibly this is because the owners of major cinemas and theatres in Britain wanted to engage conductors ‘of note’ to front their orchestras, thus adding some additional prestige. This, in turn, resulted in radio broadcasts, which further added to their status in the eyes (and ears) of the general public.

There are instances where an organ could still be found rising from the darkness of the pit during the intervals in cinemas as late as the 1950s, and in a few places enthusiasts were able to enjoy special performances by leading organists on Sunday afternoons when films were not being screened. Generally speaking live musical entertainment in cinemas soon vanished when World War II broke out in 1939, but there are exceptions to every rule: even in the 1950s some of the larger cinemas would

stop showing films for a week and put on a variety show instead, featuring some of the biggest stars of the day.

Things were different in theatres (not to be confused with movie theatres, where films were screened): technology was not the enemy of musicians – the culprit was changing tastes in entertainment. The once ubiquitous variety theatres in provincial towns and cities have become just a memory, and today it is noteworthy when more than a handful of players support a musical stage performance.

It is slightly surprising (given the technical problems that must have been involved) that some recordings from this period proudly state that the orchestra was actually recorded in the theatre or cinema where it usually performed. Of course, this was necessary if the organ was to be featured, but in other cases it would have been a simple matter to get the orchestra into a studio, and in fact there are instances where a studio-based orchestra and a cinema organ were recorded together via what used to be known as a land line.

One orchestra recorded using both techniques was the London Palladium Orchestra, in its heyday one of the major British light orchestras of the pre-war years, at least on gramophone records. Their early recordings (including some using the pseudonym ‘Royal Court Orchestra’) were made in the theatre but, when they started to record for HMV in the 1930s, the favoured venue became the Small Queen’s Hall in Langham Place, part of The Queen’s Hall complex. When this was destroyed by enemy bombing in 1941 the Kingsway Hall and Abbey Road were used. HMV recorded over 140 sides before Paul Fenoulhet and ‘The Skyrockets’ became the Palladium’s resident orchestra in 1946. The famous theatre stands on a site which was once the residence of the Duke of Argyll, in Argyll Street, London. It was opened on 26th December 1910, having taken two years to build. By 1930 it was firmly established as one of London’s premier entertainment venues, and the orchestra was in the capable hands of Richard Crean. He remained at the helm until 1937 when Clifford Greenwood took over. Crean’s assistant was William Pethers who conducted a few recordings (he later went on to the Coventry Hippodrome); Jack Frere provided a similar service for Greenwood. Many readers of these notes will be surprised to learn that the London Palladium once had an organ but, in March 1928, the theatre was purchased by the General Cinema Corporation and converted into a cinema complete with a 2 manual / 8 rank Wurlitzer. Unfortunately films weren’t a success and, after only three months, the

Palladium reverted to variety and the organ was quickly removed and installed in the Plaza Cinema, Allerton, Liverpool. The Palladium’s resident organist was Reginald Foort who recorded four pieces on the instrument for HMV and is probably playing it on this Edison Bell ‘Winner’ recording of *The Voice Of The Bells* conducted by Richard Crean’s predecessor Horace Sheldon (real name Horace William Hindmarsh Catcheside) who was musical director at the theatre from 1916 to 1928.

‘Paramount’ still crops up at the start of films, and the original Paramount Pictures opened their third London movie theatre (after the Plaza, Lower Regent Street, and the Carlton in the Haymarket) in Tottenham Court Road in 1936, with a capacity of 2,568 seats. The organ installed was a Compton with ten units of pipes, together with one of the recently developed Melotone units, which produced a variety of voices together with carillon, chimes and other effects produced by electrostatic tone generation.

The Regal Cinema Orchestra, under its conductor Emanuel Starkey gained a fine reputation, and is remembered today partly through its early recordings of Eric Coates’ music. A number of recordings by this orchestra and organ were issued by British Columbia and three (all featuring Sidney Torch) are available on Guild - *The King Of Jazz* (GLCD 5108), *Beautiful Spring* (GLCD 5168) and *La Paloma* (GLCD 5116). *Les Saltimbanques* by Louis-Gaston Ganne (1862-1923) was an opera in three acts which dates from 1899; for some reason it was only issued by French Columbia and is extremely rare. On this recording the Christie organ is played by its designer, Quentin Maclean (1896-1962). The Regal Cinema opened in November 1928, and the organ was the largest in Europe, with an amazing 36 ranks. It was eventually removed from the cinema in 1964, and today it is apparently rotting away in a barn in Cornwall, and it is highly unlikely that it will ever play again.

Many of the orchestra leaders and soloists in this collection were ‘household names’ in their day. Arthur Anton (real name Arthur Sweeting, who died in 1980) conducted for many light music broadcasts over the years, and he later made some recordings of library music for London publishers Boosey & Hawkes. Frank E. Tours (1877-1963) combined his conducting and arranging with occasional compositions for the musical stage, although his most successful work was not a show number but his setting of Rudyard Kipling’s *Mother o’ Mine*.

Russian-born Joseph Muscant (1899-1983) is credited with making the Commodore Grand Orchestra into one of the finest ensembles playing light music at that time. It was formed when the