

Elevator Music



"Fascinating."

—*The New York Times Book Review*

"Fascinating."

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"Fascinating."

—*Seattle Times/Post Intelligencer*

"Fascinating."

—*New York Newsday*

"Fascinating."

—*Entertainment Weekly*

A SURREAL HISTORY OF
MUZAK, EASY-LISTENING, AND
OTHER MOODSONG

JOSEPH LANZA



Elevator Music

**A
Surreal
History
of
Muzak,
Easy-Listening,
and
Other
Moodsong**

Joseph Lanza

**Picador USA
New York**



This book is a result of research and ruminations about a much-neglected musical category, Elevator Music. Since Muzak Corporation has been a leading source of this art form, much of this book concerns that company's technological and philosophical genesis. I culled all of my information about Muzak from preexisting literature (both from the mainstream press and Muzak's company archives), as well as telephone and in-person interviews with various Muzak personnel, or others connected with the company at one time or another, who were generous enough to help me write this story. However, many of my conclusions about Muzak's ultimate cultural impact are speculative and do not necessarily reflect Muzak Corporation's official, present-day policies.

—Joseph Lanza

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1 / Probing the Jell-O



The Howard Johnson's restaurant centered in New York City's theater district offers a spectacle *extraordinaire*: vinyl upholstery, fake wood laminants, Formica *moderne*, and a turnover of players savoring their french fries, overboiled vegetables, and Jell-O® cubes to the latest Muzak® selections.

Muzak is, in fact, the most essential part of this performance: a computerized chorus that judges, reflects, and determines the actions and thoughts of every character. But if this show is too middlebrow, you need only journey to a café in New York's East Village, L.A.'s West Hollywood, or any enclave where *chic* is *kitsch* spelled backward, to find the digitized drones of artists like Brian

Eno counterpointing cappuccino milk steamers and sundry book chat. The actors, sound, context, and coffee brands may differ from theater to theater, but the stage is essentially the same, as modern life evolves into a megalopolis of air-conditioned and sonically monitored atria.

As restaurants, elevators, malls, supermarkets, office complexes, airports, lobbies, hotels, and theme parks proliferate, the background, mood, or easy-listening music needed to fill these spaces becomes more and more a staple in our social diet. Indeed, background music is almost everywhere: avant-garde “sound installations” permeate malls and automobile showrooms, quaint piano recitals comfort us as we wait in bank lines, telephone techno-tunes keep us complacently on hold, brunch Baroque refines our dining pleasure, and even synthesized “nature” sounds further blur the boundary between our high-tech Platonic caves and “real life.”

Along with Muzak and elevator music, there is mood song to accompany our favorite movie scenes, tickle our subconscious fancies on television and radio commercials, alert us to the next network news station break, and lull us in our home entertainment centers.

But just mention the words *Muzak*, *easy-listening*, or even *contemporary instrumental*, and many critics will lash out with judgments such as “boring,” “dehumanized,” “vapid,” “cheesy,” and (insult of insults) “elevator music.” But such reactions appear to be based more on cultural prejudice than honest musical appraisal. In these supposedly “enlightened” times, when people are compelled to think twice before passing blanket judgments on most cultures and their contributions, I find it inconsistent for the press (particularly the music press) to relegate “elevator music” to a categorical pejorative with no questions asked. 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.

Not every musician should be obligated to reassure us that we are not zombies. There is also a place for music that is subdued,

unobtrusive, even remote or alien. This is certainly true in the case of many instrumental recording artists—from Percy Faith to Brian Eno—who have from time to time been successful in the art of producing sonic wallpaper.

Championed by Muzak more than half a century ago, the philosophy and musicology of background music have since radiated into a web of styles and applications more complex and engaging than many people realize. What distinguishes such contoured concertos from other music? An artfully contrived regimen of unobtrusive harmonies and pitches; metronomic repetition; melodic segments that overlap into a tonal wash; a concatenation of hypnotic violins, harps, celestes, and other instruments connoting inherited concepts of how heaven sounds; or diaphanous harmonies that seem to issue from a mysterious, invisible source that is more than the sum of its musicians and (to paraphrase a favorite Muzak saying) “more than music.”

For a more clinical definition: mood music shifts music from *figure* to *ground*, to encourage peripheral hearing. Psychoanalysts might say that it displaces our attention from music’s manifest content to its more surreal latent content. Hearing it, we are inspired to frame an otherwise disordered or boring existence into movie scenes whose accompanying soundtrack alternately follows and anticipates our thoughts and actions—but then shifts (or rather plays on) with a rhythm and logic indifferent to our own. Moodsong reinforces mounting suspicions that we live inside a dream.

Be it mellifluous Mantovani or Philip Glass parsimony, background music provides an illusion of distended time. It makes us feel more relaxed, contemplative, distracted from problems, and prone to whistle over chores we might find unbearable if forced to suffer them in silence. Yet for other hearers, such music can be a source of annoyance or anxiety. The sounds intended to cater to or quell the emotions can also sound aloof or haunting or intolerably peaceful, depending on the listener’s mind, ear, and past experiences.

The vast quantity of uncharitable jokes and condescending anecdotes directed against elevator music in general and Muzak in

particular betrays a lack of understanding about music's augmented role in a media-dominated culture. English author and playwright J. B. Priestley once bragged of having "had it turned off in some of the best places." Another Briton, the comic Spike Milligan, allegedly claimed that "Tranquility is something that liberates the soul; Muzak destroys it." Comedian Lily Tomlin once expressed fears that the guy who invented Muzak might be inventing something else.

Sometimes the Muzak metaphors are strained, to say the least. A political commentator wrote in *New York* magazine that Bill Clinton "is the political equivalent of Muzak, appropriating pungent themes like opportunity, responsibility, community, creating vast marshmallows of rhetoric from them but never really taking a tough stand." More curious is a travel article about winding roads that appeared in the *Baltimore Sun*: "I always liken curvilinear streets to Muzak: vaguely pleasant but nothing you can remember."

The American Symphony League insists that host personnel turn the Muzak off at every hotel where it holds its conventions. During the League's Fiftieth annual get-together, at the Washington Hilton, one official petulantly explained to the *St. Petersburg Times*, "We want to be sensitized to music, not desensitized to music."

But journalist Bruce MacLeod, writing for *Popular Music and Society*, is much more even-handed: "Complain as we may about its blandness and ability to manipulate, it is inextricably bound up in the social fabric of our times." Andy Warhol went further by being among the very few celebrities with a public endorsement: "I like anything on Muzak—it's so listenable. They should have it on MTV."

Many commentators habitually label all music that reminds them of elevator music "Muzak." But Muzak is just one company's registered trademark, like Kleenex, Xerox, or Vaseline. With the exception of a few commemorative and novelty promotion albums, Muzak is not something you can buy at retail shelves. It is music made and programmed for business environments to reduce stress, combat fatigue, and enhance sales. Nonetheless, many in-

strumental songs—some by very famous recording artists such as Lawrence Welk, Lionel Hampton, and Kenny G—have played on Muzak from time to time, either as custom-made cuts or from preexisting records.

According to one-time Muzak designer Christopher Case, “There are literally 90 million people listening to Muzak per day. It’s a real challenge to put something together that’s going to please everyone. . . . Since we have so many people listening at once, we are forced to amalgamate.”

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.

Consider the words of Professor Gary Gumpert of Queens College when he assessed Muzak’s maternal role in a 1990 television documentary on background music for Britain’s Channel Four. “Muzak is music that is put in a laundromat. It’s been bathed; and all of its passion gotten rid of. It’s there; it doesn’t make a wave. It’s just a kind of amniotic fluid that surrounds us; and it never startles us, it is never too loud, it is never too silent; it’s always there. . . .”

Part of our social therapy is to bathe and swim in that “amniotic fluid,” not just to the sounds of Muzak but to all of the mood-song soundtracks that embellish our lives but that many ungratefully ignore, deride, or take for granted. This book will have succeeded in its purpose if I can help efface (or at least make all the more confusing) the distinction between one person’s elevator music and another’s prized recording.

2 / Lullabies from Heaven and Hell

MOOD MUSIC'S ANTIQUITY

And now, its strings
Boldlier swept, that long sequacious notes
Over delicious surges sink and rise,
Such a soft floating witchery of sound
As twilight Elfin's make, when they at eve
Voyage on gentle gales from Fairy-Land . . .

—Samuel Taylor Coleridge,
"The Aeolian Harp"

From the most ancient times, background music has soothed us one minute and tormented us the next. Orpheus had to play his lyre to assuage and inspire Jason and his Argonauts on their sea-bound quest for the Golden Fleece. But Orpheus's melodies also blocked out the intoxicating chorus of Sirens intent on pulling the minds of listeners into a calamitous unknown.

As if he did not have enough problems throughout Homer's *Odyssey*, Odysseus dared himself to withstand the ebb and flow of the Sirens' song. He instructed his sailors to wear ear-plugs, tie him to his ship's mast, and witness him writhe as they sailed past the Sirens' lair. Of course, the sadistic gods also watched.

Philo Judaeus, in his comments on the book of *Genesis*, asks: “For did not the singing of the Sirens, as Homer says, so violently summon listeners that they forgot their country, their home, their friends and necessary foods? And would not that most perfect and most harmonious and truly heavenly music, when it strikes the organ of hearing, compel them to go mad and to be frenzied?”*

Pythagoras was set on the notion of a superhuman symphony playing beyond the listener’s reach or will. His “Music of the Spheres” was based on an inferred mathematical correspondence between harmonic ratios and the motions of planetary bodies. The cosmic geometry followed a “doctrine of correspondences” according to which a plucked string resounds through every living tissue in the universe.

Judging from their literature, the Greeks were rarely without some kind of perpetual musical soundtrack. The mythical Hermes satisfied Zeus’s request to charm the 100-eyed Argus with a reed flute lullaby. Once Argus was asleep, Hermes slew him and temporarily freed Io from Hera’s jealous gaze. Amphion’s music brought down the walls of Thebes. Antigenidas, a flute player, was performing martial melodies at an important banquet when Alexander the Great flew into such a rapture that he jumped from his table, grabbed his weapon, and almost bludgeoned the guests.

One of the first pieces of background music technology to emerge from Greek folklore was a self-generating Aeolian harp (named after Aeolis, the God of Winds) that consisted of a box with strings pulled across its openings to make celestial noises on windy days. Shelley, in “Prometheus Unbound,” paid tribute to “The Music of the rolling world, Knowledge within the strings of the waved air, Aeolian modulations.” The musical lexicon would later record the term “Aeolian Mood,” used to denote an airy, soft, or pacifying chord.

Censorinus, a third-century Roman grammarian, wrote that “music serves to make toil as bearable as may be, as when it is used by the steersman in a moving galley; and the legions, fighting with the

*Philo Judaeus, as cited in Joscelyn Godwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic* (New York and London: Arkana, 1987), p. 56.

sword, even lose the fear of death when the trumpet is sounded.”*

The walls of Rome’s Messina were purportedly built to the rhythm of a flute orchestra; and Nero’s fiddle (more likely a lyre) score for his inflamed Roman Empire was destined for reenactment in a disaster sequence that director Cecil B. DeMille committed to historical memory centuries later in one of his Biblical epics.

Much of Europe’s early history is sprinkled with anecdotes in which music is used not for its attention-grabbing performance but as a disembodied voice to alter environments and invoke the Divine. David’s harp saved King Saul from going mad. Bernadette’s song helped her heal the sick. Sublime choirs guided Joan of Arc as she led the French troops. The Christian soldiers of the early Crusades hired battlefield musicians to play the same Arabic martial music that the Saracens used to defeat them in previous battles.

Author Dyer T. Thistleton, in his book *The Ghost World*, dedicated a chapter to “Phantom Music,” contending that belief in supernatural fairies strumming harps and other sonic intoxicants is widespread in European folklore. Celtic fables spoke of Dagda, the Irish god who played on a harp to welcome Spring. The Teutons bequeathed the Lorelei legend of musical mermaids enticing wayward listeners to dwell among the sea citizens.

By medieval times, various reports celebrated the private relationship between background music and listener, usually as visitations by angels and holy emissaries. Richard Rolle, a medieval English hermit, was only saying his prayers when a “sweet ghostly song” started spinning in his head. The supernatural voices were so beautiful that he rejected the usual church music as redundant and crude.

Voices of the muses and saints had become man-made territorial soundmarks by the fourteenth century as Christendom’s clock ticked to parish church bells and carillons. Gregorian chants most likely tranquilized monks for hundreds of years and have a similar relaxing, yet unobtrusive, effect when played at low volume on today’s compact-disc players.

*Censorinus, as cited in Joscelyn Godwin, *Music, Mysticism and Magic* (New York and London: Arkana, 1987), p. 19.

Monk musicians would also play Gregorian plainsong, a kind of medieval Muzak performed outside the monastery to uplift agricultural workers. Unlike the earthy work songs of migrant or slave laborers, plainsong came not from the workers but from an outside source—the descant of deities trickling from the clouds.

Utopian novels, which usually tried to adapt Christian teachings to encroaching technology, were often repositories of background music philosophy. As the Western world made its queasy transition into print culture, Sir Thomas More concocted *Utopia* to impress King Henry VIII with thoughts of a justly ruled egalitarian society where, among other civic niceties, “No supper goes by without music.”

Sir Francis Bacon’s unfinished novel *New Atlantis* offers a Christian utopia based on the Bible’s “natural law.” European sailors drift onto a South Sea island and are treated to the hospitality of Salomon House, a Christian institution dedicated to nature studies. But it is a natural philosophy quite different from that of Rousseau’s cuddly “noble savage”: the castaways get a grand tour of a magic kingdom where nature is inseparable from intervening technology. Bacon’s union of religious idealism and liberal arts prefigures today’s theme park, as he describes “perspective-houses” representing “all colorations of light, all delusions and deceits of the sight in figures, magnitudes, motions, colours, all demonstrations of shadows.” There are also “houses of deceits of the senses . . . where we represent all manner of feats of juggling, false apparitions, impostures, and illusions” as well as “sound-houses” where every effort is made “to convey sounds in trunks and pipes, in strange lines and distances.”

We can also trace mood music to the first church organ recitals that pacified worshippers between sermons. The cathedral became the architectural soundscape that would later inspire the builders of malls, atria, and auto showrooms.

Piped-in music filled the European aristocracy’s secular confines by the seventeenth century. Baroque gardens celebrated civilization’s dominance over nature with hydraulic organs and artificial singing birds. Much of what today’s audiophiles reverently call “the Classics” served as background music for bluebloods. David

Weiss, in his novel *Sacred and Profane*, portrays Mozart commenting on Archbishop Colorado's musical request: "His Grace is having company for dinner. He expects a serenade, something that will please, but which will not disturb his conversation or his digestion."

In the mid-eighteenth century, German composer Georg Philipp Telemann broke down the once rigid barriers between sacred and secular music by devising a series of background "instrumental" pieces called *Musique de Table* ("Table Music"). Admitting to being no great lover of virtuoso concertos, Telemann ignored rigid schemes and favored an uncomplicated melodic line that could turn stuffy court music into "light music."

Johann Sebastian Bach had his own version of Telemann's light instrumental style. His famous "Goldberg Variations" were commissioned by Count Kaiserling, a former Russian ambassador residing in Dresden. The count sent his protégé, Johann Theophilus Goldberg, to Bach to learn some clavier pieces with enough of "a soft and lively character" and a "constant sameness of the fundamental harmony" to cure his insomnia. A probably fatigued Goldberg played this mixture of canon, fugue, and étude in an adjoining room while the count counted sheep.

When Napoléon restored Christianity as France's official religion, François René Chateaubriand (the religion's prime defender) described heaven as a phantom music wonderland: "Music never ceases in these places: music which one hears everywhere, but which is nowhere; sometimes it is a murmuring like that of an Aeolian harp which the soft breath of Zephyr strokes on a night in springtime; sometimes the ear of a mortal believes it hears the plaint of a divine harmonica, those vibrations which have nothing terrestrial about them and which swim in the middle region of the air."⁶

The Ancient Egyptians may have explained man's cosmic relationship with the dictum "As above, so below," but it took the

⁶François René Chateaubriand, *Les Natchez*, Book IV, in *Oeuvres Complètes*, vol. 2, Paris, 1834, pp. 491–3, as cited in Joscelyn Godwin, ed., *Music, Mysticism and Magic*, p. 187.

temerity of nineteenth-century Romantics to ask: “How far below?” Romanticism further eroded distinctions between heavenly and satanic serenades. Germany’s Robert Schumann was at first content to believe that singing angels were visiting him, but he suddenly had a nervous breakdown after concluding that the choirs were “those of demons and in hideous music.” Animal magnetism enthusiast Franz Anton Mesmer was notorious for his Paris séances of dimmed lights set against background melodies so soft and pleasing that mortals received the ghost with no discomfort.

Music that could heal or rend the soul had identical effects on the body. Florence Nightingale claimed, in her *Notes on Nursing*, that “wind instruments capable of continuous sound have generally a beneficial effect on the sick, while the pianoforte with such instruments as have no continuity of sound has just the reverse, the pianoforte playing will damage the sick, while an air like ‘Home Sweet Home’ . . . on the most ordinary grinding organ will sensibly soothe them. . . .”

Arthur Schopenhauer, in *The World as Will and Idea*, was astute enough to predict movie soundtracks: “This deep relation which music has to the true nature of all things also explains the fact that suitable music played to any scene, action, event, or surrounding seems to disclose to us its most secret meaning, and appears as the most accurate and distinct commentary upon it.”

Modern capitalism instigated an ecclesiastical rift. If background music was good enough to orchestrate the houses of God, why not the houses of commerce? The nineteenth-century Italian author Mario Morasso anticipated Muzak futurism by declaring that “the holy temple, as a means of satisfying a spiritual need . . . has become the Department Store or the clerical office. . . .”

As the Industrial Revolution introduced the internal combustion engine’s roar and the drone of generators, ventilation systems, riveting pistons, and low-frequency electrical lighting, silence became an unwelcome anomaly when it existed at all. There erupted a whole new genus of criminal activity and factory-related illnesses connected with these noisy incursions, such as “Boilermaker’s Disease” produced by metal scraping. Music was not mere entertainment but an “audioanalgesia” to kill the pain of urban

din. Karlheinz Stockhausen later suggested using computer-programmed “sound swallows” to neutralize every unwanted noise in a public place with its opposite vibration.

Background music became a piped-in panacea just in time for what many intellectuals and lapsed theologians called “the disappearance of God.” But God did not die so much as become transformed into an electromagnetic choir with a center everywhere and a circumference nowhere. Richard Wagner’s “universal currents of Divine Thought” became Nikola Tesla’s alternating currents of mass communication.

Thomas Edison perfected his wax cylinder machine by 1888, just before Germany’s Emil Berliner introduced a sound disk. Soon a thousand electrical bulbs illuminated the Tower of Light at Chicago’s 1893 Columbian Exposition, where Tesla demonstrated his alternating current, Edison presented his “cinetophograph,” and music was piped into the fairgrounds by telephone wire from a Manhattan concert.

Tinny Swiss music boxes enabled turn-of-the-century homes to extract music out of a can, although these devices soon lost out to the Duo-Art player-piano, which, in turn, deferred to the gramophone. Mechanical sound reproduction engendered what an unapproving R. Murray Schafer in *The Tuning of the World* calls “schizophonia,” a state in which contemporary life is “ventriloquized” by noises duplicated, transmitted, and divorced from their “natural” sources.

Retailing magnate Bradford Peck took a friendlier view in his 1900 novel *The World a Department Store*. This was another Christian utopia dedicated to “suffering toilers in all walks of life.” The president of B. Peck & Co. (then New England’s biggest department store outside Boston), Peck believed that the principles of Jesus Christ were inherent in “a system of life operated on the department store plan, organized so that every one shall be employed.”

The novel’s protagonist is Percy Brantford, owner of a small dry-goods business, who overdoses on sleeping powders, falls into a coma, and flashes forward to 1925. It is a future run by the “Cooperative Association of America.” Architects and engineers

are among the nation's moral arbiters, while the ever-present strains of a "grand orchestra" play continuously in public restaurants and other buildings modeled after such consumption monoliths as Macy's and Wanamaker's.

Edison had initiated several background music "mood tests" in the early 1900s. Aided by a "Dr. Bingham," he compiled charts depicting the mood changes of people as they listened to his phonographs. In 1915, Edison used a programmed selection of phonographic music for factories to determine the extent to which it would mask hazardous drones and boost morale. But the infant loudspeaker and transmission technology was still too weak. There were also cigar factories in the United States and Cuba that hired "readers" to recite the contents of books and newspapers aloud while workers rolled tobacco. Sometimes records or radios were used in their place.

Changing economic and social conditions altered musical perception. The days of the feudal town minstrel were long gone by the time musicians were taken off the streets and confined to cabarets, salons, and café-concerts, with admission prices levied, and a maw of union and licensing complications gaping in the middle distance. The confusion grew more profound when recorded sound forever consigned music to a graven image.

Musical greats of yesteryear were no doubt upset by the electronic colonizer's invisible orchestras. John Philip Sousa disliked the wireless and the phonograph so much that broadcasters had to pay handsomely to overcome his scruples and obtain his radio rendition of "Stars and Stripes Forever." With acrimony in his heart, Sousa allegedly coined the term "canned music."



3 / The “Canned” Avant-Garde



At first glance, the lonely musician depicted in Luigi Russolo's Futurist painting *Music* (1911) looks dejected. He appears to be slumped over his keyboard, dwarfed by a leering electronic chorus that keeps him in the dark and plays on, regardless of whether he lives or dies. But is the musician sad or in a state of ecstatic somnambulism? Perhaps the faces are an electromagnetic halo while the whiplashing snake creeping up from behind is an umbilical wire plugging him into a superior high-voltage nervous system.

Russolo's subject occupies the ambivalent position of any virtuoso forced to abide the twentieth century's fusion of music and megahertz. No musical artistes ever played the game with more

élan than the European avant-garde who, in their efforts to subvert consumer society, ended up buttressing the "canned music" revolution.

Luigi Russolo, an Italian Futurist, lauded the modern era's beautiful machine clangor. A painter, not a musician, Russolo was nonetheless committed to being the Futurist movement's musical activist. His 1913 manifesto "The Art of Noises" rejected inherited preferences for harmony in favor of the dissonant masterpieces that serenade us everyday without our conscious awareness. Conventional pianos, violins, harps, and horns were inferior to "the crashing down of metal shop blinds, slamming doors, the hubbub and shuffling of crowds, the variety of din from stations, railways, iron foundries, spinning mills, printing works, electric power stations, and underground railways."

To realize his dream of a life when "every factory will be transformed into an intoxicating orchestra of noises," Russolo created *Intonarumori* ("Noise Intoners")—gangly speaker boxes that transmitted such chainsaw melodies as an internal combustion engine gurgling in ten whole-tones. He concocted four main noise families: the Exploder, the Crackler, the Buzzer, and the Scraper; the pitch and timbre of each were manipulated by a side lever.

Futurism's resident musician, Francesco Balilla Pratella, was so impressed by Russolo's machines that he wrote the "Technical Manifesto of Futurist Music," another encomium on "the musical soul of crowds, great industrial complexes, transatlantic liners, trains, tanks, automobiles and aeroplanes . . . the domination of the machine and the victorious reign of electricity."

When it came to industrial symphonies, the Mussolini-backed Futurists were probably embarrassed to find many of their efforts matched by those of the enemy Soviet camp. Artists from the pre-Stalin halcyon days of 1920 staged a *Concert for Factory Sirens* that consisted of an orchestrated crescendo of sirens calling comrades to their workstations. Only in this cruder Soviet version did life come to imitate art. We can still hear its influence in factories all over the world orchestrating the peak hours of blue-collar travail.

After some exhibitions in England and private shows for Stra-

vinsky and Stockhausen, Russolo's Noise Intoners became more of a novelty than the promised innovation. Russolo eventually combined several of the Intoners into a rudimentary keyboard called the Russolophone, but that too was doomed to the crackpot file of history.

A less clamorous experiment (with Marxist overtones nonetheless) was Germany's *Gebrauchsmusik*, meaning "utility music" or "music to be used." It encompassed tunes that amateurs could play at home without the intimidations of a concert hall. Kurt Weill's career in the later Weimar period was mostly devoted to this movement's efforts to erase the distinctions between "art music" and "use music." Weill wanted to bring music to the masses by making it "capable of expressing simple human emotions and actions." He took pleasure in provoking the snobs who reviled his rank-and-file allegiances, taunting them by declaring that "the fear of banality has finally been overcome . . . with the use of the elements of jazz, easily graspable melodies that superficially bear a strong resemblance to light music."

Weill's words may have sounded revolutionary then, but he was merely advocating the mixture of light music and film music we take for granted today. To get an idea of *Gebrauchsmusik*, imagine mixing a mathematical Philip Glass frost, the string syrup of Percy Faith, a hearty scoop of Boston Pops, an Ennio Morricone marshmallow sauce, and the Ray Conniff Singers for the cherry on top.

Gebrauchsmusik often took on rogue themes. Paul Hindemith, another major figure in the movement, centered his opera *Neues vom Tage* (1929) around the lowbrow subject of tabloid newspapers and homespun compositions called *Spielmusik* ("Music for Playing"). His love of technological gadgetry led to pieces made exclusively for pianola, radio, and for an ether-wave machine perfected by Leon Theremin. Hindemith's irreverent swipes at established aesthetics and authority agitated the Nazi Kulturkammer when his *Kammermusik No. 5* concerto satirized German military marches.

Though created to classify a socially conscious art movement, the term *Gebrauchsmusik* took on the same pejorative mantle as Germany's equally volatile term *kitsch*. The final implications of

"utility music"? Music for elevators, offices, stores, and house-cleaning—all to Hindemith's dismay. Perhaps this explains why, once ensconced in an Ivy League music department, he attempted to save face by writing off Muzak and other background music as a "relentlessly running music faucet."

In place of Futurism's rumpus and *Gebrauchsmusik's* *noblesse oblige*, Erik Satie offered a musical complement to urban life with pieces that retained melody yet were emotionally neutral. Satie was like the Futurists in developing a blueprint for *sound* environments that originated with the most anti-bourgeois intentions but ended as a middle-class champion. He affirmed his role as Muzak's true progenitor in a 1920 manifesto advocating *musique d'ameublement* ("furniture music").

There are several stories about how Satie coined "Furniture Music" as a term and concept. According to one, Satie had overheard Henri Matisse express a desire for some kind of art form without any nagging subject matter—something he likened to an easy chair. Another more conclusive version has Satie at a luncheon with the painter Fernand Léger. The restaurant's resident orchestra was so loud that the diners had to leave. According to Léger, Satie reacted to the situation with an impassioned discourse:

*You know, there's a need to create furniture music, that is to say, music that would be a part of the surrounding noises and that would take them into account. I see it as melodious, as masking the clatter of knives and forks without drowning it completely, without imposing itself. It would fill up the awkward silences that occasionally descend on guests. It would spare them the usual banalities. Moreover, it would neutralize the street noises that indiscreetly force themselves into the picture.**

Satie elaborated on this idea in a note to Jean Cocteau: "Furniture music for law offices, banks, etc. . . . No marriage ceremony

*Alan M. Gillnor, *Erik Satie* (Boston: Twayne, 1988), p. 232.

without furniture music. . . . Don't enter a house which does not have furniture music."

Musique d'ameublement (arranged for a piano, three clarinets and a trombone) had its public debut on March 8, 1920, at the Galerie Barbazanges, performed during intermissions of a play written by his friend Max Jacob. Rollo H. Myers, Satie's biographer, claims "the music, which consisted of fragments of popular refrains from *Mignon* and the *Danse Macabre* and isolated phrases repeated over and over again, like the pattern of wallpaper, was meant strictly to be nothing more than a background and was not intended to attract attention in any way."^o

The patrons, unaccustomed to regarding art with anything but genuflection, were deaf only to Satie's instructions and proceeded to strain their ears. An annoyed Satie leaped into the crowd and implored everyone to talk, make noise, or concentrate on the picture exhibition in the theater hall. Satie's frustration in trying to change the listening habits of people accustomed to sitting on hard-backed chairs with rapt attention contrasts with a similar situation more than fifty years later when John Cage exposed Satie's *musique d'ameublement* to a public all too accustomed to peripheral listenership. In his address to a New York forum called "The Phonograph and Our Musical Life," Cage attempted to break people out of passive listening by forcing them to wind through a darkened corridor made visible only by the scattered spotlights shining on three chamber ensembles playing the piece.

Appearing on Channel Four's British documentary "Beautiful Music," Professor Roderick Swanston of London's Royal College of Music claims that furniture music was "a reaction against composers taking themselves too seriously." This could also have been Satie's last laugh at all of the tony patrons who ignored him during his dark days as a cabaret pianist.

The Galerie Barbazanges presented the only official "public" furniture music show, but Satie arranged several private installations. When the wife of *Washington Post* owner Eugene Meyer requested the musician's autograph, Satie instead sent the man-

^oRollo H. Myers, *Erik Satie* (New York: Dover, 1948, 1968), p. 60.

uscript for a musical piece called "Wall Hanging for a Prefectural Office," scored for a small orchestra and intended to be "decorative and sumptuous in appearance." Satie soon created smaller works such as "Forged Iron Tapestry" (to be played in house vestibules for guests as they arrived) and "Phonic Floor Tiles" (designed to complement either luncheons or marriage proposals).

Furniture music, far from being just another smug Dadaist hoax, was Satie's serious attempt to facilitate the simultaneous rise of canned music and movie soundtracks. The cinema impelled musicians to compose viscerally while staying subtle enough not to overscore the screen action, a challenge Satie had met with his score entitled *Cinema* for Rene Clair's *Entr'acte*, in which he cut up, juxtaposed, and repeated musical phrases until they were devoid of any intrinsic meaning.

Long before furniture music, Satie had experienced deep, metaphysical yearnings that prompted him to make unorthodox conclusions not only about music but about how harmony (as opposed to melody) brings us closer to the great beyond.

Born into the middle-class comforts of a then Germanophile France, Satie spent much of his early career fighting off Wagner's tentacles, which gripped so many of his contemporaries. To purge himself, he extolled the monophonic sounds of Gregorian chant and plainsong, transforming this anachronism from the Middle Ages into an antidote against Teutonic excess.

Like plainsong, Satie's music was stripped of dramatic accent and sounded remote enough to make people more cognizant—at times, more suspicious—of their surroundings. Roderick Swanston (speaking again in the British documentary) contrasts Satie's approach with that of two of his contemporaries: "Debussy and Ravel would certainly be composers whom you listened to and expect to listen to. Ironically, a lot of the language they used in their compositions gave the vocabulary for later composers to write their background music." In contrast to Debussy's "parallel chords" (which made a more lush and sentimental sound later echoed by Mantovani and his disciples), Satie's music was minimal and somewhat glacial. The Debussy versus Satie approach to background music is similar to today's sometimes dubious distinctions between

easy-listening (which relies on nostalgic melodies) and more emotionally ambiguous forms like Brian Eno's "ambient" music.

Satie performed his Gregorian experiments around the time of his two-year association with the Rosicrucians, during which he fell under the influence of the sexually ambiguous cult leader Joséphin Péladan. Péladan was part of a *fin-de-siècle* sect that rejected materialism and the influence of Darwin in favor of a metaphysical goulash of spiritual observance, hedonism, and a love of "nature."

For Péladan's salon exhibitions, Satie composed "incidental music" (intended as ancillary to the proceedings)—compositions noted for their aimless, hypnotic quality (due partly to Satie's habit of omitting time signatures or bar lines). Satie maintained an enigmatic front by posing more as an interior decorator than a composer, filling his written music with descriptions like "White and motionless" or "Pale and hieratic."

Satie biographer Alan Gillmor states: "Tonality and rhythm as such did not concern him. His aim was to create a vague, floating . . . atmosphere . . . a nongoal-oriented music, a music that is simply *there*, a kind of quasi-religious 'furniture music' before the fact."

More than a decade before furniture music, Satie's three "Gymnopédies" demonstrated how his "minimalist" work harbored repressed feelings that could leave him wide open to maudlin interpretations. The "Gymnopédies" crop up today in some of the gushiest contexts—particularly Louis Malle's elegiac use of them in *The Fire Within* and during the misty-eyed conclusion of *My Dinner with André*.

Various social and economic forces during Satie's time show that he did not arrive at furniture music out of an aesthetic bubble. Mid-nineteenth-century Paris was among the first European cities to shift from a market economy to a consumer culture. The Parisian department store, for instance, replaced the quaint, small shop. The Bon Marché appeared by 1870 to transform shoppers into ambulatory voyeurs propelled by a fixed-price system, rendering haggling obsolete and gawking all the more enticing. Émile Zola, in *Au Bonheur des Dames*, saw the Bon Marché as a place

where female shoppers became intoxicated by a carefully contrived retail dramaturgy.

Celebrating the French Revolution's centenary, the Universal Exposition of 1898 foreshadowed Busch Gardens with its "exotic" samplings of foreign lands garnished with price tags. Satie stood at the foot of the Exposition's freshly erected Eiffel Tower, so intoxicated by the theme park atmosphere that he composed his "Gnossiennes," among his most elegant and spectral works.

Furniture music represented a transition between Satie's departure from Péladan and his embrace of Dada. By the 1920s, his religious convictions were eclipsed by post-World War I cynicism. Dada, a loosely based movement that started in 1916 and disbanded eight years later, took every opportunity to disrupt Europe's old order with a nihilism so pure that it self-destructed. No surprise then that furniture music ended up thwarting the expectations of both classicists *and* the avant-garde. Just two years after it appeared, an army technocrat named George Owen Squier reinterpreted Satie's dream by devising a system for transmitting canned music via electronic wire into the concert halls of restaurants and typing pools. The year was 1922: Dada was in its death throes as Muzak kicked into life.

4 / Umbilical Chords

THE BIRTH OF MUZAK

In 1887, Edward Bellamy wrote a fantastic book called *Looking Backward*. In it, he attempted to visualize what would be going on in 2000 A.D.

In one part he wrote: *"Please look at today's music," she said, handing me a program, "and tell me what you prefer." It was dated September 12th, 2000, and contained a long list of music. I noticed that selections were grouped under headings 6:00 p.m., 7:00 p.m., etc. Then I observed this program was an all-day affair divided into sections corresponding to the hours of the day.*

"How is it done?" I asked. "There are a number of studios," she answered, "adapted to play all kinds of music. They are connected by telephone with hotels, restaurants, and homes throughout the City."

Fifty years ago Mr. Bellamy came very close to prophesying exactly what "Music by Muzak" is today.

—From a 1937 Muzak promotional booklet

Before Aldous Huxley and George Orwell confronted us with dystopias of social regimentation and advanced technology gone amok, Edward Bellamy gave us a future where high-tech was a maternalistic marvel. His novel *Looking Backward (2000–1887)* described an orderly society where piped-in music was one of many perquisites in a state-controlled consumer paradise run by a benevolent "Industrial Army."

Homes with "acoustically prepared chambers, connected by wire with subscribers' houses" used a "musical telephone" that soothed people in the evening but also got more lively so that "the

halls during the waking hours of morning were always of an inspiring type.” The musical programs were “so coordinated that the pieces at any one time simultaneously proceeding in the different halls usually offer a choice, not only between instrumental and vocal, and between different sorts of instruments, but also between different motives from grave to gay, so that all tastes and moods can be suited.”

No man was better equipped to realize Bellamy’s “musical telephone” and its infinite utility than his contemporary Brigadier General George Owen Squier—the inventor of Muzak and the unsung hero of the electronic age.

Squier shared Bellamy’s optimistic view of tomorrow, yet had some notable differences. He was congenial neither to *Looking Backward’s* complete government centralization without private enterprise nor to its voting system, which enfranchised only citizens over forty-five years old.

Bellamy, like all utopians, worked best when his vision was reinterpreted if not distorted. Squier was adept at doing both. While many Americans were forming societies of Bellamy literalists, Squier caught on quickly to the author’s tacit suggestion that technology could forge a postindustrial link between the apparatuses of entertainment and of social engineering.

Squier led a life that could have easily paralleled that of Julian West, *Looking Backward’s* upper-middle-class protagonist, who emerges from suspended animation to a tomorrow in keeping with the Victorian ideals of yesterday. Without the advantage of time-travel, however, Squier helped usher in the “global village” by concocting a hook-up system capable of compressing vast areas of time and space previously isolated by geography. This same technology is responsible for today’s fiber-optic phone lines and cable television’s 500-plus channels.

Squier’s life and career illustrate how much Muzak is interlinked with the military, the telephone, and the radio. Born near Dryden, Michigan, on March 21, 1865, Squier was destined for precociousness and pulled his first “believe-it-or-not” stunt by gaining admission to West Point Military Academy just after com-

pleting the eighth grade. He graduated seventh in his class and, for six years, was a second lieutenant of Army artillery. He soon experimented with physics, mathematics, and chemistry at Johns Hopkins University, getting a doctorate in electrical science and becoming possibly the first U.S. Army official with a Ph.D.

“Georgie” (his school nickname) generated occasional friction with his peers when his rendezvous with the laboratory eclipsed sundry soldierly duties. Still, this did not deter him from fathering his first invention: the high-speed telegraph. Not for a moment did Squier shy away from applying this in the most flamboyant fashion—ringing bells, activating machinery, firing canons, and detonating mines by remote radio control.

The 1893 Columbian Exposition in Chicago may very well have been the place where Squier got the idea of using music as one more implement in his electromagnetic arsenal. Attending as an Army representative, he could not help but notice the electronically transmitted philharmonic infiltrating the festivities.

While still in the Army, Squier convinced his lab crony, Albert C. Crehore of Dartmouth University, to join him in a small business partnership. The Crehore-Squier Intelligence Transmission Company dissolved within a year, but Squier soon received accolades for lending the Army an electromagnetic hand. By 1900, he was among few military men engaged in the Spanish-American War who could fathom the science of underwater communications cables. When one of the Army’s two cable ships got stuck in the Philippine Islands, Squier (as Telegraph Line Superintendent) laid out a cable system for the second ship.

Squier helped the military achieve the goal of sending and receiving radio signals without revealing the location of either conversant. As assistant commandant, he showed that previously impenetrable wilderness could be converted into a natural transmitter/receiver, since a tree “provides all the essential elements of a radio antenna.” This “tree telephone” or “florograph” could receive messages from as far away as Germany.

In 1906, Squier got a visit from Orville Wright, who wanted to fill the general in on his plans for a biplane. Though at first skeptical about the project (the plane had no gas bag), Squier agreed

to join him on a test flight. This made Squier technically the world's first airplane passenger. Thereafter, Congressmen were obliged to adjourn and see the plane for themselves before assigning Squier and Wright to design the military's first wings.

By the time he set up a Signal School at Fort Leavenworth, Squier had convinced Congress to dole out the then-astronomical sum of \$30,000 for research and development on wireless telegraphy and telephony. As assistant to the chief Signal Corps officer, Squier met the fruit of his research: the "Wire-Wireless." It offered the military an even better intelligence system, with improved accuracy over the wireless and better safeguards against espionage.

Until Squier's invention, existing telephone lines could transmit only one conversation per pair of wires. But on September 18, 1910, Squier unveiled "multiplexing"—a system allowing multiple conversations. (Later, FM radio engineers would devise a similar layout for sending messages through a single carrier wave.)

American Telephone and Telegraph's Bell Laboratories saw Squier's wires as the best method for saving time, money, and materials while meeting a mounting demand for phone service. AT&T obtained Squier's patents and soon inaugurated the electronic revolution that Marshall McLuhan would later describe in *The Gutenberg Galaxy* as "a single constricted space resonant with tribal drums."

But Squier, the eternal public servant, got edgy about his ideas being gobbled up for a private company's vested interests. He sued AT&T, claiming that an allotment of his patent profits should go to the people. The courts did not see it his way, especially since Squier no longer had any legal patent ownership. Congress later changed its position so that some royalties could be funneled into the National Academy of Sciences.

As Squier was proving the benefits of a wired world, his nemesis, the wireless, had also gained popularity. As early as 1896, Guglielmo Marconi had acquired a British patent for his wireless telegraph. Radio's textbook inventor Lee De Forest referred to his "radio telephone" as the "Invisible Empire of the Air, intangible, yet solid as granite." But by the time Woodrow Wilson re-

cited his Fourteen Points across the Atlantic, the wireless and cable were being used simultaneously.

By February of 1917, Squier had become the Army's Chief Signal Officer and was serving on the Joint Army-Navy Board on Aeronautics. This tenure gave him liberty to organize radio and cable communications between military stations in America and the American Expeditionary Forces overseas. He also gained clout with such honors as the Distinguished Service Medal (USA), Knight Commander of the Order of St. Michael and St. George (Great Britain), Commander of the Order of the Crown (Italy), Commander of the Legion of Honor (France), and the Elliott Cresson Gold Medal for his multiplex innovations.

When the Army bought its first airplane, Squier was on hand to draw up the proper specifications. He supervised the assembly of the first Air Corps during World War I after working as a London military attaché. He disagreed with Woodrow Wilson's anti-war proclivities, surmising from the start that America's involvement in the Great War was inevitable. The Wilson Administration grew hawkish two years later and called Squier back to the United States to serve in the Army Air Service as Brigadier General.

But just as he was not a favorite among his classmates, Squier also antagonized the top brass. He was present when Lieutenant Thomas Selfridge became the military's first air-crash casualty. Squier was permitted to name the Macomb County Air Base after Selfridge, but he soon became the focal point of public and media outrage when the Air Corps encountered further technical problems. This led to his forced resignation as Chief Signal Officer.

Squier was near retirement in 1922 when he decided to apply his signal innovations to a music service. The connection between music, mass communication, and military might had been established long before. In the 1820s, a French engineer named François Sudré had submitted the proposal for a musical code to the Académie des Beaux Arts. It was intended as a universal language by which the scale's seven notes could transmit battlefield orders and dispatches. By 1916, future RCA executive David Sarnoff,

then working for Marconi, was proposing the “Radio Music Box” for homes.

Scientific applications to civilian life were nurtured years earlier; many people regarded them as incursions. Inventions like Jeremy Bentham’s “Panopticon” (designed to observe several prison chambers simultaneously) made mass technology synonymous with repression. As Jerri Husch writes in *Music of the Workspace: A Study of Muzak Culture*, “that both industry and politics gradually came to be influenced by an engineering perspective is dramatically illustrated by the observation that during the 1920s both President Hoover and the five chief executives of the largest and most growth-oriented corporations at the time, General Motors, Singer Sewing Machine Company, Dupont, General Electric and Goodyear, were all past classmates at M.I.T.”

While Squier investigated the connection between wired music and crowd control, Frederick Winslow Taylor had already outlined an unprecedented human behavior blueprint with his 1911 book *Principles of Scientific Management*. His “Taylor System” employed time and motion studies to determine optimum clerical performance. A 1912 German study called *Psychology and Industrial Efficiency* led to specialized testing procedures for typists and stenographers. Westinghouse (which would one day own the Muzak corporation for several years) was one of the first companies to finance industrial management. If Taylorism could monitor the time-lag between clerks’ reaching for pencils and their marking papers, sound engineers could likewise manufacture their version of the optimum work womb.

Squier’s ambitions were less overbearing. When presenting his patents to the New York offices of the North American Company, a Cleveland utilities combine, he had in mind servicing homes and retail shops. It was the dream of any corporation to plug electronic lines into homes and businesses, transmitting not only music but advertising and public service announcements. In October of 1922, North American started a new subsidiary called Wired Radio, Inc., to compete with the burgeoning wireless.

North American spent several years conducting preliminary ex-

periments in Ampere, New Jersey, and on Staten Island. By 1930, the Cleveland Electric Illuminating Company of Cleveland, Ohio, attempted to pipe music from an electronic substation into households in the city's Lakeland area. Homes were given a choice of three channels that featured news items and dance music for only \$1.50 per month. Engineer Walter H. Thomas (whose parents were among the recipients) recalls the stations' being a less sophisticated version of today's FM band. But abundant interference made it a short-lived venture until improvements were made in 1933. Aware that the wireless monopolized private residences, Wired Radio started servicing small businesses—mostly restaurants and hotel dining rooms. It also abandoned the inferior electric wires and started leasing AT&T's phone lines.

Notwithstanding the lure of jazz clubs, Rudolph Valentino, and flappers, the 1920s were the wired music wonder years. Before Muzak transmitted its first note, the subject of background music was seeping into more and more pages of modern folklore. In 1929, playwright Elmer Rice contributed a novel to the *New Yorker* called *Voyage to Purilia* about a distant planet where “melody is as much a condition of life as are light and air.” People woke, slept, and caroused to this “swooning sound,” an “omnipresent harmony; now pathetic, now gay, now ominous, now martial, now tender, but always awakening familiar memories, always swellingly mellifluous, and always surcharged with a slight but unmistakable tremolo.”

Public address serenades also evoked unease. “The air was continuously alive with gay synthetic melodies,” wrote a facetious Aldous Huxley in *Brave New World*, describing a future society where “Synthetic Music” piped out “hyper-violin, super-cello and oboe-surrogate” to boost the spirit of techno-tribalism. For him “whenever the masses seized political power, then it was happiness rather than truth and beauty that mattered.”

Huxley, like Edward Bellamy, was prescient in understanding how music would ultimately become a disembodied muse in an electronically, magnetically, and (ultimately) digitally reproduced world of absentee players. But where Bellamy envisaged a humanitarian purpose for an everyday background chorus, Huxley

could only lament the passing of individual rights, the specter of human engineers, and the triumph of zombie symphonies that filled the empty spaces “with its agreeable languor.”

Yevgeny Zamyatin, a precursor to both Huxley and Orwell, wrote a dystopian novel in 1920 called *We*. A former supporter of the Russian Revolution and friend to Maxim Gorky, Zamyatin fashioned his story as a bitterly satirical reaction to the unmistakably totalitarian route the revolution had taken. The book was so disturbing to the Russian Association of Proletarian Writers that its publication was banned, and it did not appear in the Soviet Union until 1957. Zamyatin’s hypothetical future is dedicated to the preservation of unanimity, where life is regimented, reason is supreme, and the “soul” is looked upon more as a malignant tumor. To keep citizens in step with the “March of the One State,” a “Music Plant” grinds out sonatas composed by a “musicometer” at three sonatas per hour. Describing the music, Zamyatin alludes to at least one leading turn-of-the-century social engineer: “The crystalline chromatic measures of converging and diverging infinite series and the synthesizing chords of Taylor and McLauren formulas; the full-toned, square, heavy tempos of ‘Pythagoras’ Trousers’; the sad melodies of attenuating vibrations; vivid beats alternating with Fraunhofer lines of pauses. . . . What grandeur! What imperishable logic!”

Without the alarming lyricism of dystopian fiction, however, Professor Jacques Attali, in his book *Noise: The Political Economy of Music*, summarizes Muzak’s imminent role in twentieth-century musicology. He points out how music is “one of the first artistic endeavors truly to become a stockpileable consumer product.” Standardized music, like standardized labor, was part of the machine process challenging the outmoded worship of originals. Squier’s Muzak would eventually establish what Satie hinted at in his many disquisitions and disgruntled letters: that it was no longer the musical instrument that mattered so much as the conduits transmitting the tones.

Squier spent his retirement in Dryden where he reportedly made an apt but premature prediction. Looking around one day at the elaborate movie theaters sprouting along Detroit’s thor-

oughfare, he expressed dismay at how the builders were wasting their time and money since electronic and cable technology would soon bring movies right into living rooms. He died of pneumonia on March 24, 1934, in Washington, D.C. His body lay in Arlington National Cemetery, decorated with full military honors, and the Squier Memorial Park subsequently was listed as a National Historic Site. But prior to his death, Squier made one more cataclysmic contribution. Seeking a catchier name than Wired Radio, he played word games with *music* and *Kodak* and came up with the Jabberwocky jumble *Muzak*.



5 / The Push-Button Ballroom

MOOD MUSIC AND EARLY RADIO

These oscillations, as well as the radio waves of space, have been transposed into audible sound. The results, though interesting, cannot really be said to correspond with music as we know it. However, Saturn's magnetosphere produces waves which, when transposed into sound, have been described as a "slow, dreamy melody."

—David Tame, *The Secret Power of Music**

On a train headed for Saskatchewan, young André Kostelanetz looked out his compartment window at a montage of vast fields, farmhouses, town churches, and people scattered across America's cinematic hinterlands. Suddenly this freshly transplanted Russian émigré, who would one day be designated by *High Fidelity* magazine as "the prophet of classics for the masses," realized how

*From *The Secret Power of Music* by David Tame, p. 236. © 1984, published by Destiny, an imprint of Inner Traditions International, 1 Park Street, Rochester, Vt. 05767, and by Thorsons, an imprint of HarperCollins Publishers Limited. Reprinted by permission.

thoroughly radio would transform this haphazard census into a mass audience galvanized by antenna wire.

The Kostelanetz intuition soon paid off when he became one of radio's biggest stars of what would become "light music"—a style of popular songs dolled up with a symphonic shimmer to please the largest audience.

By the 1920s, Radio Corporation of America CEO David Sarnoff had transformed the wireless from a person-to-person message unit into an entertainment altar. One-third of America's 1924 furniture budget was spent on radio receivers. Herbert Hoover offered crooner Rudy Vallee a medal for helping people forget the rigors of the Depression. In 1930, 40 percent of America's households had a radio; by 1938, the percentage had jumped to 82 percent.

Sarnoff once explained to a group of art students during the 1930s that the human voice had to wait for centuries before the supernatural conduits of electromagnetism could permit an individual to communicate with millions of people in different regions at one time. Sarnoff's colleague (and the inventor of the radiola), Dr. Alfred Goldsmith of the City College of New York, hailed radio as "the ultimate extension of personality in time and space."

Kostelanetz, as well, was aware that electronic communication was spinning life into "an age of fast tempo," decades before radio day-parting and the MTV soundbyte began pandering to the ever-diminishing attention span.

Born on December 23, 1901, in St. Petersburg (later, Petrograd), Russia, Kostelanetz was exposed to music from his earliest childhood as a member and later leader of the Petrograd choir. He arrived in the United States in 1922, working temporarily as a singers' accompanist before organizing radio orchestras, notwithstanding the ridicule of his peers and friends.

Kostelanetz made his radio debut in 1924. A decade later, he employed a sixty-five-man orchestra—the largest ever assembled for the popular airwaves—for his coast-to-coast broadcast *André Kostelanetz Presents. Radio Guide* magazine presented him with an award for providing "so much enjoyment" for so many; *Motion*

Picture Daily rated his program #1 among musical shows; and a 1943 poll conducted in the United States and Canada honored his promotion of both popular and “serious” music.

As with many light orchestra arrangers, Kostelanetz often followed in Victor Herbert’s shadow, with modern adaptations of now classic operettas and musical showtunes. He took Tchaikovsky’s Fifth Symphony, superimposed modern lyrics over it, renamed it “Mood Love,” and had the public loving it within three months.

Various reasons explain why Kostelanetz and his light music cohorts became an early radio success story. There is of course the good music. But there is another, more abstruse but no less relevant explanation that is intrinsic to radio’s hardware.

With radio came a renewed belief in the physical existence of a universal medium termed *ether*. Lee De Forest referred to his invention as “those silent etheric voices, which seem often less of *nature* than of the *spirit* realm!”^o Inspired by the Scottish physicist James Clerk Maxwell’s conclusion that ether carried waves of electromagnetic energy, some engineers enjoyed fantasizing about the wireless as a cosmic conduit through which light waves, sound waves, electricity, and various other apparitions traveled into the ear from outer space. There were already hints of ghosts in the machine when electrical and radio pioneer Nikola Tesla credited his insights to the “appearance of images often accompanied by strong flashes of light.” In his later experiments (according to Margaret Cheney’s biography, *Tesla: Man Out of Time*), he reported getting messages from extraterrestrial aliens as well as telepathic instructions on electrons from pigeons.

Merging the languages of science and fantasy, we can infer that from ether came ethereal music—a style born out of radio’s tenuous position with respect to the countermelodies emitted from stars and quasars. By trial and error, radio musicians and engineers determined that the sound of overlapping strings, preferably played at a high pitch, counteracted much of the static and buzzing that marred the early broadcasts. The light music style soon

^oTom Lewis, *Empire of the Air: The Men Who Made Radio* (New York: Edward Burlingame, 1991), p. 150.

evolved into an airwave onomatopoeia: lithe violins, harps, and chimes mimicked stratospheric echoes.

Ever since January 20, 1910, when De Forest attempted a live transmission from New York's Metropolitan Opera House of Caruso singing parts of *Cavalleria Rusticana*, high-brows had entertained serious doubts about "great" music's place in "De Forest's prime evil." In addition to the classical purists, many sentimental primitivists who clung to jazz as the antidote to urban neurosis were displeased with the prospect of hearing it on the radio.

Light music, on the other hand, inhabited a safer middle ground. Not quite classical, not quite jazz; not entirely showtune or waltz, it triumphed by eluding pigeonholes. An example was a particular contribution by Victor Young. This future movie composer, who conducted for radio in the 1930s, had performed a violin solo on a 1931 recording of "Stardust" that transformed it from a hot, jazzy number into a soft ballad. Young not only broadened the song's musical context (making it a tune for dreaming as well as dancing) but demonstrated how previously entrenched styles could be liberated for multipurpose packaging.

Morton Gould, another light music pioneer and an eventual star of what would later be called "easy-listening," remembers:

*The so-called serious musician turned up his or her nose at light music in any medium for many understandable reasons. It was a way of giving the serious musician more importance. If you could be in a private club, you could feel superior. There were a lot of psychological, physiological, and in some cases pathological reasons for these feelings. Oddly enough, the great artists of that time were experimenting with sound technology and early radio transmission—men like Leopold Stokowski. Stokowski subsequently did *Fantasia in Hollywood*; that was looked upon by the purists as the very last, final downfall of good music.*

Gould is a fine example of a composer, conductor, and arranger struck by the "light" after years of "serious" music study. Born on December 10, 1913, at Richmond Hill, Long Island, he was con-

sidered a piano prodigy by the time he was four; graduated from New York University by fifteen, he was later chosen by S. L. Rothafel (alias "Roxy") to perform as staff pianist for Radio City Music Hall. He then joined the National Broadcasting Company and conducted "special arrangements" for New Jersey's radio station WOR in 1934, before becoming music director for the nationwide "Cresta Blanca Carnival" program.

Percy Faith, whose string arrangements were higher pitched and more poignant than most, hosted *Music by Faith*, which played on the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation from 1938 to 1940 and was simulcast in the United States. Born in Toronto, Ontario, on April 7, 1908, Faith began studying violin at the age of seven before switching to piano. He played regularly in silent movie houses and gave his first concert, at the Toronto Conservatory, when he was eighteen. His pianist career was abruptly handicapped after his hands were burned while trying to save his sister from a house fire. But the hotel orchestra's lure and radio's profits determined his unflagging career and reputation.

Due to the Canadian Broadcasting Company's budgetary restrictions and a creeping suspicion of his being the network's "token Jew," he left *Music by Faith* for a U.S. career in 1940. He started in Chicago, was naturalized in New York City, and soon hosted *The Carnation Contented Hour*.

Light salon, supper tunes, or midnight-hour "slumber music"—terms used interchangeably—stayed even as radio sound got better, and proud producers felt technologically proficient enough to broadcast the Great Masters. With an expanding marketplace of sponsors (including Chesterfield, Philco, and Firestone), radio was the hottest selling tool in the nation, with light music drawing in the largest listening market.

One of the first significant program innovations occurred when CBS head William S. Paley began competing with Sarnoff's NBC. Paley was much more intent on enhancing commercial revenues than on being "respectable." NBC preferred classical music, but CBS used Paul Whiteman's whitebread jazz band to promote products such as Old Gold cigarettes.

Paul Whiteman, often called the "King of Jazz" (a title that

stirred considerable controversy), is another musician who took advantage of radio's power to introduce unexplored sounds to middle America. A native of Denver, Colorado, Whiteman had played both violin and viola for the Denver and San Francisco symphonies and was backup for a vocal quintet that included Bing Crosby on a version of "My Blue Heaven." Whiteman softened (and, in some respects, improved upon) jazz with soft strings, constraining it to little or no improvisation in order to appeal to a wider, more musically conservative audience.

Other light music radio stars would also go on to make easy-listening records. Gordon Jenkins, for example, performed as a multi-instrumentalist for NBC's Hollywood network from 1938 to 1944. The Mutual Network, in association with the Longines-Wittnauer Watch Company, had the Longines Symphonette; Enoch Light and the Light Brigade (popular in the hotel circuit) appeared on *Hit Parade*; Phil Spitalny and His All-Girl Orchestra played *The Hour of Charm*; Wayne King had *The Lady Esther Serenade*; and NBC presented Evelyn and Her Magic Violin.

Across the Atlantic, the BBC was nurturing its own breed of light orchestral radio stars. In fact, England would go on to perfect the genre of mood music. London-born George Melachrino (1909–1965) sang; composed; conducted; arranged; played the violin, oboe, and piano; and was the United Kingdom's biggest light music star. By 1927, he was broadcasting on the BBC and got top billing a year later when playing the Savoy Orpheans.

Morton Gould continues:

Other than the polarization of light and heavy music comes a very real fact. Radio was the great communicator, in terms of reaching millions and millions of people instantaneously; the equivalent of what television is today. If you were on radio, you were fairly well known—because you reached so many people. Therefore, because of the popular medium, from a commercial point of view, it was important to attract enough people to justify the cost of running or sponsoring these programs. The kind of music that would

please the most number of people and offend the least became the norm. . . . The serious classical and Baroque writers of the time may have actually written functional music: themes like "Fireworks," Handel's "Water Music"—music to celebrate something with a million oboes playing on a barge going up the river. This was all functional music, in a sense."

Before radio, millions of people could encounter a symphony performance within a time frame of perhaps 100 years. But a single radio broadcast could reach the same number of people in one hour. The radio audience, cut off from the garrulous tuxedo-and-gown crowds, had a one-on-one relationship with the musical piece.

A common image of radio days depicts the family seated around a room, listening to an installment of "The Green Hornet" or Jack Benny. But while radio did house a great deal of drama and music meant for active listening, it also presented light music (as one more push-button appliance) designed to serve as background for domestic scenes. There has been considerable celebration of radio's ability to unite people from great distances, but what about the equally significant time-space transformation involving the radio, the listener, and the household chores (not to mention mood music's longtime companion, the icebox)?

Without the imposed discipline of a symphony hall or opera house, average listeners were at last free to select the music they wanted to share the contours of their parlor and personality. Brahms and Berlioz had to defer to Gould and Faith on radio's home turf, where, to quote Kostelanetz, "every one is his own master and, incidentally, master of the program."



6 / Ghosts in the Elevator

In hotels, office buildings, and many other places, one is perpetually awash in soft music, as in America. Plaintive arias leak from the walls in elevators, waiting rooms, bars, and lavatories; the music comes from nowhere, like a ventriloquist's voice.

—Luigi Barzini, *The Europeans**

Think of “elevator music,” and the first sounds that come to mind are of “syrupey” strings, “homogenized” horns, and “whipped-cream” Wurlitzers languidly laboring to make us relax. Like all stereotypes, this one has some truth, but few critics appreciate why the music is purposely made this way and why, notwithstanding all the whining, griping, and cheap jokes, most people have welcomed its intrusion into their lives at one time or another despite themselves.

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Besides its significance as a musical innovation, elevator music is important for its literal meaning. Imagine what average turn-of-the-century urban dwellers (still stuck in a Victorian mindset) felt at the sight of a conveyance capable of lifting them multiple stories in a matter of seconds. Next to rollercoasters and airplanes, elevators were perceived by many as floating domiciles of disequilibrium, inciting thoughts of motion sickness and snapping cables.

Building proprietors and the rapidly growing lift industry dedicated part of their public relations campaign to allaying elevator jockey fears. Riders felt a little more assured when uniformed attendants were on hand to greet and guide them through their uncertain vertical passage. But following the first appearance of the electric elevator in 1887, the flesh-and-blood attendant was eventually superseded by soft, comforting, angelic music luring and lulling the squeamish on board. By injecting ether and eliminating dross, elevator music became a style whose notes and harmonies sounded as if they were whipped up with air.

All of the monstrous visions of gargoyle-lined skyscrapers (perfected in Fritz Lang's 1919 film *Metropolis*) came to life on May 31, 1931, when New York City unveiled the 102-story Empire State Building. Music had to be piped into the elevators, lobbies, and observatories to give people at least some illusion of continuity amid the disorder.

One particular incident shows just how much elevator music became part of the historical record. On July 28, 1945, an Army B-25 bomber on a cross-country mission crashed into the Empire State Building's 79th story. Flames shot up the elevator shafts, damaging cables and threatening to engulf fifty people stuck inside of a glass-encased observatory on the 88th floor. The front-page article in the July 29th *New York Times* reported: "Even at this terrifying juncture, however, the "canned" music that is wired into the observatory continued to play, and the soothing sounds of a waltz helped the spectators there to control themselves. There was no panic, but within a few minutes the heat and choking fumes from the fire below made the observatory uncomfortable."

Background music companies never considered elevators their biggest market, however. Their primary customers were places of

work and recreation that used music as a mood boost, just as radio had orchestrated private homes. When it was still known as Wired Radio, Muzak transmitted to grocery stores equipped with loudspeakers to announce such news items as reduced milk or egg prices. Restaurants and hotels played only music spun from the central Muzak studio's dual-phonograph turntables, running up to 17½ hours per day. To compete with Muzak, which would continue to lead the world in this trade, numerous other companies sprouted in both America and England. Popular journalists started discussing background music's role in our modern folklore as a changing economy stumbled through the Great Depression, recharged during the war effort, and burgeoned during the Cold War consumer blitz.

From the start, Muzak was not content to broadcast compilations of previously recorded material. It conducted its own studio sessions to produce custom-made "functional music" that resembled the breakfast marches (such as the Pan American Brass Band's "Star Spangled Banner") and lunchtime pipe-organs described in *Looking Backward*, with jazz-classical filler in between.

Muzak's first 1934 recording was a medley of "Whispering," "Do You Ever Think of Me?" and "Here in My Arms," performed by Sam Lanin (brother of Lester Lanin) and his orchestra. Muzak's second band was Russ Morgan's midwest dance ensemble, whose star musicians included Fats Waller and Teddy Wilson (from the original Benny Goodman Sextet). The Dorsey Brothers Orchestra also contributed a 1935 version of "Solitude."

All Muzak recordings were pressed on vertically engraved 33⅓-rpm disks—forerunners of the LP, which became popular after World War II. Muzak was most likely the first company to press recordings on vinylite instead of shellac (which scratched too easily). Before using vinyl, Muzak engraved its music onto wax cylinders. According to sound engineer Irv Joel, who worked on Muzak's studio sessions in the 1950s, when it shared space at Capitol Records:

During the early 'thirties, Muzak's chief engineer invented the "gold sputtering process," which cut the

original musical transcriptions onto wax; from the wax, they made a "mother" recording which would be a negative of the groove. They sprayed a fine coating of gold onto the wax, then parted the wax and got this impression. The next step in the process was to electroplate it. From that was made a stamper and then the record. Other record companies followed suit until silver proved cheaper.

By March 6, 1936, Muzak had completed its move from Cleveland to its New York studios on Fourth Avenue, where "Music by Muzak" emitted cover versions of "I Got You Under My Skin" and "There's a Small Hotel" for such swanky clients as the East Side's Stork Club and the Chambord. That same year, when Franklin Delano Roosevelt defeated Alfred Landon in the Presidential election, Muzak was there to relay the results to its subscribers. The New Deal may have implemented a quasi-socialist program to bail the nation out of capitalism's hangover; but Muzak, in a more mercenary communitarian spirit, cultivated a franchise system that extended into Los Angeles; Boston; Washington, D.C.; Detroit; Buffalo; and Philadelphia.

Muzak was now getting closer to a bigger goal: to supply its clients with a program of tunes segmented by mood as a tonic for the times of day when the human spirit sags. This was an idea that Muzak President Waddill Catchings cherished. Catchings was a well-known investment banker who once bore the nickname "Golden Boy of Wall Street." Already boasting a record of profitable business schemes, he came up with the idea of assigning each song in the Muzak library a stimulus code that could be stored and transmitted according to rhythm, tempo, instrumentation and ensemble size.

Still in its formative stages, "Music by Muzak" served up a potpourri of classical, semi-classical, pop vocal, and quasi-Polynesian or Gypsy tunes played by such prominent figures as Xavier Cugat, Clyde McCoy, and Harry Horlick. A more standard format was inaugurated in August of 1936 when Catchings ordered his programmers to target sequencing, timing, and vocal impact. No

vocals could play between 9:00 P.M. and 12:30 A.M. After 12:30, no waltzes or tangos (except for an occasional “hit” song) were permitted. Slow music was usually avoided; if used at all, it had to appear either in the middle of a set or at the end.

A typical sequencing program for restaurants complemented the daily eating ritual. The breakfast hours (7:00–9:00 A.M.) offered cheery sunrise melodies and caffeinated rhythms. From 9:00 A.M. to noon, background filler whetted appetites until the official lunch diet of light classical and spicier strains was served. After more filler beginning at 2:00 P.M., cocktail tunes came on at 5:00 P.M. to mix with piano and such exotic condiments as vibraphone. The discreet and quietly classical dinner hours from 6:00 to 9:00 P.M. provided sustenance in anticipation of the evening dance protocol, which permitted increased volume and tempo the closer midnight encroached.

A March 1939 issue of *Newsweek* noted that Muzak’s restaurateur clientele comprised at least 360 businesses. At least 1,000 new accounts were serviced in the next five years. Besides its regular functional music regimen, Muzak supplied interference-free transmissions of local New York–area radio stations WABC, WOR, and WEAJ.

Muzak established four networks to meet varying demands and budgets. The “Purple Network,” available for a monthly lease premium of \$35, served restaurants from 10 to 3:30 A.M. In addition, it offered special requests, the most popular being a “wedding sequence” that included strains from Wagner’s *Lohengrin* and Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*. Reportedly, twenty-seven requests for this sequence alone were made during one day in June 1940.

The “Red Network” offered news reports, weather, sports updates, and time signals; it was intended mostly for modest-sized bars and grills. The “Blue Network,” on the other hand, serviced mostly department stores. The “Green Network” reestablished Muzak’s early commitment to providing service to private residences, with transmissions beamed exclusively to apartment buildings for a landlord’s fee of at least \$25 per month.

Following an early Stevens Institute of Technology study in the

1930s (which found that “functional music” reduced absenteeism in workplaces by 88 percent, with a 53 percent reduction in early departures), industrial psychologists started taking Muzak very seriously and conducted similar, more elaborate tests. Dr. H. C. Smith demonstrated that 75 percent of the workforce favored not just good but well-programmed music. Joe Coco, a Muzak engineer for over forty years, recalls that “Muzak was never meant to be played loudly, just subdued like wind playing between the leaves of trees.”

Muzak received further impetus from an unexpected source. In 1937, the Medical Research Council’s Industrial Health Research Board of Great Britain published *Fatigue and Boredom in Repetitive Work* by S. Wyatt and J. N. Langdon. Twelve young English women employed in making paper firecrackers apparently worked better and harbored less of a resentful attitude when exposed to morning music. This, more than any previous study, demonstrated music’s boost to worker production and, according to subsequent observations by Muzak programmer Jane Jarvis, “proved conclusively that the use of music in an ever-rising stimulus curve to combat fatigue was very desirable.” Work music became so well regarded in England that, in 1940, British composer Eric Coates wrote “Calling All Workers,” a pep-melody that his wife requested while she was making wartime supplies for the Red Cross. It soon became a signature tune for the BBC’s *Music While You Work* program.

A few years later, the Frankford Arsenal in Philadelphia released a study linking background music to a reduction in on-the-job accidents. This information was augmented by even more tantalizing news that farmers in McKeesport had reported that their cows gave more milk to the “Blue Danube Waltz.”

Muzak was catapulted into bigger ventures when Warner Brothers purchased it in 1938. Warner combined Muzak with Associated Music Publishers, a transcription library that, in turn, got to use Muzak’s recording studios. But a year later, Warner Brothers sold these acquisitions to a triumvirate of ambitious and slick entrepreneurs: Waddill Catchings, Allen Miller, and William Benton. Miller (an American “soldier of fortune”) had helped form En-

gland's Rediffusion, Ltd., which, like Muzak, transmitted music over telephone lines. The big star was Benton, a public relations specialist who was destined for a U.S. Senate seat in Connecticut.

William Benton acquired full controlling stock in Muzak in 1941 for just \$100,000, on the advice of economist Beardsley Ruml, whose famous book *Pay as You Go* helped inspire our federal withholding tax. Not long after graduating from Yale in the early 1920s, Benton served as copywriter for the Lord & Thomas advertising firm, and soon he was the company's assistant manager. In 1929, in the wake of the Wall Street crash, he joined Chester Bowles (later governor of Connecticut) to start the Benton & Bowles Advertising Agency. Benton & Bowles secured success during the Depression years precisely because it perfected radio advertising as an art. Shows like Fred Allen's *Town Hall Tonight* and Maxwell House's *Showboat* helped pioneer the blurring of entertainment and product promotion that is so much a fact of life today.

It should be noted that Benton later took the post of Assistant Secretary of State for Public Affairs in 1945 to promote the American propaganda machine Voice of America. His ideas about knowledge dissemination eventually led to creation of the United States Information Service. He was also active in the formation of UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization), an agency that would later decry the use of background music in public places.

Despite its future battles with Muzak regarding the mechanical royalties conundrum, ASCAP had been instrumental in pushing Muzak into wartime military arsenals. A 1944 ASCAP pamphlet entitled *Music in Industry: Principles of Programming* offered advice on how to make full use of background music's utilitarian advantages with such tips as avoiding "tricky instrumental effects, prolonged vocals, or changes of key in the middle of a chorus." The literature, compiled by U.S. War Production Board member (and future Muzak research director) Richard (sometimes Richmond) Cardinell, recommended starting each day with military marches and a fox trot or polka "to wipe the gloom off the faces

of the incoming employees and perhaps to instill a little esprit de corps into the whole group.”

Muzak became an American institution through its wartime clout. Besides supplying arsenal music, it helped the Office of War Information circulate training instructions. The 17½-hour programming day increased to 24 hours by January of 1942. If necessary, the lilting tones of Lawrence Welk, Lester Lanin, and Robert Farnon could be interrupted by “on the line” reports of enemy bombs. Muzak headquarters took civil defense precautions by encasing itself in windowless plywood and stayed abreast of news with its own United Press International ticker. It felt compelled to add a brand-new program of air-raid music whose songs could never be disclosed ahead of time for fear that listeners hearing a regular broadcast would recognize one of the air-raid program songs and start a panic by running for cover.

As Muzak spread, musician licensing grew more complicated. It became difficult to keep tabs on when, where, and how often a song was broadcast or played for any kind of public function. Establishments that wished to play music used Muzak to avoid legal tangles with musician and composer unions. North American had already acquired the music publishing company Breitkopf Publications, Inc., and formed Associated Music Publishers, Inc., when Warner Brothers united the latter with Muzak, giving Muzak the American rights to many compositions, both classical and semi-classical.

Muzak’s Associated Music Publishers was ASCAP’s sole competitor before a group of about 256 radio broadcasters formed BMI (Broadcast Music, Inc.) in 1939. Merritt Tompkins, a former president of Associated Music Publishers, was BMI’s first president. Anticipating the 1940 ASCAP strike against the broadcast industry, BMI sought legal coverage for songs not under ASCAP’s rubric and bought Associated Music Publishers out by 1947. All of this finagling led Muzak to play an indirect role in recent music-licensing history.

Muzak had mounting problems with the American Federation of Musicians—primarily its notorious president James Caesar Pe-

trillo. This former pianist and bandleader shook the music business cage with his stern demands. Argumentative and litigious, with an alleged deathly fear of germs that made shaking hands with others unthinkable, Petrillo led a long and bitter fight against permitting any kind of “canned” music into Chicago establishments, reasoning that it would deprive working performers of their livelihood.

In 1940, Judge Learned Hand of the Federal Circuit Court of Appeals wrote an opinion for the court, ruling on a suit brought by RCA, that playing a record over the radio posed no copyright infringements. Petrillo disagreed with the ruling and commissioned Ben Selvin (a former orchestra leader from the 1920s, a broadcasting expert, and supposedly the first recording artist to sell a million records) to prove that recordings and broadcasts put musicians out of work.

To Petrillo’s chagrin, Selvin concluded in a report to the 1941 AFT convention that union action was not the answer, since mechanized music was unavoidable and because record labels compensated by paying back millions of dollars to studio musicians. Selvin’s presentation elicited support from the AFM members and many bandleaders, as well as a standing ovation.

Ben Selvin’s role in dismissing the political maneuver he had been commissioned to defend is only part of the irony. The other twist is that Selvin was Muzak’s chief programmer in its early years; he supervised its first New York City transmission in 1936 and had helped the company devise its first standardized programming.

Despite the consensus against him, Petrillo was committed to preventing record companies from catering to any background music services, not to mention radio stations and jukeboxes. On August 1, 1942, he ordered a strike, barring all musicians from studios. It took record companies four years to cave in to Petrillo’s demands. Some music historians (such as Donald Clarke in *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music*) speculate that this strike tolled the Big Band era’s death knell by silencing many promising players.

Muzak entered Chicago’s market in 1946, forging a franchise

with Boom Electric & Amplifier Company, which provided sound systems for Wrigley Field and Comiskey Park. Petrillo, learning of Muzak's invasion, threatened to establish a boycott by live orchestras of any hotel establishment that used piped music. His ire was directed at both Muzak and Boom Electric because he felt they had entered his turf surreptitiously. In October of 1949, Muzak filed a complaint with the National Labor Relations Board, accusing Petrillo and the AFM of violating the Taft-Hartley Act (which Congress had passed over President Truman's veto in 1946). In the meantime, another union, the Electrical Workers' Local 134, which installed the Muzak equipment, became irate over Petrillo's threat—a situation all the more muddled because both unions were members of the American Federation of Labor. Petrillo was tenacious and managed to pressure ten businesses into discontinuing their Muzak lines for four months. Finally, however, the NLRB ruled in favor of Muzak in its case against Petrillo, ending the impasse.

All of the industrial know-how Muzak had put into the war effort soon got rechanneled into the postwar era's prolific private economy, which social scientists characterized as heralding the arrival of the "Organization Man." Although it was a private corporation, Muzak constituted one of the most intricate federal-private mergers in America's history, with civil defense, public service, and entertainment issuing from the same source in the service of profit and public welfare.

The mainstream press meanwhile doled out reports confirming Muzak's efficacy. The March 1946 *Reader's Digest* reprinted a *Forbes* article titled "Have You Tried Working to Music?" Its author, Doron K. Antrim, informed middle America that "music is now being piped into banks, insurance companies, publishing houses and other offices, where brain workers find that it lessens tension and keeps everyone in a happier frame of mind."

Among Muzak's most notable customers were the Federal Reserve Bank, National City Bank, Prudential Life Insurance Company, Bell Telephone, and McGraw-Hill Publishing Companies. Muzak surveyed workers with in-house questionnaires and found that a meager 1.6 percent considered background music distract-

ing on the job; meanwhile, 83 percent preferred the music to a music-free environment, and 60 percent reported experiencing a definite reduction in fatigue following introduction of the music.

Dr. Harold Burris-Meyer and Richard L. Cardinell, both Stevens Institute of Technology alumni, made a significant impact on Muzak's applications. Cardinell conducted a 1947 study of eight divisions of the Army Map Service in Washington, D.C., and obtained even more favorable results. Among supervisors, 44.5 percent saw a boost in production efficiency; and 88.7 percent of employees claimed "Muzak helps me in my work." The study's summary: "As Muzak relieves monotony and makes the time go faster, conversation decreases and employees invariably take a kindlier view of each other."

Cardinell received corroboration from a Dartmouth University probe showing that music helped to enhance reading speed and comprehension. Researchers at De Pauw University gathered evidence that waltzes helped students with arithmetic. Expounding on his research efforts, Cardinell spoke the lingo of a sonic interior decorator:

Factors that distract attention—change of tempo, loud brasses, vocals—are eliminated. Orchestras of strings and woodwinds predominate, the tones blending with the surroundings as do proper colors in a room. The worker should be no more aware of the music than of good lighting. The rhythms, reaching him subconsciously, create a feeling of well-being and eliminate strain.

Cardinell reached one more stunning conclusion: "In some cases, it is possible to achieve a direct production increase by playing a program which completely ignores employee preferences and concentrates on the functional aspects only."

"Stimulus Progression," Muzak's most elaborate program, premiered in the late 1940s. It was implemented by Burris-Meyer and Cardinell but masterminded by Muzak executive Don O'Neill, who had toyed with the idea since he joined the company in 1936. Stimulus Progression was a method of organizing music according

to an “Ascending Curve” that worked counter to the “Industrial Efficiency Curve” or what some authorities called the average worker’s “fatigue curve.” Subdued songs progressing to more stimulating songs in fifteen-minute sequences throughout the average workday yielded more worker efficiency and productivity than did random programming. Programs were soon tailored to workers’ mood swings and peak periods as measured on a Muzak mood-rating scale ranging from “Gloomy—minus three” to “Ecstatic—plus eight.”

Muzak literature claims: “The idea was to combat monotony and offset boredom at precisely those times in a work day when people are most subject to these onslaughts.” Although several years passed before the Stimulus Progression program began to work efficiently, Muzak’s quarter-hour programming has remained its trademark innovation up through today.

Ben Selvin, among Stimulus Progression’s earliest engineers, devised a 45-hertz tone that could automatically turn the music off in factories that requested fifteen minutes of silence for every quarter hour of music. At the time, the music was divided into four blocks; the softer first and third segments were programmed for the offices, while the louder and brassier selections for factories were included on segments two and four.

Over the years, Muzak compiled a digest of jagged graph studies conducted by Lever Brothers, Fairfield University’s language laboratory, and the U.S. Army Engineering Labs to show how Stimulus Progression increased office output, reduced stress, lessened costs, enhanced worker concentration, and improved personnel morale.

By 1948, “Travel Muzak” was disseminating wistful arrangements like “I Want My Mama” and “I’ll Be Seeing You” on trains, passenger ships, and planes. Entering the 1950s, Muzak became the biggest consumer of phone lines in the world.

But another, far more pesky bugaboo was gumming up Muzak’s ointment: the notion that piped-in music somehow interferes with an individual’s right to privacy and even brainwashes listeners. The question of whether music alone (without subliminal messages) constitutes an infringement on protections guaranteed by the Bill

of Rights or a mind-manipulation technique received close judicial scrutiny in the early 1950s. The precipitating event was Muzak's effort to transmit a program called "Transit Radio," consisting of local radio programs and announcements (including commercials) from a Washington, D.C., radio station (WWDC-FM), into the District's public buses and trains.

The District's Capital Transit project began in March of 1948 with a pilot study using a "music as you ride" format on selected streetcars and buses. The speakers were laid out so that passengers could hear the music and announcements no matter where they sat or stood, at a volume level that did not inhibit chitchat.

Capital Transit signed an agreement with Washington Transit Radio, Inc., for exclusive installation, maintenance, and use rights in all Capital Transit vehicles, including office headquarters, terminals, and waiting rooms. The program consisted of 90 percent music and 10 percent public service announcements and commercials. Because of the District of Columbia's peculiar status as, in effect, a federal territory, the United States Congress granted a franchise to Capital Transit alone, challenging the distinction between public and private utilities. Matters were complicated by the fact that D.C. Transit was perceived as being a federally monitored monopoly that permitted the city's residents no competing transit alternative.

Although 92 percent of the passengers polled after the pilot study wanted the program to continue, protests poured in when "music while you ride" was formally instituted on at least twenty vehicles. The D.C. Public Utilities Commission investigated the complainants' claim that the music and announcements violated their constitutional rights to privacy and free speech.

The Commission's hearings started in July of 1949. According to U.S. Supreme Court Reports of October 1951, two disgruntled passengers, Pollak and Martin, who led the complainants, were initially thwarted when the Commission ruled that the "transmission of radio programs through receivers and loud speakers in passenger vehicles . . . does not violate the free speech guaranty of the First Amendment, where the programs do not interfere substantially with the conversation of passengers and there is no

substantial claim that the programs have been used for objectionable propaganda.”*

Citing train and bus operator observations, the Commission concluded that vehicle music kept riders “in a better mood” and further ruled that “The Fifth Amendment does not secure to each passenger on a public vehicle regulated by the federal government a right to privacy substantially equal to the privacy to which he is entitled in his own home.”

On March 3, 1952, after the dissenting passengers lost again in a hearing before the United States District Court, the case of *Public Utilities Commission of the District of Columbia v. Franklin S. Pollak* came before the United States Court of Appeals of the District of Columbia, taking almost three months for a decision. The Court reversed part of the Commission’s judgment because it concluded that the use of commercials and announcements “deprive[s] objecting passengers of liberty without due process of law.” But the court found no such violations with the playing of music alone.

With the Court of Appeals refusing a second hearing, Capital Transit, Transit Radio, and the Utilities Commission took the case to the Supreme Court. This was followed by Pollak’s and Martin’s cross petition, which sought to prohibit music as well as announcements. But the Supreme Court reversed the Court of Appeals decision, finding neither an equation between music and mind control nor any constitutional reason to ban announcements.

Justice Harold Burton, writing for the Court’s majority, stated that no First or Fifth Amendment rights were in jeopardy and that broadcasting the music was “not inconsistent with public convenience, comfort and safety and ‘tends to improve the conditions under which the public ride.’” He also cited Edward G. Doody & Company’s 1949 public opinion survey which revealed that 93.4 percent of those polled voiced no opposition to the music, and 76.3 percent gave an outright approval.

Burton went on to counter the arguments of Pollak and Martin

**Public Utilities Commission v. Pollak*, U.S. Supreme Court Reports (October 1951), vols. 342–343, pp. 1069–80.

by showing fundamental differences between privacy in the home and privacy in public places:

This position wrongly assumes that the Fifth Amendment secures to each passenger on a public vehicle regulated by the Federal Government a right of privacy substantially equal to the privacy to which he is entitled in his own home. However complete his privacy may be at home, it is substantially limited by the rights of others when its possessor travels on a public thoroughfare or rides in a public conveyance.

Justice Felix Frankfurter had chosen to recuse himself from participating in the judgment of the case because of his strong feelings against such “aural aggressions.” Justice Hugo Black concurred with the Court of Appeals decision against non-musical broadcasts but showed no variance toward music alone. Justice William O. Douglas filed the only resolute dissenting opinion, in which he objected to D.C. Transit’s compulsory listening policy and offered his memorable quip that “The right to be let alone is indeed the beginning of all freedom.”

Most intriguing about Douglas’s opinion is his ethical distinction between machine-imposed and human-imposed noise: “One who is in a public vehicle may not of course complain of the noise of the crowd and the babble of tongues. One who enters any public place sacrifices some of his privacy. My protest is against the invasion of his privacy over and beyond the risks of travel.” Is it possible (or sensible) that low-volume music (intended to help mask noise) should be more deserving of censure than loud passenger cackle? (Perhaps urban crowds were more containable when the judge wrote these sentiments in 1951.)

Muzak and Transit Radio may have stemmed the tide of some civil libertarians for a while, but the victory was short-lived. Transit Radio continued its program for only a few years more before being discontinued by the mid-1950s.

Muzak faced bigger challenges as its competition mounted and magnetic tape transmission and portable tape players made background music installation easier and cheaper. By 1955, RCA and

Capitol records started making arrangements with companies like Magnecord, Inc. and Magnetronics to provide music for restaurants, offices, factories, and funeral chapels.

Magne-Music, a tape-reel service operating out of Tulsa, Oklahoma, recorded some of its music at New York's St. Patrick's Cathedral for use in devotional religious observances. One selection, consisting of "pipe organ, symphonic carillon and vibraharp" was cataloged as "Music for Mortuaries." Magne-Music had a total of eight commercial categories, including music for cocktail lounges, hotels, luncheons, dinner, and after-dinner, with instrumental renditions of favorites such as "Laura," "Begin the Beguine," and "Sophisticated Lady."

Among the biggest background music suppliers aside from Muzak was J. P. Seeburg, a jukebox manufacturer in Chicago that maintained a library of up to 7,000 recordings. Seeburg had the advantage of adding private houses to its customer roster: 570 new homes erected in the Detroit suburb of Westchester Village were equipped with Seeburg's Select-O-Matic units specially made for high-fidelity use. Seeburg transmitted its "planned sequence of selections" from "self-contained" machines, dispensing with phone lines and dependence on a central broadcasting studio.

Muzak met the magnetic competition as early as 1953 with its M8R System, among the first electronic tape playback units to allow full automation for functional music relays. Described as an "electric brain," the M8R responded to inaudible signals and adjusted music transmissions with little human intervention. This technology allowed Muzak, for the first time, to have franchises in communities with populations of 25,000 or fewer people.

Muzak was installed in the White House during the Eisenhower years. Lyndon Baines Johnson owned Muzak franchises in Austin during his early senatorial days. By 1955, the company ventured into broadcasting its music through FM multiplexing on side channels known in broadcasting parlance as SCAs (sub-carrier authorizations). The number of Muzak franchises swelled to at least 150, including offices in Canada and elsewhere abroad. The Jack Wrather Organization, which already owned the *Lassie* TV show, the Disneyland Hotel and Monorail, and the Gilbert Toy Com-

pany, bought Muzak in 1957. The attendant excitement was orchestrated to the sounds of such newly acquired Muzak melodies as “Gigi” and “The Hawaiian Wedding Song.”

As each new study validated the benefits that the company claimed to provide, detractors were stymied by the dearth of counterstudies. Harold Burris-Meyer, looking proudly on his Muzak accomplishments, had already stated in the 1946 *Reader's Digest* article: “If people who claim they require absolute silence were placed in a near vacuum . . . they would probably go nuts. We are conditioned to sound, but our present need is for more that soothes and less that frays the nerves.”

During the brief recession of 1958, Muzak's aggressive marketing kept the company in the black. Stevenson, Jordon & Harrison (a consulting firm) established that “Music by Muzak” was a most effective and least costly management tool. Howard Taubman, a *New York Times* reporter, would soon write: “Electrical appliances have taken the drudgery out of getting the laundry done, and now music turns it into enchantment.”

7 / Emotional Archives

BACKGROUND MUSIC IN THE MOVIES

Easy-listening music (at least in theory) helps the consumer buy, the patient relax, the worker work; its goal is to render the individual an untroublesome social subject. Film music, participating as it does in a narrative, is more varied in its content and roles; but primary among its goals, nevertheless, is to render the individual an untroublesome viewing subject; less critical, less "awake."

—Claudia Gorbman, *Unheard Melodies**

Toward the finale of *Grand Hotel*, Greta Garbo (playing the temperamental ballerina Grusinskaya) laughs and prances in her suite. Her countless bouts with manic-depression give way to fevered joy as she anticipates a rendezvous with her newfound lover Baron Von Geigen (John Barrymore). Yet even while swooning, Garbo senses something is awry: "The music has stopped. How quiet it is tonight. It was never so quiet in the Grand Hotel. . . ."

*From *Unheard Melodies* by Claudia Gorbman, p. 5. © 1987, published by Indiana University Press and the British Film Institute. Reprinted by permission.

Greta has every reason to feel ill at ease. Throughout the film, her mood swings have been counterpointed by Rachmaninoff's romantic Second Piano Concerto piped into her hotel suite. Now, with the musical buttress pulled out from under her, she is on the verge of gazing at life unadorned. What lousy timing, considering that her beloved (a jewel thief in disguise) has just been murdered. With neither paramour nor soundtrack, Garbo leaves the hotel as dizzy as she was when she entered.

Released by MGM in 1932, *Grand Hotel* complicated the debate about music's new role in the talkies. Audiences, still new to the sound film, were known to deride a phantom symphony of violins, harps, and horns coming out of thin air whenever characters were in distress or succumbing to a kiss. Directors and producers likewise used music only if it had a narrative source, whether that source was a phonograph, a radio, or a live orchestra written into the story.

Grand Hotel played it safe by having things both ways. It was one of the first and few situations where both a movie's source music and background music were inextricable. With the exception of a live jazz band in "the funny yellow room where they dance," music blares from invisible speakers, the volume rising and falling as doors open and close—an antiphony for characters wandering in a place where "people come, people go and nothing ever happens."

From its inception, the science of film scores helped to articulate the background music industry's needs. Early movie soundtracks in general and the soundtrack to *Grand Hotel* in particular most likely inspired Muzak's arrangements of the scores of our lives. Music by Muzak, like Hollywood film scores, provides seamless segues between waking and dream life in the service of what Claudia Gorbman calls a "bath of affect." Background music on both sides of the movie screen minimizes discontinuities of space and time and draws subjects into suspended disbelief.

Movie music had its first incarnations in the days of *The Beggar's Opera*, when magic lantern spectacles at carnivals and fairs used balladeers to narrate picture stories. By the time Thomas Edison, Louis Lumière, and Oscar Messter brought us the cine-

matograph, sideshow venues continued to be the natural place for talking pictures. Edison presented the first “sound-film” on October 6, 1889, as a kind of peep show. The first theatrical silent films, shown in spaces that lacked sound-absorbent walls, used barrel-organs, phonographs, and music boxes to mask the grating din emitted by early projectors.

In 1896, long before World War I spurred advances in electro-acoustic science, Charles Pathé introduced the Berliner gramophone, with longer-running records and a mechanical “Joly” allowing for some kind of synchronization between film strip and record. That same year, Oscar Messter made a similar experiment. Messter, trying to correct the problem of recorded sound’s low volume, would run several gramophones at once, with giant horns attached.

Edison’s movies were often distributed with written “suggestions for music” in the early 1900s. New York’s Sam Fox Publishing Company released *Sam Fox Moving Picture Music*, consisting of classified “mood music” volumes by J. S. Zamecnik intended for silent movie pianists.

In 1908, while in Germany, Italian composer Giuseppe Becce published *Kinothek*—the first definitive book on cinema music compilation. Becce set the standard for many film libraries throughout the world by transmuting the works of many renowned composers into functional mood units. Often, stylistically contrary pieces were juxtaposed according to the logic of the film narrative. The opus proper lost its autonomy in favor of what Kurt London, in his book *Film Music*, calls “the melting pot of compilation”:

Here we have, for the first time in the history of modern music, a systematic tabulation of music according to its uses. . . . It contained, if we follow the romantic conception of programme music, all the moods of men and the elements, every kind of reaction to human destiny, musical drawings of nature and animals, of peoples and countries: in short, every sphere of life, well and clearly arranged under headings.

In James L. Limbacher's *Film Music: From Violins to Video*, Max Winkler, another early film composer, summarized the cinema's art of mood control:

The immortal chorales of J.S. Bach became an "Adagio Lamentose for sad scenes." Extracts from great symphonies and operas were hacked down to emerge again as "Sinister Misterioso" by Beethoven, or "Weird Moderato" by Tchaikovsky. Wagner's and Mendelssohn's wedding marches were used for marriages, fights between husbands and wives, and divorce scenes: we just had them played out of tune, a treatment known in the profession as "souring up the aisle."

Another movie music guide appeared in 1924: Erno Rapee's *Motion Picture Moods for Pianists and Organists: A Rapid Reference Collection of Selected Pieces Adapted to Fifty-two Moods and Situations*. It offered a wide selection of motifs, including "Wedding," "Sinister," "Orgies," "Sea-Storm," "Chase," and "Oriental."

As Kurt London contends: "The silent film without music had no right to exist." When this same maxim proved true for most sound films, it began to seem that, without something like Muzak to enliven our off-screen tragi-comedies, neither did we.

Background music companies like Muzak must work with "real" instead of "cinematic" time. The hyperexplicit crescendos and diminuendos of a Max Steiner score are fine for an artificial narrative structure with a precise beginning, middle, and end. Philip Glass might be appropriate for a movie flouting conventional narration (such as Godfrey Reggio's *Koyaanisqatsi*). But for daily life's unpredictable events and mood shifts, the soundtrack gets more tricky.

Any coincidence between the content of a Muzak tune and the feelings or circumstances of people hearing it is aleatory, not synchronized. A pretty series of tremolo strings may evoke feelings of peacefulness or horror, depending on how a scene is shot and what the script demands. But in public places, the same music is open to as many interpretations as there are people. Nonetheless, moments of Muzak synchronicity do occur at different times of

the day, from place to place, city to city, state to state, and country to country, when the music coming out of an elevator, office, airport, or department store seems suddenly to be playing our song.

By 1934, when people finally got used to music in the talkies, filmmakers began taking full advantage of a device known as “the up-and-downer,” which automatically lowered the music volume when dialogue signals appeared on the soundtrack. When studios commissioned specially composed soundtracks, they rarely planned them in advance, leaving the pressure of concocting a last-minute score to the composers. Henry Mancini, in his autobiography, talked about his leaner days at Universal Studios when low-budget westerns and period pictures were churned out by several arrangers at once, all cribbing earlier scores from the studio library.

Leonid Sabaneev insisted that film music was the screen melody’s “left hand,” while the story proper remained the right hand. Writing in the 1940s, Aaron Copland described movie “background” music as “the most ungrateful kind of music for a composer to write. Since it’s music behind, or underneath, the word, the audience is really not going to hear it, possibly won’t even be aware of its existence; yet it undoubtedly works on the subconscious mind. The need here is for a kind of music that will give off a ‘neutral’ color or atmosphere. . . . To write music that must be inexpressive is not easy for composers who normally tend to be as expressive as possible.”

It is only fair to note that some film composers flouted their self-effacing role by making scores rife with personality glitches. Dimitri Tiomkin’s hands-on involvement with his movies gained him notoriety, due to the heavy accents he imparted to every scene. Edmund Meisel’s leaden, expressionistic stamp became controversial with the soundtrack to Sergei Eisenstein’s *Battleship Potemkin*. The European countries that allowed its release often censored the music, fearing that the aggressive rhythms would inspire their own proletariats to replicate the Russian Revolution of 1917.

The 1930s produced a slew of films with overwrought orchestrations, in which turbulent-sounding maestros called excessive attention to themselves. This tendency, known as “mickymousing,” might have worked for a Disney cartoon, but in *Of*

Human Bondage, when clubfooted Leslie Howard had the extra handicap of a limping leitmotif, the consequences were ludicrous. A classic story of how a film score can overrun its boundaries took place during the making of *Dark Victory*. When the dying Bette Davis made her ceremonial ascent up to her deathbed, she broke character and asked director Michael Curtiz whether she or Max Steiner was going up the stairs.

Despite his reputation as a maker of sometimes obstreperous scores, Steiner composed “Theme from *A Summer Place*”—a song that not only elevated Percy Faith into the popular domain but that continues to be the most identifiable easy-listening soundmark. In fact, many famous movie scores later became mood music favorites. Mantovani got famous by reproducing “Charmaine,” the theme song that emerged from Erno Rapee’s synchronized score to Raoul Walsh’s silent classic *What Price Glory?* Other movie themes turned easy-listening are “Diane” from Frank Borzage’s *Seventh Heaven* (1927), “The Moon of Manikooora” from John Ford’s *The Hurricane* (1937) (which plays incessantly whenever romance looms), “Fascination” from Billy Wilder’s *Love in the Afternoon* (1957) (constantly counterpointing the love scenes between Audrey Hepburn and Gary Cooper with violinists hired to prod the seduction), and “Moon River” from Blake Edwards’s *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* (1961). There is, of course, also “Pachelbel’s Canon,” reborn from its 17th-century context into modern brunch Baroque for countless films, TV movies of the week, and commercials.

A fine example of a movie soundtrack leaping from the background to foreground is film composer Richard Addinsell’s “Warsaw Concerto,” used in the score for Brian Desmond Hurst’s *Dangerous Moonlight*. This British film, released in 1941 (several months before the U.S. entered World War II), starred Anton Walbrook as Stefan Radetzky, a Polish composer and military pilot who is spared combat and sent to America to give fund-raising concerts for Polish refugees. Throughout the film, Radetzky faces an ethical dilemma: how to weigh the luxuries of art over the realities of war while his comrades risk their lives. In the film’s opening, the Nazi air raid over Warsaw looks more like a *trompe l’oeil* behind Radetzky as he sits at the piano, inspired to write the

“Warsaw Concerto” while swooning over an American press correspondent (played by Sally Gray), whom he meets the very moment the bombs fall. From that point on, *Dangerous Moonlight* becomes a brilliant feat of narrative deception: the concerto plays constantly (both as a Radetzky performance and as film score atmosphere) while viewers are tempted to perceive the great military events as background to the music instead of vice versa. A few years later, the “Warsaw Concerto” would also become a fifties “mood music” favorite, variations of which appeared on albums designed for romance and dining.

Other films have used *Grand Hotel*'s caprice of mingling piped-in source music with the score. In Alfred Hitchcock's *North by Northwest* (1959), the music in the first scene—where Roger Thornhill (Cary Grant) receives his fateful telephone call at a hotel (before falling into the hands of kidnappers)—is provided by lounge musicians playing “It’s a Most Unusual Day.” In John Brahm's *Hangover Square* (1945), Laird Cregar is the twisted composer George Harvey Bone, so obsessed with his work that he falls into “blank little moods” at the slightest discordant sounds and discovers whole chunks of time missing from his life, during which periods he kills people. Throughout the film, Bone's composition in progress takes on the violent and tawdry noises around him. The street calliope, the angry chanting at a ritual bonfire, and the lurid songs of a dancehall all coalesce several murders later in his final concerto and fiery finale. We cannot always be sure which discordant notes come from Bone's piano and which are provided by Bernard Herrmann's background score.

In 1933, while writing the script for *The Power and the Glory*, director Preston Sturges was concentrating on making the story upbeat, but it kept coming out morose. Sturges later realized that someone in an adjacent room was listening to a melancholy piece of classical music. This realization of music's subliminal effect on emotions and thoughts led him to explore the subject fifteen years later in 1948 when he got a new contract from Twentieth Century-Fox to write and direct *Unfaithfully Yours*, starring Rex Harrison as a symphony conductor driven to kill his wife, whom he believes to be adulterous.

While directing his 1971 lunatic masterpiece *The Devils*, Ken Russell was not content just to harass his actors into religious hysteria. He had to crank out Prokofiev's grating opera *The Fiery Angel* full blast while filming a coven scene rife with demented and horny nuns.

A 1991 cognitive psychology study entitled "Effects of Background Music on the Remembering of Filmed Events" has concluded that movie scenes can be more readily recalled with background music than without. The music seems to provide a setting by which viewers develop better schematic processing through memory cues.

Anyone growing up on movies carries a sound library of tunes and leitmotifs that, in turn, get superimposed on the "real" world. The twentieth century may be going haywire, but cinema soundtracks have surreptitiously imposed a much needed order. Natural landscapes, the flight of migratory birds, sunsets, rippling shores, orphans running through war-torn streets, a Tokyo massage parlor, cattle roaming through vast fields, lovers ogling on a beach, big-city lights, Saturday afternoon at the rodeo, international travel—the infinite tableaux of set designs with their attendant tunes boggle the mind.

We are also likely to feel like strangers in strange lands after considering that the classic movie scores of the 1930s, 1940s, 1950s—the ones that linger in our minds most and affect our daily perceptions—were mostly invented by transplanted European Jews second-guessing what they supposed were WASP fantasies set to a musical style inspired by the anti-Judaic Richard Wagner.

Literary critic Georges Polti once reduced the possible number of dramatic situations to an exceedingly modest thirty-six. He was, of course, working under the academic assumption that drama is a fantasy world delimited by a stage for the purpose of enlightening audiences with archetypal clichés handed down from ancient religions and myths. Polti's limited and bleak perspective did not take into account mass media's power to extend the borders of make-believe and to superimpose technicolor terrain onto personal experience.

This extended musical palette does not end with movies alone.

Mood music, production music, and stock music libraries have adapted movie soundtrack principles to other media. The first major production music libraries thrived by the 1930s by providing themes, signature tunes, or “transitions and links” for newsreels, war propaganda, radio spots, and (later) television commercials.

Most of the big music libraries came out of England. Among the first were Phonographic Performances Ltd. and Synchrophone Ltd., dedicated to meeting the needs of movie theaters desperate for music to play during intermissions or during advertisements. Companies such as DeWolfe, Chappell & Co., KPM (Keith Prowse Music), Mozart, and H.M.V. (His Master’s Voice) provided songs that were not easily recognizable but that, after frequent exposure, came to have a hypnotic and subliminal impact. These compositions could be stored, reprogrammed, shortened, extended, cross-referenced, and rearranged according to market demands.

Until the late 1960s, production music was issued on 78s and later on 33 rpm 10-inch disks. As the competition grew fiercer, with many music libraries cropping up, catalogs ceased to list tunes by artist or composer but increasingly adopted categories resembling those of today’s new-age “environmental” companies. Categories such as “Industrial,” “National Music,” “Sea Atmospheres,” and “Religious” identified and filled as many niches as possible.

Mood libraries, much like their predecessors in the early cinema, were challenged to classify tracks by their immediate visceral impact rather than by artist or musical genre. Self-descriptive titles like “Hurly-Burly” or “Hazy Morning” could alert broadcasters about what to expect before cuing up to an image. The players as well, divorced from any virtuoso role, consisted of ad hoc session musicians who were given temporary names like “The Tune-smiths” if they were named at all.

Production music, like Muzak, is heard so commonly by so many that it deserves a place among the twentieth century’s most authentic folk arts. Terry Pavone, who currently works with a branch of the DeWolfe library in New York City, describes the music as “a subjective product”: “The music is not a final product. It’s a piece of a final product that is intentionally designed to be incomplete.” There has been a long-running tradition in production music to scrap a

song if it becomes too easily recognized or grows too popular, since this would distract listeners from the movie, play, or advertisement the music was supposed to serve invisibly.

Yet the “accidental hit” was promoted from time to time, when its popularity could not be avoided—especially if it were the signature line of a much-loved television program like the theme from *Dragnet*, which was once a music library tune. Still, associating the words *art* and *stock music* strikes the average production music arranger as odd or ludicrous. Many people in the business are either frustrated musicians who hate what they do or people loosely associated with broadcast media who want to make the right connections or just earn some fast money. Still, the music triumphs for the average listener, who can enjoy it despite the contempt or misguided neglect with which the arranger or distributor treats it.

No musician better demonstrated the possibilities of the library tune as an art form than Robert Farnon. The Canadian-born Farnon once played lead trumpet for Percy Faith and the CBC Orchestra before repatriating to England after World War II. He composed the scores for the 1951 film *Captain Horatio Hornblower* (with Gregory Peck), *Gentlemen Marry Brunettes*, and the last Hope-Crosby road movie, *Road to Hong Kong*. He also arranged songs for Muzak, Tony Bennett, Frank Sinatra, Vera Lynn, and Pia Zadora. André Previn called him “the greatest string arranger in the world.”

Farnon’s greatest and least widely recognized contributions were his so-called hack melodies, commissioned by England’s Chappell mood music library to evoke the romantic outdoors. Whether conducting the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra or arranging incidental music for BBC radio traffic reports, Farnon could convey plots, characters, and feelings with just a few quick musical phrases. At least four orchestral “miniatures”—“How Beautiful Is Night,” “A Star Is Born,” “Jumping Bean,” and “Portrait of a Flirt”—became hits after library exposure.

In the 1950s, before television employed its own studio arrangers, production libraries offered unlimited musical combinations at minimal cost and with no copyright snags. Chappell, for in-

stance, had a song in its collection called "Puffin' Billy" (written by Edward White) that was used for Britain's *Children's Favourites* television show at the same time that CBS used it as the opening theme for *Captain Kangaroo*.

The KPM library was inaugurated in 1958 and eventually became a dominant force in production music. Specialists in evoking light and busy activity, they offered tunes like "Shopping Street," "Workaday World," "Trafficscape," and "Screw on the Loose." One indelible entry called "Holiday Playtime" (ideal for the "Jolly family outing") has not only appeared on countless 1950s school films about good citizenship but currently plays on *The Ren & Stimpy Show* and on Nick-At-Nite's *Better Living Through Television* segments.

Just as an Eskimo thriving in a snowy environment could come up with dozens of words for colors ranging from white to light gray, the average American and West European consumer would soon be serenaded with countless musical variations to connote the magnificent sensations born from exposure to the smells of plastic wrap, perfumes, clothing textures, and other stimulants indigenous to mall culture.

Today, production music personnel can act as informal psychiatrists, coddling executives who wish to promote the right image with music but are not quite sure what image they want or whether they are really comfortable with the one they propose. To assist them further, companies like DeWolfe offer a library of compact discs with such easily classified titles as "Just Whimsical," "Work Force," "Power Struggle," "Space Adventure," "Rise Time," "Topsy Turvey," and "Wallpaper Music." DeWolfe has one Mozartian piano and orchestra number called "Blue Porcelain" that has played behind commercials for both a fancy European car and a feminine hygiene spray.

To this day, people who recoil at background music in a restaurant or office are more tolerant when similar sounding melodies show up in the movies or on TV. When film composers like John Barry or Danny Elfman add lush orchestral scores, they also supply a bridge between the elevator and the home entertainment center. Now, the movie itself is just one component in a complex

marketing scheme that also includes the advertisement, the infomercial, and the music video. From there, the soundtrack gets reused for other commercials, and even other films, until it is stamped indelibly in our cinememories.



8 / The Moodiest Years on Record

Have you ever thought of the possible connection between day-dreaming and progress in the science of electronics? Far-fetched as it may seem, they are unquestionably associated. It is now possible, if you so desire, to indulge in your favorite fantasy via the wonders of high fidelity.

—Liner notes to Wayne King's *Dream Time*

The aftershocks of World War II brought changes in American life that, by the summer of 1946, had altered the nation's music habits. Soldiers came back to a G.I. Bill encouraging them to invest in homes of tomorrow, lured by kitchens full of glistening appliances and mood-lit living rooms. The music too had to conform to these new surroundings. Muzak may have comforted people during the first crucial stages of urbanization, but mood music on record brought the panacea home with different and much stranger results. Uncongenial to the babbling brass and jackhammer jazz of the earlier Swing Era, the postwar home required softer, subtler, more enchanting, and even haunting textures.

In 1944, Westinghouse had already taken out a *McCall's* magazine ad preparing us for "living electrically." Monsanto's 1957 "House of the Future" opened in Disneyland, exposing us to the fortress home's synthetic treasures. The ideal American dwelling went from a quaint clapboard bungalow with a white picket fence to a microcosmic World's Fair of separate rooms with distinct themes. Cascades of mood music albums, likewise, offered sonic sprays for dens, patios, rec rooms, backyard barbecues, cocktail parlors, and bedrooms.

In *The Lonely Crowd* (first published in 1950), sociologist David Reisman wrote about the changing American character of "other-directed" men and women who were turning away from traditional mores and looking to the media for guidance about the parameters of "gracious living." With Madison Avenue propaganda selling everything from Frigidaires to air-conditioned bomb shelters, and with motivational researchers triggering consumer desires for thermostatic and stereophonic bliss, mood records supplied an important symbol of emotional security, romance, exotic travel, dining pleasure, intellectual serenity, and countless indoor adventures. The album jackets alone depicted bright, rich and bigger-than-life tableaux lifted from romance novels, movies, television shows, magazine ads, and lifestyle prescriptions from pop psychologists.

Another contributor to mood music was the LP's unique format. The phonograph record alternately waxed and waned in popularity throughout the 1920s and 1930s, but it was always upstaged by the radio. In the old Victrola days, the maximum time a recording could run was about four minutes and fifty seconds. The switch to 33 $\frac{1}{3}$ rpm made the twenty-minute side possible, so records could play in the background longer without constantly nagging to be turned over.

What's more, the record industry did not thrive in mutual exclusion from Muzak and other background music services. Mood music became such a spreadable commodity that such composers, arrangers, and conductors as Robert Farnon, Lawrence Welk, and Frank Chacksfield played for Muzak and production libraries, scored movie soundtracks, arranged backup music for leading

vocalists, and still had time to enjoy recording artist celebrity.

Is mood music on record different from Muzak? Yes and no. In the late 1950s, at a *Melody Maker* interviewer's prompting, British mood maestro Norrie Paramor sought in vain to grasp mood music's elusive definition, ultimately finding no difference at all:

It's very difficult to define. . . . I imagine it's meant to entertain without being obtrusive, to put you in an easy frame of mind. In other words, perhaps it is music to be heard, but not necessarily listened to. . . . Victor Silvester's Ballroom Orchestra played gently as a background to a cocktail party could be classified as mood music. Though when you turn the volume control up, it becomes music for dancing.

Mood music on record had one important distinction: it functioned as Muzak's id. Muzak was confined mostly to moderate tempo arrangements with few if any distractions. But mood music indulged in volatile mood swings forbidden in the workplace: happy to grim, frantic to narcoleptic, sexy to robotic. Records abounded with outrageous themes, dissonant styles, and risqué suggestions.

Still, mood music's essential ingredient was as unmeasurable to the recording industry as ether was to radio. The common properties of mood albums? Slower, more hypnotic time signatures; massed strings treated with echo-reverberation; background vocals that sounded more angelic (or in some cases, demonic) than human; and often well-conceived philosophies about music's utilitarian function.

Columbia Records released a *Quiet Music* series of instrumentals performed by the Columbia Salon Orchestra that were meant to calm the nerves and alleviate the strains of daily travail. In 1955, Columbia followed with a four-album series called *Music for Gracious Living* that included the arpeggios of Peter Barclay and His Orchestra, along with back cover recipes for buffets, bridge games or barbecues.

Capitol, an important mood music laboratory, had an early

1950s series simply called *Background Music*—four albums consisting of an eclectic mix of light swing, polka, showtunes, and semi-classical romance songs (all without vocals). *Light and Lively* had “Rhythmic, bubbling melodies with a soft, sparkling beat.” *Songs We Remember* was “especially good if anyone is in a singing mood.” *Bright and Bouncy’s* “happy music to accent lighter moments” included “Isn’t This a Lovely Day” and “It Had to Be You.” The fourth record was a Broadway revue of *Show Tunes* “done in tempo.” All of these selections were intended to “never dominate, yet always be pleasant and listenable.” According to the prescriptive liner notes: “Early in the evening, when the hostess is struggling to get the party off the ground, the music will fill those embarrassing lulls.”

Mood music is perhaps the twentieth century’s most authentic music, tailored exclusively for the electronic revolution. These recordings fully exploit the intended use of the hi-fi and stereo as domestic appliances with all of the environmental controls of thermostats, air-conditioners, and security systems.

Mood records have been ideal sonic showcases. Their acoustical forays into advancing sound technologies allowed record producers and engineers to accrue stardom along with the musicians. “Musical motion” or the “elaborate system of charting each and every instrument for proper stereo placement” came about at roughly the same time that the cinema attempted to expand visual and audio perception with Cinerama and other wide-screen novelties. According to freelance engineer Robert Oakes Jordan, RCA Records’ Stereo-Action claimed to be “a conscious and deliberate effort to set music in motion by actually moving the sound of various instruments from one speaker to the other, and, at times, suspending it in the space between.” Other recording advances were packaged with similarly evocative appellations: RCA’s “Dyna-groove,” Somerset’s “Dyna-coustic,” Liberty’s “Visual Sound Stereo,” Mercury’s “Living Presence Series,” London’s “Phase Four Stereo,” Columbia’s “360-degree Sound,” and Capitol’s “Full Dimensional Stereo.”

What follows is a review of several categories that I feel best summarize the plethora of records from mood music’s golden era

and the personalities behind them. To sustain their mood-specific designations, I have included biographies only when appropriate to the music. I will also take moments to describe the music that captured America's heart and soul with a sensual language more in keeping with fabric catalogs than music textbooks. So come with me into a walk-in dream showroom where all you ever wanted, hoped to be, or perhaps dreaded being unfolds like a parallel world. These mood records are the closest America has ever come to creating a genuine, home-grown surrealism. A mood music appreciation may propel Surrealism's next phase. Now that our fantasy media have colonized and drained the mind's dark regions to the point where they've become horror novel and splatter-movie pap, these records (and their attendant artwork) can enchant us with exaggerated dreamscapes of order and happiness.

Mermaids After Midnight

Red velvet sheets, gossamer drapes, scented rooms, and martinis pouring from a bottomless shaker: just the foreplay to this soundscape of misty evenings, postcard-perfect sunsets, and aquatic paramours . . .

Featuring: *The Orchestras of Frank Chacksfield, Jackie Gleason, Nelson Riddle, and Paul Weston.*

At their San Simeon castle in the late 1940s, William Randolph Hearst and his darling Marion Davies spent their evenings having dinner in the refectory before retiring for a movie in their private theater. Before each picture started, the theater projectionist had to play in its entirety a remarkable new album called *Music for Dreaming*. This collection of elegantly conducted sentimental favorites was the perfect anodyne to get the Hearsts "in the mood" as they lounged among their menagerie of Egyptian statues and museum bric-a-brac. The man who made the album, Paul Weston, only found out about this historical tidbit in 1986 from Roland Dragon (brother of classical conductor Carmen Dragon), who had

served as Hearst's private secretary. The news strengthened Weston's self-image as mood music's progenitor.

Weston was born Paul Wetstein on March 12, 1912, in Springfield, Massachusetts. A onetime economics major at Dartmouth, he started playing with college bands to a beat that was anything but relaxing. This was certainly incongruous with his image: a modest-sized, bespectacled man who projected the reserve of a university professor.

Weston garnered a reputation in show business by arranging for Rudy Vallee, Phil Harris, and Tommy Dorsey, with whom he had worked from 1935 to 1940. Backing singers such as Bing Crosby, Dinah Shore, and soon-to-be wife Jo Stafford, Weston always had a predilection for music that jarred the senses. When he became A&R director in 1944 for the fledgling Capitol Records, his musical life was still immersed in free-form jagged tempos, screeching brass, and the likes of Buddy Rich and Gene Krupa tom-tomming at breakneck speed. Weston recalls:

It was like a social club more than a record company. Johnny Mercer got upset when he found out he had to have regular releases. With the Tommy Dorsey band, we hardly ever did a ballad in slow tempo. It was always considered danceable. Then, as Frank Sinatra and Doris Day became more famous than the bands, the tunes got slower and slower. Jitterbugging went out, and my albums stepped into the gap.

Detecting the mood change, Weston recorded *Music for Dreaming* in 1945. This decidedly subdued first album shocked most fans with its gentle Swing with slackened tempo, moderate volume, and strings mixed with piano to muffle the brass. The songs, too, were balmier: "I'm in the Mood for Love," "My Blue Heaven," and "I Only Have Eyes for You" executed in a style Weston describes as "underplayed" and "underarranged." It worked. *Music for Dreaming's* record sales boasted a then-astronomical 175,000 copies.

Weston wanted assurance that the public's taste for "creamy-on-the-melody" was not transitory. While at Capitol, he gauged

the demand by sending a representative to ten major U.S. cities for interviews with record company salesmen and record-shop proprietors. He also corresponded with at least 200 record distributors. The findings were consistent; and so were his subsequent album titles: *Music for Memories*, *Music for Romancing*, *Music for the Fireside*, and *Music for Reflection*.

By 1950, *Coronet* magazine hailed his "smooth, shimmering arrangements" and dubbed him "Master of Mood Music"—a sobriquet with which he still has trouble coming to terms. "I was the first person the term mood music was applied to," Weston reflects, "but afterward, a lot of other people snuck under the tent."

That same year Weston left Capitol for Columbia. Seeing mood music branching out into various styles (not all of which he liked), he continued with *Dream Music by Paul Weston*, *Music for a Rainy Night*, and *Melodies for a Sentimental Mood*. While at Columbia, he decided to write several arrangements to pay tribute to the jazz musicians he had worked with in his radio days. The results were *Mood for Twelve* and *Solo Mood*—two albums that maintained a virtuoso veneer against background music that nonetheless crept into the foreground.

Other former bandmen turned sandmen included Wayne King, whose album *Dream Time* used his smooth sax and a lushly padded orchestra to showcase "most requested" movie themes such as "Fascination," "An Affair to Remember," and "Tammy," along with such standards as "Stardust," "Till," and Leroy Anderson's "Forgotten Dreams." Known as "The Waltz King," King had already whispered sweet melodies into many a feminine ear on his *Lady Esther Serenade* radio show in the 1930s, sponsored by Lady Esther Cosmetics for older women less prone to shimmy.

Weston admits that his mood albums walked a narrow line between respectable jazz and wallpaper music. That is why he looks back on the mood genre as any Frankenstein would regard the monster that made him rich:

I had instrumental solos and countermelodies; the framework of a dance band but with added strings. Robert Farnon would operate in the classic form of or-

chestra, not jazzy at all. Percy Faith was the same, and Kostelanetz more so. I believe this reliance on strings without the jazz feel that I brought even to my ballads was the reason the term "elevator music" came to symbolize most of the later mood music attempts.

By 1959, Weston and Stafford returned to Capitol. As the *Music for series* was being re-pressed into stereo, Jackie Gleason's Orchestra had already taken over the label's mood music helm with more histrionic packaging.

A man of girth, mirth, melancholy, and alleged tippler tendencies, Jackie Gleason added wider meaning to the term "*lush moods*." As the liner notes to his *Night Winds* album attest: "This man who has given the nation some of its warmest humor has also given it favorite musical backgrounds for its gentlest dreaming."

His involvement in the *Jackie Gleason presents . . .* series remains a matter of controversy. Some say the connection was nominal only or minimal at best. Gordon Jenkins, who composed such classy mood suites as *Seven Dreams* and *Manhattan Tower*, described Gleason as the studio's shadow figure who "sits in the control room puffing at a fat cigar while his arrangers do the conducting."

Others maintain that Gleason was *too* involved. With no formal musical training, his efforts to convey what he called his "plain vanilla music" were constant exercises of frustration. William A. Henry III's *The Great One: The Life and Legend of Jackie Gleason* explains how his instructions to the orchestra flouted academic terms like "syncopation" and "arpeggio" in favor of such analogies as "the sound of pissing off a high bridge into a teacup." To evoke that sensuous, floating effect, Gleason conjured this scenario: "It's five a.m. and you see her body outlined through her dress by the streetlight and you get that 'Mmmmmm, I want to come' feeling."

Gleason's records catered blatantly to the common man's lusts. The album jackets depicted silk-and-lace-dishabilléed vixens reclining on sofas; hopeful sirens leering with come-hither lips; jeweled femmes fatale straddling bar stools; and nordic nymphs

lurking in dark forests. This was mood music for men who may not have been up on the latest Kinsey findings but appreciated a good trollop on the pages of *Cavalier*. As William A. Henry III notes: "If Gable on the wide screen needed background music to help him pitch and woo at the critical moment, then surely the poor slob in Brooklyn did too."

Gleason reportedly had to raise much of the investment to produce the records before Capitol assented. His first album *Music for Lovers Only* sold a then-surprising 500,000 copies. Between 1952 and 1955, *Jackie Gleason presents . . .* enticed Americans to spend at least \$2 million.

Music, Martinis and Memories provided musical accompaniment to countless cocktail parties, while *Lover's Portfolio* ("music for listenin', sippin', dancin' and lovin'") included a bartender's recipe manual. This, like most entries in the series, suggested an orchestra gone tipsy, with a soused saxophone.

One of Gleason's main trumpeters was Bobby Hackett, a former player with Glenn Miller, who was revered in jazz circles for his Dixieland flair but never scoffed at a chance to (at the right price) take a break from improvisation dementia and indulge in a more subdued formula. He reportedly met Gleason while working with Miller on the 1942 movie *Orchestra Wives*, at which point Gleason promised that he would one day record Hackett in a string-filled room.

Twenty-four subdued trumpets helped flesh out *Opiate d'Amour's* airy selections, six of which (including "Melancholy Serenade," "Pink Lace," and "Pale Blues") Gleason composed himself. The star instrument was Romeo Penque's *oboe d'amour*. Here, as in other albums such as *The Gentle Touch* and *Lazy Lovely Love*, there is a "band within a band"—a "sometimes lazy, sometimes lively" jazz ensemble played against the regular strings.

Lonesome Echo (with a cover designed by Salvador Dali) stands out for its foray into the unconscious. Mandolins, cellos, marimbas, and guitar are deliberately paced, and each track is barely distinguishable from the others except for varied melodies weaving in and out. This is a musical Rorschach blot inviting many moods

yet leaning toward “nostalgic” and “sad”—an atmosphere only to be expected from the “comedian” who composed “Melancholy Serenade” as a signature tune.

The listening instructions to *Lonesome Echo* appear to be advice from a sound psychoanalyst: “This is the music that says relax . . . close your eyes . . . remember. . . .” But the spooky renditions of “I’m Always Chasing Rainbows,” “Dancing on the Ceiling,” “I Wished on the Moon,” and “How Deep Is the Ocean?” threaten to drag us into the mind’s less hospitable regions. The back cover photo of Gleason and Salvador Dali shaking hands hints at a deeper motive. Describing his cover art, Dali puts the Freudian clutch in overdrive:

[The] first effect is that of anguish, of space, and of solitude. Secondly, the fragility of the wings of a butterfly, projecting long shadows of late afternoon, reverberates in the landscape like an echo. The feminine element, distant and isolated, forms a perfect triangle with the musical instrument and its other echo, the shell.

For *That Moment*, Gleason contributed his own oil painting called *The Kiss*—an angular, extremely abstract answer to Edvard Munch’s much more explicit depiction of lovers smooching into one another’s abyss. Gleason claimed to have a deliberate notion of this album’s mood down to the painting’s color scheme: “I chose the colors for their psychological value. Pastels are *simpatico* with music. The pink of the girl’s face is the flush of love, and the blue of the boy’s face is the azure of emotion.”

Like *Lonesome Echo*, most of the *Jackie Gleason presents . . .* oeuvre implies the musical equivalent to Dali’s desert mirages. This is music with a distorted “persistence of memory,” where time distends, clocks melt, and landscapes assume the contours of love goddesses one moment, decaying carcasses the next.

A bit more sobering but no less romantic, Frank Chacksfield offered the British counterpart to Gleason’s “gentle touch.” Among the brightest stars in the “music-for-leisure technique,” Chacksfield had a predilection for songs about tactile reverie. Consider some of his original composition titles: “Seamist,” “Web of

Dreams," "My Blue Dream," "It's Just a Daydream," "On the Smooth Side," "Clouds," "Silk and Gold," and "Rather Shy."

One of his early albums, *Velvet*, explains that "Softness in music is not only a matter of volume . . . it means that there must be no jarring notes, that the playing must be smooth, controlled and sophisticated." But Chacksfield's music was also presented in a deeper sociological context:

The musically aware hostess no longer allows the butler, or her husband, to sling records on to the turntable in a haphazard way. She no longer risks the dangers of the soup being spilled by Haydn's "Surprise" Symphony, of Mrs. Alias-Jones choking over the fish because an ill-timed bit of jazz trumpet has frightened her. She now supplies a ready-made background of elegant and suitable music to smooth the evening into one long feast of pleasure and unshattered nerves.

Born in Battle, Sussex, England, Chacksfield courted his muse in boyhood as deputy organist for the local parish church. His parents pressed him not to pursue music, but Chacksfield turned away from a dreary solicitor's day job to moonlight at the piano.

Once war started in 1940, he enlisted in the Army, took convalescent time after a service-related illness, and soon sang at piano for a BBC broadcast from its Glasgow studios. His major break came when he became staff arranger for the War Office's "Stars in Battledress" show. His taste for layered arrangements did not surface until he signed onto Decca and, in 1953, released his first gold record, "Limelight," the title song from the Charlie Chaplin film released the same year. In a time when few British nonvocal recordings became hits across the Atlantic, Chacksfield won the #2 spot on the U.S. charts with the first popularization of Robert Maxwell's "Ebb Tide." It prompted *New Musical Express* to recognize him with its "Record of the Year" award, and a 1953 nationwide jukebox operators poll voted his orchestra the most promising newcomer.

While Chacksfield's romance reveled in lakeside melodies whose inspiration might have come from tasteful postcards, and

Gleason's land-based fantasies took frequent dips in a sea of vermouth, Nelson Riddle's mood music made full-scale ocean probes on two of his best albums, *Sea of Dreams* and *Love Tide*.

By the 1950s and early 1960s, images of the sea dominated popular culture. Movies like *The Creature from the Black Lagoon*, Bobby Darin's hit "Beyond the Sea," and the craze for scuba gear invested oceanic life with an allure that Riddle, in turn, treated as a sensual descent.

Riddle's place in the easy-listening pantheon is somewhat complicated to delineate. A prolific contributor to film and television scores, he had dabbled in many styles. As a trombonist for Tommy Dorsey's band and as an arranger for NBC radio, he had developed an affection for playful jazz and skip-happy rhythms set to flute and piccolo. This became obvious with his 1962 theme song for the television show *Route 66*, which shot up to #3 in *Billboard* and was one of the first television themes to be released commercially. He is most widely remembered for his musical director days on *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour*, as well as for his presence at the Kennedy and Reagan inaugurations.

Riddle achieved fame as a background arranger for Frank Sinatra in the 1950s, making melodies that one *New York Times* journalist described as hovering "between a swinging celebration of bachelorhood and more introspective ballads." This style inspired Linda Ronstadt decades later to abandon MOR rock for pillow-soft Riddle collaborations on her Grammy-winning LP *What's New?*, as well as on *Lush Life* and *For Sentimental Reasons*.

Riddle's *Sea of Dreams* offers songs of time-travel into amniotic bliss. The cover depicts a heavily cosmeticized sea nymph, seductive and sinister, inviting updated visions of the ancient association between the ocean and feminine mystery. The songs too are about dripping enigmas: "My Isle of Golden Dreams," "Tangi Tahiti," and "Easter Isle." *Love Tide*, the sequel, continues with a full orchestra complemented by harp, vibes, guitar, and celeste—all in the service of a standard easy-listening formula of melody and counter melody. Obscured by the thumping of an acoustic bass paired with harps, a rustle of jazz lies submerged somewhere

in the deeper currents, barely surfacing in Riddle's version of "Caravan."

Riddle's seascapes were also a reflection of his home, situated on the Southern California coast overlooking the Pacific, where he has been photographed seated on a rock, gazing wistfully westward, sketchbook in hand. But unlike the turbulent orchestrals on Les Baxter's album *Midnight on the Cliffs* (where the suggested clangor of waves summons cliff-dwellers to their doom), Riddle's music is more focused on the calm before the storm. This is music in suspension, where drowning is only a sensual slumber. No other arranger of his time (other than Baxter) gave "the deep" such fervent attention; and his sea reveries have since been equaled only by later generations of new-agers obsessed with "space."

Cathedralized Classics

What better way to discover or rediscover the classics? A snippet of sonata here, a morsel of aria there, mixed with pop and jazz, then blended with echo-reverberation to re-create the vaulted acoustic grandeur of cathedrals, concert halls, and shopping malls . . .

Featuring: *André Kostelanetz, the Living Strings, Annunzio Paolo Mantovani, and George Melachrino.*

In his book *The Influence of Music on History and Morals*, British musical historian Cyril Scott predicted "a new species of violin" and a sound where "floods of melody will be poured forth from the higher planes, to be translated into earthly sound by composers sensitive enough to apprehend them."⁶ This was in the 1930s, after radio had already put live orchestras in limbo but before the postwar recording studio fulfilled Scott's prophecy by merging violin with microphone to create a new instrument.

Plucked, layered, processed, and pampered, lush string arrange-

⁶Cyril Scott, as cited in Joscelyn Goodwin, ed., *Music Mysticism and Magic* (New York and London: Arkana, 1987), pp. 286–87.

ments seemed to be everywhere by the 1950s. Though many people today might take it for granted or even ridicule it, the use of massed strings for popular melodies (instead of symphonies) was a stylistic and audio breakthrough when it first occurred.

Of all such string arrangements, none were more rich and mellifluous than those of Annunzio Paolo Mantovani. Many adjectives have described or lampooned Mantovani's style: "cascading strings," "honeyed, caressing tones," "pseudo-symphonic," "the gush of lush," and the "Niagara Falls of fiddles."

Many in the emerging light music field took advantage of the new studio technology to create sound tapestries with innumerable strings, but Mantovani championed the art. The sustained hum of Mantovani's reverberated violins produced a sonic vaporizer foreshadowing the synthesizer harmonics of space music.

Born in Venice, Mantovani followed his dad, Benedetto Paolo, who was a concertmaster (first chair, first violin) for Toscanini and a professor at music conservatories in Venice and Milan. While Annunzio was still a child, the Paolos moved to England. Annunzio got his first job performing in a Birmingham restaurant when he was fifteen; by the time he became a professional, he had taken his mother's maiden name, Mantovani, as his surname.

Mantovani claims that his musical style was indelibly influenced in the mid-1920s by violinist Fritz Kreisler. He explained to *High Fidelity* magazine in 1957 that, after hearing Kreisler's encore performance of "The Girl with the Flaxen Hair" at Albert Hall, he suddenly understood "how some music had been neglected. How the lighter side of music has always been thrown about and never received its proper dignity."

Combining his classical violin with Kreisler's stylistic populism, Mantovani adapted many tunes for performance in hotels and eventually worked for the BBC in 1927. He toured the British Isles with his Tipica Orchestra before conducting for London's Hotel Metropole from 1935 to 1939.

The early Mantovani made a few instrumental recordings (including a version of "Red Sails in the Sunset") before serving as Noël Coward's musical director in the 1940s. But his truly "cascading" sound did not emerge until 1951, when London Records

(the American arm of Decca) requested an album of waltzes from him. Unwilling to settle for the expected, Mantovani sought a gimmicky yet innovative formula that would permit him to sell a lot of records without tiring his fans.

"I wondered what I could do to make an impression in America," he once recalled. He employed a forty-piece orchestra (with twenty-eight string players), ran them through Decca's enhanced studio system, and brought the medieval use of church acoustics into the twentieth century.

Mantovani himself never shied away from the religious analogy: "Strings were not being used as they are now . . . I wanted to get a classic string sound with plenty of violas and cellos. I wanted to use close harmonies. I wanted an effect of an overlapping of sound, as though we were playing in a cathedral."*

His first attempt at cathedralized classics was a treatment of Ruggiero Leoncavallo's "On with the Motley," a *Pagliacci* excerpt that composer Ronald Binge had arranged with "a scoring effect that would sustain the melody line with reiterated waves of sound." After Mantovani applied more embellishments, London Records was impressed enough to order twelve more tracks.

One of those waltzes, called "Charmaine," was an American hit by 1951. We can thank Bill Randle, an enthusiastic Cleveland disk jockey who played it constantly over the airwaves to the rhythm of switchboards flashing with calls of support from equally zealous listeners. Randle became so enamored with the song that he used the first sixteen bars as a teaser to open his show. Finally he corralled the necessary support to get it released as an American single.

It was natural for Mantovani to derive his initial hit from a movie theme. From its first high-frequency flutter, "Charmaine" connotes Christian heaven remade into a Hollywood soundstage. Listening to it with eyes closed, you can imagine a soft-focus descent of sequined angels wielding magic wands over dancers who float from the ballroom floor in a slow-motion version of waltz time turned dream

*George T. Simon (& Friends), *The Best of the Music Makers* (Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1979), p. 381.

time. Pastoral woodwinds offer a bit of earthly assurance, but the incessant violins lift us back into the melody unmoored.

"Charmaine" was just one of the tracks on Mantovani's *Waltz Encores* album, a collection that included similar soft-focus treatments of "Greensleeves," "Dream, Dream, Dream," and "Song from Moulin Rouge," a second hit that secured the U.K. #1 spot in 1953. All in all, Mantovani amassed "a million-dollar musical empire" by playing what many nonaficionados dismiss as "dentist's office music."

Mantovani was the first musician to sell 1 million stereo records in the United States. Between 1953 and 1972, fifty-one Mantovani albums (a deluge of Strauss waltzes, movie themes, and romantic standards) reached Top 50 lists for sales. *Continental Encores* took us on a European pleasure passage "Under Paris Skies" before spending an "April in Portugal" and bidding "Arrivederci Roma." Some of the most romantic moments in the cinema were recaptured in *Film Encores*, including "Unchained Melody," "Three Coins in the Fountain," and (one of Mantovani's signature tunes that he used to open his live concerts) "Love Is a Many Splendoured Thing." With the exception of his 1964 album *Kismet* (which featured vocals by Robert Merrill), all of Mantovani's work was instrumental and was considered by many observers to be a musical "halfway house between jazz and the classics."

Arthur Lilley, who was Mantovani's studio engineer from the early days, deserves a great deal of the credit for Mantovani's success. If Decca's studios had to lay down carpet to contain the ear-splitting frequencies of a rock-and-roll session, Lilley would be the first to tear it out again when Mantovani was getting ready to record, in order to heighten the echo effect. Lilley would assign at least nine microphones to the strings alone to get a level of reverb equaled only perhaps by Phil Spector's "wall-of-sound." Mantovani also benefited from Decca's "FFRR" (Full Frequency Range Recording), which was developed during wartime research. Part of that research is traceable to Berlin's Jesus Christus-Kirche cathedral, whose acoustics were used extensively by Deutsche Grammophon. When the United States established RIAS (Radio in the American Sector) during the German reconstruction, one

of its engineers discovered the church and helped bring its “sacred sound” into the world of modern recording.

Adding to the Mantovani mystique, *Billboard* magazine featured a multiple-page info-advertisement in 1967 entitled “Mantovani: A Mirror of His Time.” It provided correspondences between crucial historical dates and the subject matter of many Mantovani releases.

In 1947, for instance, Mantovani had released “Beyond the Sea” as a single just as America began its Marshall Plan to rebuild postwar Europe. Mantovani helped christen the Cold War with his 1948 release of the “Warsaw Concerto” from his first 78-rpm album *Music for the Films*. When Edmund P. Hillary scaled Mt. Everest in 1953, *Mantovani Plays Tangos* included “Blue Sky.” The famous Soviet Sputnik satellite, launched in 1957, coincided with *Mantovani Film Encores Vol. 1* and its featured song “Over the Rainbow.” “Unchained Melody,” on the same album, fit in perfectly with Strom Thurmond’s record-breaking filibuster on the Senate floor that same year.

Mantovani synchronicity got scarier in 1958 when Nikita Khrushchev was turned out of Disneyland and *Mantovani Film Encores Vol. 2* included “When You Wish upon a Star.” Two years later, he may have paid tribute to freshly elected President Kennedy with the song “Mr. Wonderful” on *Great Theme Music*, but his version of “Turkey in the Straw” seemed a jaundiced joke on the American U2 reconnaissance plane shot down by Soviets. Mantovani helped inaugurate the Space Age in 1962 with “Come Back to Sorrento” on his *Italia Mia* album in honor of Alan Shepard’s record Mercury launch 116.5 miles above the earth. He paid equal tribute to John Glenn’s first American orbit in 1963 with “Stop the World I Want to Get Off” from his *Moon River and Other Great Film Themes*. Then, in 1965, when a Soviet cosmonaut stepped out of his orbiting space craft, the album *The Mantovani Sound* included “Who Can I Turn To?”

Despite its reputation for excessive sentimentality or (less charitably) “schmaltz,” the Mantovani sound is emotionally ambivalent—warm one moment, distant the next. The reverberating stereophonic spectrum seems to come from an unknown source yet

floods the listener's geography at all points. A good example of what Morton Gould called the "hangover effect" was Mantovani's take on "Ebb Tide," which begins with a slow, slightly threatening low-register buildup of overlapping violins approximating an aquatic ebb and flow; then suddenly we are once again thrown a melodic lifeline. Although Mantovani allowed the strings to dominate the melody in most of his songs, he retained subdued interludes of mandolin, acoustic guitar, and (of course) accordion—an instrument he loathed but used obligingly and frequently.

"It is all very well for critics to dismiss my music airy-fairly as, say, sugary," he once commented to *Billboard* in 1967. "But far more effort and thought and know-how go into it than any critic would dream."

Once described as "The man who could make a hymn out of a rock number," Mantovani was not impressed by the Presley generation. He identified his audience in *High Fidelity* as "that fantastically large group of people who like music but can't appreciate the masterworks—and who can't abide anything like rock n' roll." He later clarified his position as follows: "Perhaps 25 percent of the people like the classics, and about 25 percent like the Beatles . . . I aim to please the 50 percent in the middle." It is a maxim he lived by until March of 1980, when he died at age 74 in a Tunbridge Wells nursing home.

With Italian genes and a British passport, Mantovani exhibited the personality extremes of both cultures. Journalist Murray Schumach distilled his character as "a mixture of English restraint and Italian sentiment. His clipped speech and well-tailored dark suit mirrored England. . . . But his sudden, intense gestures, his impulsive humming, his bowing of imaginary violins reflected the Latin heritage evident in his complexion, eyes, and hair."

Arthur Jackson, a one-time head of Chappell's production music library, had rubbed elbows with the biggest names in light orchestral music. He recalls Mantovani as "A friendly man to talk to, but with delusions of grandeur. Even after 35 years I can recall every word of a conversation I had with him. 'You've given me some nice reviews, Arthur, but you . . . haven't got through to your readers that I'm better than everybody else.'"

Though he worked best as a studio craftsman, Mantovani gave lots of successful live performances. He had a light-hearted and humorous stage presence, a “disarming nonchalance,” making jokes and funny baton gyrations in a bid to dissuade audiences from taking him and his art too seriously. Robert Sherman in the *New York Times* paid him a most fitting compliment when reviewing a Carnegie Hall performance in 1966: “as the sumptuous sounds filled the auditorium, you could almost close your eyes and imagine yourself back home listening to the hi-fi.”

Despite being light music’s patron nation, Britain did not catch the Mantovani fever as quickly as did the United States. Russian émigré André Kostelanetz went further than Monty by giving “pop classics” a distinctly American character. His death in 1980 inspired President Jimmy Carter to give a eulogy reaffirming Kosty’s view of America as “a great music hall with the roof lifted off.”

Hailed by *High Fidelity* magazine as “the prophet of classics for the masses,” Kostelanetz believed that the proper orchestra should consist of at least 50 percent strings. He also had the savvy to recognize music as an assembly-line commodity and praised the phonograph record for exposing average Americans to more music than the most professional composers could have heard a century ago.

While Walter Benjamin’s famous essay “The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction” lamented that the mass-produced object “substitutes a plurality of copies for a unique experience,” Kostelanetz had an enthusiasm for simulacra equaled only by Andy Warhol:

*I don't know if one can compare this amazing discovery of music by millions of people over the past quarter century to the invention of the printing press, but perhaps a better analogy would be the also recent development of the color off-set process that enables millions to see, enjoy and own fine reproductions of paintings by Renoir and Degas.**

*“Kostelanetz Constructs Bridges for Audiences,” *Down Beat*, 12 January 1955, p. 10.

Like many other easy-listening arrangers, Kostelanetz appreciated the importance of the sound engineer. In 1980, *Village Voice* critic Leighton Kerner cited him and famed Boston Pops conductor Arthur Fiedler as “marvelous combinations of market appraiser and orchestral technician.” Recalling his impressions of watching Kosty in concert, Kerner also says: “The main matter of his radio programs were show tunes dressed up for symphony orchestra and acoustically sequined, satined, and laced by special mikes and sound reflecting panels.”

Kostelanetz proved his technical wizardry when the United States entered World War II. While volunteering to conduct serviceman ensembles in war theaters from Germany to Burma, he had introduced a mechanical gadget that let musicians know whether they were in proper pitch without having to listen to themselves. The Massachusetts Institute of Technology adapted his machine to their sonar system for locating submarines. The British Admiralty later praised Kosty for his contribution to winning the Battle of the Atlantic.

Besides being the guest conductor for the New York Philharmonic longer than anyone else, Kostelanetz did backup arrangements for Perry Como, Beverly Sills, and Lily Pons (whom he later married). His success in selling at least 52 million records kept him living well in a New York penthouse apartment, surrounded by precious European and Oriental objets d’art. Astronauts reportedly listened to his music on moon journeys.

Even for marketing purposes alone, however, mood records had to be much more than just “high-class pop.” The blurred boundary between the classics and pop may have been a welcome change in some quarters, but many opponents of light music scoffed at the trend. Average consumers with no preestablished opinion on the matter were, in turn, cajoled with novel twists on the theme.

Years ago, if you told someone you were in a Melachrino mood, they would have been puzzled *precisely* because they knew what and whom you were talking about. George Melachrino’s *Moods in Music* series on RCA supplied an audiologue of varying tempers and situations: studying, romancing, dining, working, courage and inspiration, or just daydreaming.

George Miltiades Melachrino was born in 1909 in London. This perennially happy man made "Music by Melachrino" famous all over Britain. One of Great Britain's most popular orchestras, the Melachrino Strings became a household favorite in both the United Kingdom and America.

Melachrino was the British third of the World War II Allied Expeditionary Forces triumvirate that included Robert Farnon representing Canada and Glenn Miller representing the United States. This perhaps explains his penchant for lively marches and steady up-tempo beats, which lingered throughout his career in compositions for film, radio, television, and the stage.

In the spirit of other mood music pros, Melachrino took much of his inspiration from movies and their power to reinforce image and atmosphere. He exhibited his cinema music talents with the score for the British film *House of Darkness* in which he abridged "First Rhapsody" (a tune he used to open and close his AEF broadcasts) from seven and one-half to four minutes for use as a theme song.

The *Moods in Music* series of albums, likewise, had an unmistakably cinematic character. Just as they suggested that daily life could have a soundtrack, their album covers also included Hollywood-inspired scenes and poses connoting ideal worlds where clothes fit just right, fixtures are color-coordinated, the food and fruit are waxed to perfection, and the people are beautiful enough to fit into a museum diorama on affluent life in the 1950s.

The liner notes to *Music for Dining* promised to "add that little bit of extra seasoning that turns an ordinary supper into an adventure." The repast begins with a martini, a cocktail glass of vermouth, or some other aperitif to accompany "Diane." Next the pâté de foie gras is served up with truffles and the "lush treatment" of "Too Young." To keep matters in their proper seasonal and climatic perspective, a chilled plate such as lobster mayonnaise or vichyssoise is recommended for "September Song." The entrée, always warm and full of stuffed relics from the upper end of the food chain, starts out with "Clopin Clopant" for the side dish; then, by the time the brandied duck arrives, listeners are eager to let the "deep tones of a nine-foot grand announce the

lovely strains of the 'Warsaw Concerto' and overcome the discreet tinkle of silver and crystal (and perhaps a slight loosening of the belt) as the waiter presents the pastry tray."

Melachrino continued with several other records for specified activities: *Music for Reading*, *Music for Relaxation*, and *Music for Daydreaming*. There was hardly a lifestyle that Melachrino did not address. *Music to Help You Sleep* includes the soporific harp strings of "Soft Lights and Sweet Music," "Beautiful Dreamer," and "Goodnight Sweetheart," with quotes from Proust, Shakespeare, Nietzsche, and Ovid on the art of dozing.

"Now that modern science has come out in favor of it, everyone agrees on the good sense of listening to music while you are otherwise occupied." So claimed the liner notes for *Music to Work or Study By*. This particular album offers cover notes that address many key points of background music philosophy: "The privacy of the listener's mind is never invaded, so that it may range freely over the most involved manual or intellectual problems without disturbance despite—or perhaps because of—the song that is on the lips."

Songs like "Heigh-Ho," "Whistle While You Work," "Scrub, Brother, Scrub," and "Waltz in Water Colours" not only motivate us to move but suggest that we do so as cartoon characters. The lead-in song, "Can't Help Singing," is a theme for worker compulsion in up-tempo pizzicato, with brass and orchestra. These are slightly speeded-up waltzes, premised on the idea that the energy and inspiration that go into dancing could be diverted into work, shopping, or sports events. (Muzak, too, often labeled its programs in the 1950s "Dancing," even though they were never piped into a ballroom or sock hop.)

At the production end, the *Moods in Music* series had William Hill Bowen as Melachrino's primary arranger, along with Robert Sharples and Robert Armstrong. But the true *Moods in Music* mastermind was Ethel Gabriel, among the first female record producers. Gabriel was inexhaustible in her efforts to provide optimum easy-listening with the finest technology and no skimping on the orchestra.

Growing up in suburban Philadelphia, she was one of few girls

with ambitions to play the trombone; by the age of thirteen, she was already leading a dance band. Her first significant career move was to pose as a living advertisement while conducting a pseudo orchestra in a window display at a music store in Chester, Pennsylvania, called Caruso's. Gabriel claims: "When I did Melachrino, he had a full bottom-string section, a fat and wonderful warm sound. I used Bob Armstrong, who could make a fat chord out of five instruments, a bass tone with high piccolo, spreading all the frequencies of bottom, mid-range, and high."

But these technical considerations were just part of the optimum mood equation. Gabriel was equally meticulous about nurturing the listener's frame of mind:

In between each band, there is a spiral on the record which takes the stylus from track to track. I would worry about someone going off one mood and into another. If the standard spiral lasted three seconds, I would make it five seconds. I felt that it takes time to breathe, exhale, and get into the next mood. I didn't jerk you from one mood to the other. The sequence was very important. I had a lot of little tricks like fade endings. I would make the studio technology fit into the concept of the album. From the beginning to end, it had a flow.

Gabriel carried the *Moods in Music* idea over to the *Living Series* on RCA's economy Camden label. Anyone looking through the easy-listening section of a rare records shop will be staggered by the profusion of Living Strings, Living Voices, Living Guitars, Living Marimbas, and Living Brass selections. Using many of Melachrino's BBC musicians, the Living Strings set out to prove once again that "the strings of music are the most effective key to the strings of her heart."

The early Camden sessions used such outfits as the Oslo Symphony, with mostly classical adaptations. But Gabriel sensed that the style was not working, so she leaned more toward pop. She remembers: "During the 'fifties, RCA had commissioned a study to help determine the most preferred concert act. The question-

naire results revealed that the first choice was the Living Strings and the second was Elvis Presley.”

LPs by the Living Strings were among the first records to play on airplanes—primarily on American Airlines flights. They were also marketed as sales premiums and giveaways at places like gas stations. Later, when most of the music syndicators for easy-listening radio used them, the Living Strings’ version of “If I Were a Rich Man” became one of FM’s most loved instrumentals.

Many Living Strings members were from the BBC and London Symphony Orchestras. Most of the early Living Strings titles were recorded in England and packaged with classy aluminum foil covers. The music was processed by what Gabriel reduced to a “room sound” effect, obtained through natural ambiance. They, like many other recording artists at the time, used a church on New York’s 19th Street as their recording studio. Gabriel recalls:

Echo was important back then. Before we got the German echo chambers in the early 'sixties, we found that the best echo was through the men's room on RCA's studios on 24th Street. When Toscanini recorded at places like Manhattan Center, they would channel his music through it and pipe the sound into the studio.

The Living Strings Plus Two Pianos attempted to add a Latin flavor, conducted by Geraldo, a British leader in dance bands whose Gaucho Tango Orchestra played the Savoy Hotel in the 1930s. Born Gerald Bright, he took on the Spanish nickname, wore pseudo-Latino costumes and proceeded to make tunes whose style was a hybrid of mariachi and Guy Lombardo. The Living Brass (starting just before the emergence of Herb Alpert’s Tijuana Brass and the Baja Marimba Band) attempted to make what would be, in Gabriel’s words, “a version of how mariachi would sound through American ears.”

Gabriel sees the *Living Series* as “geared for a person who loves music, but at the very moment you get too classy with them, it’s over their head. Between the Living Strings and Melachrino, I controlled at least 95 percent of easy-listening music on the radio.”

Broadening her horizons, Gabriel produced an album called *Music to Stop Smoking By*, which predated new-age sonic therapy. It was engineered for what Gabriel and many others in the trade would designate as “the comfort zone.” To avoid being cast as an audio manipulator, Gabriel is modest about these efforts:

I was not a psychiatrist, just a music major. I was better as an A&R person. But I know we need the support of a stabilizing mood to calm us all down. Nowadays we know too much, and the average person doesn't have guarded information. The news is reporting everything in a high pitch. We cannot cope with the stresses and strains switching with every moment. We grew more technologically than we did emotionally, so the strings are going to be the emotional crutch. Music is a brain-wash; some have learned this. The mind control is where pressure is put on, where it is forced. The music's going to come back that holds you and caresses you.

Sizzle & Suds

Music that tingles, then massages, with dashes of spicy rhythms and ethnic percussion marinated in catchy melodies. These songs keep leaping into the foreground but always return to the brain's back burner when the listener chooses. Imagine summer places, Canadian sunsets, and string-scored holidays . . .

Featuring: *Percy Faith, Morton Gould, David Rose, and Hugo Winterhalter.*

The music and musicians in this section have a much bristlier relationship to mood music. Many of the artists had broader ambitions and managed to maintain their ground with an occasional AM radio hit. Their tenacity in fighting against the mood music label and their inevitable surrender to it make them among the most fascinating studies in musical politics.

The best example is Percy Faith. His popular rendition of the Max Steiner classic "Theme from *A Summer Place*" may epitomize the sentimental background wash, but it was never Faith's favorite. In fact, he could only regret its evolution as a signature tune when his previous hit "Delicado" packed the Latinized punch he favored. But he made the "Theme" an international sensation almost in spite of himself. Besides winning him a Grammy, it never left the charts during the whole year of 1960.

The "Theme from *A Summer Place*" shocked a lot of older Faith enthusiasts who saw alien signs of Fats Domino in its pounding triplets. This propensity to easy-rock explains why the Ventures later adapted it to their repetitive guitar licks with ease and how Faith helped assemble a disco version called *Summer Place '76*, recorded just before he succumbed to cancer.

Faith's delicate balance between being too mellow and too raucous was both a musical gift and a career scourge. On the one hand, he was a champion of sweet violins; but on the other, he always grew skittish when his reputation got too caught up in them. He never alluded to this angst in 1950, however, when he described his goal as being that of "satisfying the millions of devotees of that pleasant American institution known as the quiet evening at home, whose idea of perfect relaxation is the easy chair, slippers and good music." These were cozy sentiments from someone who never wanted to get *too* comfortable.

No wonder Faith wanted to be more than just a practitioner of weepy music for the lovelorn. As a backup arranger, he had worked with almost every major Columbia vocalist. He helped launch Johnny Mathis's career, wrote "My Heart Cries for You" in 1950 for Guy Mitchell, and helped Tony Bennett win three gold records: "Because of You," "Cold, Cold Heart," and "From Rags to Riches." Faith's score for the James Cagney/Doris Day film *Love Me or Leave Me* gained him an Oscar nomination, before he went on to compose for lesser efforts like *Tammy Tell Me True*, *The Oscar*, and a documentary about women in the movies called *The Love Goddesses*.

Nevertheless, Faith's obituary in the *New York Times* saluted: "A composer who specialized in turning the simple melodic line

supplied by other composers into full-scale orchestrations.” His string soprano section gave listeners the impression that the songs played just for them.

Some of Faith’s more important records consisted of selections he arranged and recorded to highlight his string players. The best of these are *Bouquet*, *Bouquet of Love*, and *Country Bouquet*. On *Bouquet*, the first Faith album to showcase the strings alone, Faith divided his forty-five-piece orchestra into four sections, with “two banks of violins, one section of low strings, and one section of piano, harp, guitar and vibraphone.”

Faith perfected his sprightly style in *Themes for Young Lovers*, a 1962 release that alienated some previous devotees yet led the way for other mood musicians to adapt rock and pop melodies for larger audiences. With orchestrated versions of songs like “Go Away Little Girl” and “Our Day Will Come,” Faith indulged in his favorite method of pairing a soaring background violin with pizzicato and percussion counterpoints. This was particularly effective when used for sound effects on his rendition of “Rhythm of the Rain.”

Like Faith, Morton Gould was anxious to keep out of the “mellow” music rut and was attracted to exotic rhythms. He pursued them with fervor on his *Jungle Drums* album, mixing classical structures, popular melodies, and exotic sound effects. He also constantly revitalized his act by incorporating the newest of pop and rock into it with what one critic called “his infectious contemporary pulse.”

But long before he became president of ASCAP, Gould engaged in higher-brow projects—composing symphonies, suites, a flute concerto, and ballets. He also maneuvered his orchestra into adaptations of Calypso melodies and sailor folk songs on his soundtrack to the 1958 wide-screen “Cinemiracle” film *Windjammer*.

Hugo Winterhalter was another “soft” arranger always hunting for an edge. He demonstrated that he shared Faith’s love of Iberian percussion with *Hugo Winterhalter Goes . . . Latin*, reprising the Faith hit “Delicado” along with the “Ecstasy Tango,” “Granada,” and “Vaya con Dios.”

Winterhalter was an important arranger for bandleaders Tommy

Dorsey, Vaughn Monroe, and Benny Goodman, as well as for such singers as Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Kay Starr, and the Ames Brothers. He bolstered Eddie Fisher's career with a lush backing for the standard "Wish You Were Here." He also conducted the Milwaukee and Washington symphony orchestras, proud that his key influences were Debussy and Sibelius.

But Winterhalter found himself increasingly summoned to provide albums with an easy touch, often with themes of wistful nostalgia (*The Eyes of Love*) or ocean-cruise wanderlust (*Wish You Were Here*). *The Eyes of Love* came out in 1957, just as the Gleason albums were getting popular. Here, Winterhalter took a Gleasonish fantasy probe through a dreamscape of "green eyes, dreaming eyes, flashing eyes and fluttering eyes"—an entire collection dedicated to proving that love is not blind, with "I'll Be Seeing You," "I Only Have Eyes for You," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes," and "I See Your Face Before Me."

Winterhalter would take risks, such as using French horn against strings, a technique that later worked well for Faith. His dynamic interplay between violins and rhythm sections triumphed in "Canadian Sunset," thanks mostly to Eddie Heywood's piano and a melody catchy enough to earn the song the #2 spot on the charts in 1956.

David Rose is among the few orchestra leaders in the sizzle-and-suds game who seemed to love every minute of his work. He is the true author of the *holiday shopper's jubilee* style. As a conductor, arranger, and composer, Rose's mark of distinction was his brilliant pizzicato. His "Holiday for Strings" (where a phalanx of plucked violins mimic hysterical laughter) was a hit in 1943 and got borrowed and reinterpreted by many production music libraries for use in commercials, industrial films, and cartoons. This and several other Rose songs, like "Holiday for Trombones," inspire scenarios of ecstatic bargain hunters in motion: from middle class mall-hoppers to bedecked dowagers exiting their limousines to purchase jewelry or hats. "Holiday for Strings" was also a theme song for *The Garry Moore Show* and *The Red Skelton Show*.

Rose's career as a classical popularizer started at nineteen when

he was a standby pianist for NBC before joining the network in 1941 to assist in the music for Tony Martin's radio series. He soon formed the David Rose Orchestra through the Mutual Broadcast System and conducted the *California Melodies* program. Also in 1941, he became a musical director for MGM, scoring background arrangements for Doris Day and Esther Williams films. He also arranged for such stars as Don Ameche, Dorothy Lamour, and Martha Raye (whom he married and divorced within a year). He backed her on her only hit "Melancholy Mood" in 1939. He also composed the "Waukegan Concerto," inspired by Jack Benny's queasy violin playing and conducted by Leopold Stokowski at the Hollywood Bowl.

Eight of Rose's most memorable and perky ditties—including "Holiday for Strings," "Manhattan Square Dance," and "One More Time"—were all written in a single week for broadcast use. He is also responsible for the bucolic orchestrals of *Bonanza* (another theme song grafted onto the collective memory), *High Chaparral*, and (later) *Little House on the Prairie*. His work won him four Emmys, five Grammys, and one Oscar nomination. Muzak liked "Holiday for Strings" enough to commission Rose to do a special elevator version of the song.

Not content to linger in department stores and product showrooms, his style moved on to strip clubs. "The Stripper" replaced "Holiday for Strings" as his signature hit in 1962, with its foxy drum beat mixed with sashaying horns to spark thoughts of floozies flashing their gams in a "pink room."

Keyboards by Candlelight

Piano and organ arrangements to lend any home the trappings of a cocktail lounge or hotel bar. From frolicking to funereal, these selections evoke urban sophistication, happy hour, casual dining, nostalgia, or that undefinable misty moment . . .

Featuring: *Floyd Cramer, Lenny Dee, Ferrante and Teicher, Dick Hyman, Horst Jankowski, Liberace, Peter Nero, and Roger Williams.*

Many urbane establishments owe their mystique to the phantom keyboardist who plays compulsively in the background. In recent years, he has shown up on television ads as a shadow wrapped in candlelight while a voice-over intones the 800 number needed to order your double-disk collection of anonymously arranged oldies.

Solitary, always smiling, paid to please, and ready for requests, he has been the Chopin of cocktail lounges, the Schubert of saloons, and, in recent years, the Bach of bank lines. Such on-location pianists and organists are among mood music's most intriguing sociological flukes—canned soundtracks on salary, prone to ego bruises. A chosen few are scooped up from obscurity and dropped into the recording studio to cut a hit record or two, but these must contend with the knowledge that their music will probably end up as a matching aesthetic to private dinners, parties, seductions, and other “real” events.

Betraying an affinity with interior design, their notes and arpeggios match architecture, scenic decor, and tableware. Libera-ce's glissando approximates the tinkling of chandeliers; Ferrante and Teicher can sometimes suggest coffee percolating; Roger Williams's cascading keys conjure images of simulated waterfalls; and Dick Hyman's brisk fingerwork sounds like tumbling ice cubes and clinking martini glasses.

The candlelight keyboardist's flirtation with the scenery stems from his progenitors in old movie houses. There his presence was mandatory yet resented by viewers who wanted a more elaborate orchestra to accompany the show. Not only did the pianist or organist need to maintain the movie's rhythm (or to simulate one when none was present), he had to improvise with a repertoire ranging from symphony hall to burlesque. His artistic predicament invites the same ennui Erik Satie must have felt when his vaunting ambitions were pinioned at café-concerts.

The gin-joint pianist became a cliché with the film *Casablanca*, thanks to Humphrey Bogart's browbeating “Sam” into playing “As Time Goes By” as a backdrop for brooding. François Truffaut's

Shoot the Piano Player later cast Charles Aznavour as the man at the ivories and chronicled his fall from the concert hall arena to a Parisian honky-tonk and finally to the criminal underworld.

Peter Nero's career, though nowhere near as melodramatic as that of Truffaut's piano player, perfects this identity challenge. Born Bernard Nierow in Brooklyn in 1934, he started his musicianship as a child on a 28-cent toy xylophone before becoming a "semi-prodigy" at piano. By eleven, he was playing Haydn's "Piano Concerto in D Major."

Nierow, described by the press as impatient by nature, grew tired of the classical regimen and, by eighteen, sought fleeting gratification through Art Tatum and Oscar Peterson. After obtaining a Bachelor of Arts degree from Brooklyn College, he became a jazz pianist "much to the bewilderment, chagrin and pain of those around me." He admitted that classical music was less appealing because it demanded too much practice. His habit of retaining classical influences in every jazz exertion made him a leading figure in the movement toward their fusion. Among the first and best examples of this is his study in syncopated Baroque called "Scratch My Bach."

But when it came time to perform these hybrid gems, Nierow was working as a saloon pianist at New York City's Hickory House. He got flustered because he wanted audiences to pay attention to his playing. A faltering stint in Las Vegas forced his return to the saloon, this time demoted to the role of intermission pianist.

Not until 1960 did his decision to please the masses pay off. Stan Greeson, Roger Williams's manager at RCA, heard Nierow play at a musician's hangout on 52nd Street and was immediately convinced that he had a new star. Soon Bernard Nierow became Peter Nero and began playing renditions of "Over the Rainbow" and "Autumn Leaves." His first album, *Piano Forte*, launched him on a coast-to-coast tour in 1961. He later became musical director of the Philadelphia Pops Orchestra, lending classical forms to popular songs. His biggest-selling album was *Hail the Conquering Nero* in 1963.

The restless Nero, torn between two musical worlds that many

people considered irreconcilable, received an apt description from Sidney Fields of the *New York Daily News* in the early 1970s, just after Nero's version of Michel Legrand's "Theme from *The Summer of '42*" became a hit: "When Peter Nero plays his own compositions on the piano, some jazz people say he's too classical. When he conducts a symphony orchestra or performs with it, he's too jazzy."

Whereas Nero used orchestral arrangements with brass backing, other, more minimalist keyboardists employed the bare essentials of a bass guitar and drummer. This "cocktail sound," like all mood music, became distinct precisely because it eluded existing musical categories.

Some cocktail pianists fit much more snugly in the jazz idiom, with a minimum of fence-straddling. Carmen Cavallero was classically trained and performed in big dance-band ensembles in the late 1930s before adapting to the "cocktail set." Frankie Carle, a one-time bandleader who wrote the Glenn Miller anthem "Sunrise Serenade," considered himself a jazz musician, but he played enough functional supper music to waver into easy-listening territory. Dick Hyman, who became a Muzak favorite with his version of the Kurt Weill-Bertolt Brecht tune "Moritat" (later "Mack the Knife"), was also jazz-identified, but he got moodier when backing John Gielgud's Shakespeare recitations or playing organ for the TV game show *Beat the Clock*.

Germany's Horst Jankowski received a dubious accolade in 1965 when *Melody Maker* described his first album, *The Genius of Jankowski*, as "inoffensive background music for tea and scones." Jankowski emerged as a postwar youth with a concert pianist degree from the Berlin Music Conservatory. He had already assembled his own jazz combo by the time he was eighteen. After touring Europe backing vocalist Caterina Valente and directing Miles Davis and Oscar Peterson, Jankowski came into his own with his memorable instrumental "A Walk in the Black Forest." Formerly called "Black Forest Drive" when consigned to a production music library, it was later released as a single and gave pop piano a new lease on life.

No discussion of the creative rewards inherent in mass appeal is

complete without reference to Arthur Ferrante and Louis Teicher—the childhood prodigies of Manhattan’s Juilliard who progressed from being avant-garde hellions into one of the most successful and prolific easy-listening institutions in modern music history.

In an article for *Music Journal* in 1965, Ferrante and Teicher summarized their ascent from art-noise to elevator bliss: “. . . it was while teaching that we began experimenting and creating new material for two pianos. For novelty numbers we stuffed wads of paper, sticks, rubber stops, masonite strings, cardboard wedges, and sandpaper into the pianos conjuring up weird effects (à la Cage) resembling gongs, castanets, drums, xylophone, and harpsichord. Though we have gradually dropped many of these gimmicks, we feel that we have developed a musical style, and undoubtedly play in a manner that makes some former colleagues at Juilliard wince a bit.”

After releasing several of these avant-garde albums with titles like *Blast Off!* and *Heavenly Sounds in Hi-Fi*, they took an abrupt change of course by 1960 when they got signed to United Artists. For the first time, they began incorporating large orchestral backing, from the accomplished conductor Nick Perito (who also had an influential role in many of Muzak’s arrangements). From there, success was inevitable as their duo-piano act provided lush interpretations of theme songs from such films as *West Side Story* (the song “Tonight”), *The Apartment*, and *Exodus*. Ferrante and Teicher went on in their essay: “With the much appreciated success of recordings of movie music, and simplified versions of popular Chopin, Tchaikovsky, and Rachmaninoff classics, we decided to drop the classical repertory for concepts and change the billing from ‘duo-pianists’ to ‘a two-man show.’”

Eleven of their songs made the “Hot 100” between 1960 and 1970. “Midnight Cowboy” (which was released in 1969 and climbed to *Billboard’s* #10) is among their most striking efforts, with Vincent Bell’s “water sound” guitar paired with a combination harpsichord and piano, along with an orchestra and chorus rising and falling at strategic moments. They did retain a flair for experimentation with shades of prepared piano in their versions

of “What Now My Love?” and Bob Dylan’s “Lay Lady Lay,” featuring an unorthodox mixture of pianos, with reverberated electric guitar and horns.

Ferrante and Teicher never felt compelled to justify their fruitful romance with the market mean: “There are no regrets about having ‘deserted’ the classics. We are just as good now as we were in our ‘serious’ days, only then we were known to a very small segment of the concert-going public. In changing to the lighter side of music we no longer have to teach to make a living.”

Although Percy Faith is now immortalized for his string arrangements, he was also (and originally) a pianist; his “Kitten on the Keys” arrangement may have inspired Bent Fabric’s “Alley Cat”—a tune so popular that Fabric was commissioned to record a custom-made Muzak version.

Floyd Cramer represented a more unusual piano-playing hybrid. He was a Nashville sessions man for RCA starting in 1955 and had played on Presley’s “Heartbreak Hotel.” Around the time that “countryopolitan” brought the music of the Deep South into mainstream suburbia, Cramer developed a unique style called the “slip-note” or “whole-tone slur” that gave the piano a slat-key twang.

Far from offending jazz or classical bluenoses, Cramer rubbed his fellow country aficionados the wrong way with his decidedly more “Yankee” leanings. “Countryopolitan” music established once and for all that the Grand Ol’ Opry was susceptible to mass marketing’s airbrush. In 1960, Cramer’s single “Last Date” was a slip-note sensation, reaching Cashbox’s #10 ranking, followed by “On the Rebound” in 1961. Bill Pursell, another Nashville pianist, followed Cramer’s success into the Top 40 in 1962 with a similar mixture of piano, strings, and background vocals with “Our Winter Love.”

The art of shimmering keys spilled over into organ music, with manifestations ranging from cathedral pipes to lounge Wurlitzer. Ethel Smith offered swing favorites played on her Hammond on albums such as *Galloping Fingers*, while Earl Grant (who was also a vocalist) mixed organ with piano for moody and often lugubrious instrumental interpretations of otherwise wistful tunes like

“Tammy,” “Till,” and a heavily *organic* “Ebb Tide,” which reportedly sold 1 million copies as a single.

Lenny Dee’s organ, much like Earl Grant’s, managed to sound festive while retaining a moody edge. He could turn a version of the Leo Sayer hit from the seventies “When I’m With You” from a playful to a contemplative melody. Discovered by country singer and musician Red Foley sometime in the fifties, Dee soon proved his knack for reinterpreting many popular tunes in what can be likened to a kind of easy-listening decoding process. Though his only hit single was the 1955 “Plantation Boogie,” he had a more indirect pop impact through the late sixties and early seventies with his exposure in easy-listening radio formats and a stream of MCA albums.

Liberace was the saloon player’s antithesis. He made up for the inattention every other candlelight keyboardist received by cultivating flamboyant costumes, candelabra, and dancing fountains. His passion for showmanship was reinforced by his 1950s television show, his role in a soapy movie called *Sincerely Yours* as a concert pianist gone deaf, and his repeated appearances on talk shows and game shows for decades to come. More than the others, he took great pains to keep the classical touch in his many arrangements. When Liberace was only seven, Ignace Paderewski had praised his playing; he later performed with the Chicago Symphony.

But Liberace’s courtship of what many consider “schlock” was already consummated when he classically manipulated “Mairzy Doats” and “Three Little Fishes,” turning his instrument into a high-camp prop. His original composition “Rhapsody by Candlelight” went well with the candelabra, ermine capes, kitsch hairdos, and sequined jackets.

Roger Williams bagged the theatrics but cultivated a flair for making dramatic sweeps from classical to jazz to country to soft rock-and-roll. His early career was less shaky than Nero’s but just as categorically ambiguous. He became one of the most prolific and successful of mood pianists with his “clink-clink-plunk-plunk” arpeggios that virtually transformed the piano into a harp.

Born Louis Weertz, this “preacher’s kid” from Omaha, Ne-

braska, displayed his musical penchant at age three. After breaking his nose repeatedly during high-school boxing matches, he decided to do something better with his hands and at sixteen became a piano major at Drake University. Here Roger's irreverent blending of supposedly distinct genres got him expelled when a conservatory official overheard him playing "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" in one of the practice rooms. After getting a B.A. in engineering while in the Navy, Williams reentered civilian life, marched back to Drake for a post-graduate exam, and reenrolled. Roger finally went to Juilliard, where he received jazz tutelage from Teddy Wilson and Lenny Tristano.

After agreeing to accompany a Juilliard vocalist for an appearance on *Arthur Godfrey's Talent Scouts*, Roger was lucky enough to snag the first of his many featured solos when the vocalist did not show up. Soon Dave Kapp of Kapp Records took him in, changing Louis's name to the ultra-American "Roger Williams" in honor of Rhode Island's founder.

According to Williams: "I would start playing jazz in the studio, and Dave used to drag in a cigar store Indian. The Indian looked like he was saluting with a sign on his head saying 'Where is the Melody?' I resented this at first, but it forced me to play melody and arrive at a style."

Williams's first arpeggio hit came in 1955 with "Autumn Leaves," whose trademark key cascade was partly due to the fact that he thought it was called "Falling Leaves." It made #1 on the charts for four weeks. Up through 1969, Williams had twenty-two *Billboard* hits, and by 1972 he boasted a total of thirty-eight LPs. His later hit "Born Free" was another example of how he excelled by playing the melody "straight," with very few pyrotechnic flourishes.

Williams eventually earned two of the entertainment world's highest accolades: he became the first pianist to get a Hollywood Walk of Fame star, and he had his likeness placed in the Movie-land Wax Museum. He has also been hailed as the "Pianist to the Presidents," since he had played for every Oval Office holder since Truman. Today, his influence is conspicuous in such candlelight torch-bearers as Richard Clayderman, Ronnie Aldrich, and Johnny Pearson. Williams insists:

I would rather call easy-listening "in-depth listening." It means respecting the wishes of the composer more than other pianists. I memorize the lyrics to every song. When it says I hate you my tone gets very cold. Nobody phrases like a singer does. Pianists usually take short breaths, play jazz and chop things up. To have long phrases as you play requires breathing, relaxing. I milk it. I play the arpeggios beautifully. Chick Corea said he'd give anything to have my left hand.

Supermarket Symphonette

Step lively to a kinder and gentler Swing, elevated and swathed in a moderate tempo to keep you energized but never distracted. More to the beat of drum majorettes than jam sessions, this is heartland-of-America music, touching even hearts that have long been cold or broken . . .

Featuring: *Ray Conniff, Bert Kaempfert, and the Champagne Music of Lawrence Welk.*

American supermarkets and department stores built in the 1950s were meticulously constructed, reverberant temples of alloy and glass. Their reflective surfaces (and in some cases, their curved "space-age" roofs) had proved capable of sustaining echoes as intoxicatingly as a medieval church. Of all the easy-listening maestros in the Cold War landscape, Ray Conniff comes closest to furnishing music that is "to the supermarket born." Conniff's music connotes the mystically metallic clanking of shopping carts trailing down aisles, the rustle of cash registers, the tinkle of loose change, and the grunt of chromium doors automatically opening for the next phalanx of shoppers. Conniff's meticulous, up-tempo, and regimented beat has a chilly innocence—the perfect soundtrack for patrons traipsing under Safeway or A&P klieglights.

Born in Attleboro, Massachusetts, Conniff was always bemused

by his dad's piano playing. He took to the trombone and became an arranger after learning the trade from a mail-order transposer. When school ended, he journeyed to Boston; then in 1935 he joined Bunny Berrigan's Orchestra en route to New York, where he worked with other "society" orchestras conducted by Bob Crosby and Artie Shaw.

Conniff did a stint in the Army before joining Harry James as a staff arranger in 1945, contributing his light touch to such tunes as "September Song," "The Beaumont Ride," and "Easy On." But because of his discomfort with the emerging "Be-Bop" sound and James's fascination with it, Conniff left the band to roam Hollywood, badly in debt.

"I filed an income tax with a gross earnings of \$2,600," Conniff recalls, "with a wife and three children to support and foreclosure notices on the house. In despair, I went out and took a job on housing development as a pick-and-shovel laborer."

In 1949, faced with \$30 a week in take-home pay and wondering if he had buried his musical career in the process, Conniff conducted a private study to determine how to make a hit song. The flutter of money is as fundamental to the Ray Conniff success story as is his music. Conniff did not glean his musical formula by hanging out in coffeehouses or nicotine-drenched nightclubs, but from studying radio and television jingles:

I tried to figure out a hit solution. I bought eight or ten records like Artie Shaw's "Begin the Beguine" and Glenn Miller's "In the Mood," listened over and over, looked for a trend running through, listened for a week; nothing registered. Then after work one day, something hit me. In 80 percent of the records, either the song or background score had recurring patterns. At that time the advertisers would punch "I'd walk a mile for a Camel," "Ivory soap, it floats!"—repetitious stuff.

On other occasions, Conniff has waxed more metaphysical over his discovery, claiming: "There was always a pattern in the background. You could call it a ghost tune behind the apparent one. And there was another pattern, a pattern of tempo. All I can say

is that it's a sort of pulsing. The average persons like to hear a pulsation, not obvious, but reassuringly there in the background.”*

Conniff proceeded to knock on the doors of every record producer he knew, getting the same patronizing responses until Mitch Miller got interested in this “ghost tune.” The 1950s dawned. Conniff was at Columbia Records working again with Harry James, this time as a chief engineer. By July of 1951, Conniff was part of Harry James’s backup for three Frank Sinatra songs, one of which, “Castle Rock,” he arranged. He formed “Ray Conniff and the Rockin’ Rhythm Boys” in 1953, the same year he had a cameo appearance as a trombonist in Universal’s *The Glenn Miller Story*.

As the specter of television loomed and musicians looked to make a fast buck scoring shows, Conniff arranged “Tiger Rag” and “Moments to Remember” with bandleader and pianist Raymond Scott for Lucky Strike’s *Hit Parade*. Then, in October of 1955, Mitch Miller, still haunted by the ghost tune, asked Conniff to arrange the song “Band of Gold” for singer (and star golfer) Don Cherry. This allowed Conniff to experiment with a chorus for the first time.

As the chorus sang in the background throughout the recording session, Mitch Miller reportedly rushed out of the control booth shouting, “Ray, this is a great sound, this is tremendous!” Hence, the Conniff formula of instruments and vocals was born, with “Band of Gold” hitting #5 on the U.S. best-seller charts.

Conniff’s first solo recordings were two singles, “Begin the Beguine” and “Star Dust,” which did not achieve hit status but nonetheless got plenty of airplay. When Hal Cook of Columbia’s marketing department suggested that Conniff was more of an album artist than a singles artist, he had sown the seeds for Conniff’s first LP in 1956, called *S’Wonderful*. It was recorded in monaural sound and produced at New York’s 30th Street studio, an old church whose high ceiling produced what Conniff called a “natural echo.” Conniff’s “chorus invisible” of four women and four men joined eighteen musicians, including Billy Butterfield and Doc

*Serge Elhaik, “The New Ray Conniff Story,” *S’Conniff (The Ray Conniff Newsletter)* #3 (1991), p. 8.

Severinsen on trumpet, with occasional piano by Dick Hyman and guitars by Tony Mottola and Al Caiola.

Suddenly the Conniff sound sent ghosts floating throughout the Columbia studios. The style was so vibrant, yet so relaxing; so haunting, yet so comforting—a formula so singular and precious that no one else to this day has been able to copy it. This pure alchemy was achieved by combining the base metals of brass with the Conniff choir's golden throats. Conniff acknowledges:

I wasn't the first to use voices as instruments. That was done in early classical symphonies. But I believe I was the first to put voices right alongside instruments until you couldn't tell them apart. Trumpets and girls go together, because they operate on almost identical frequency ranges. Male voices blend better with tenor and baritone saxophones.

Recording *S'Wonderful's* other ten songs, Conniff needed to reproduce the church echo. He and his sound engineer Fred Slaut created a "stairwell echo" by piping the ten studio recordings from a speaker at the bottom of the Columbia building's stairwell up to the sixth floor.

His debut album guaranteed him a fruitful solo career, but he still lent his enchanted echoes to such recordings as Frankie Laine's "Moonlight Gambler"; Johnny Mathis's "It's Not for Me to Say," "Wonderful, Wonderful," and "Chances Are"; Guy Mitchell's "Singing the Blues"; and Johnny Ray's "Just Walking in the Rain." Conniff also wrote twelve arrangements for Tony Bennett, including the hit single "One for My Baby."

S'Wonderful retained obvious influences from Conniff's big-band days with "I Get a Kick Out of You," "Dancing in the Dark," and "That Old Black Magic." But by the time he followed up with *S'Marvelous* and *S'Awful Nice*, Conniff had begun to play more and more with technical effects until his style got so singular that he permanently altered any song he chose to cover.

Consider Conniff's reworking of the Sonny James ballad "Young Love." He transforms the rockabilly style into a mystical chorus of girl trumpets and boy saxes swooning to muted brass, an acous-

tic guitar, harp, and metronomic drum brushes. Baby-boomers enamored with the original can listen to this version with a queasy sense of déjà vu, imagining themselves as toddlers being wheeled along retail shelves and bopping to the tunes that mother loved.

Among Conniff's most intriguing arrangements were his special takes on the classics. *Concert in Rhythm* gleaned ghost tunes out of the great masters—from Tchaikovsky's "Swan Lake Ballet" to "Schubert's Serenade." He had an ingenious method of transforming something as idiosyncratic as Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto into a vaporous *danse macabre* that, in some ways, surpasses the original's blaring egotism.

Conniff's singers were mostly noted for their background "do-doo," "ba-baas" and "da-da-daas," but he gave them several albums on which to go foreground. On *Somebody Loves Me*, he relayed his singers through a "three-channel pick-up": the left channel had the male singers, piano, and percussion; the right carried the females and the harp; and the center channel contained the rhythm section's guitars, bass and drums. This allowed a left-and-right vocal exchange that mixed spatial with aural motion. Besides being heard at the opening and closing of the 1968 Dean Martin movie *How to Save a Marriage and Ruin Your Life*, the Ray Conniff Singers appeared regularly in four-second radio station identification spots, performing with the AM dial's familiar single-note-per-call-letter flair.

Conniff's disarming candor deflects all of the scorn that jazz and big-band purists have heaped on him through the years:

Instead of playing trombone solos that other musicians liked, I made an about-face and wrote my arrangements with a view to making the masses understand and buy records. From that point, I became very successful. I use the word success both financially and as a person. I felt much more fulfilled seeing a record like Johnny Ray's "Walking in the Rain" go to number one in Billboard. I could have gone on as I did with the big bands and be a little over the heads of the general buying public, but this is a better way to go.

Bert Kaempfert was another brass man who successfully converted the sound of commerce into art. Born in Hamburg, Germany, this only child was pampered through his early years as a musical prodigy and proved a model student at the Hamburg School of Music. He acquired a working knowledge of clarinet, accordion, piano, and saxophone, lending his talents to Germany's popular Hans Busch band and the *Radio Danzig* show before World War II. Kaempfert adapted Swing to the "strict tempo" dance style popular among Germans.

After the war, Kaempfert became an arranger and A&R man for Polydor Records. While still in Hamburg, he indirectly altered pop music history by introducing the original Beatles to singer Tony Sheridan, an association that led to the group's first studio recordings. In 1960, Kaempfert's single "Wonderland by Night" peaked America's "Hot 100" charts and was a million seller. A *Cashbox* poll voted the Bert Kaempfert Orchestra the "Number One Band of the Future."

Kaempfert's most famous composition, "Strangers in the Night," was included in the score for the 1966 spy-comedy film *A Man Could Get Killed* and jump-started Frank Sinatra's flagging career. The same year, he had a hit on the British charts with his original arrangement of "Bye Bye Blues," a song that typifies the Kaempfert mystique: an electric bass guitar line thumping like a merry cadet to a muted trumpet and echoing background chorus. He also wrote "Swingin' Safari," "Spanish Eyes," and the Wayne Newton hit "Danke Schoen." Herbert Rehbein, Kaempfert's main arranger, established his own smoother, slower take on the Kaempfert style in the album *Music to Soothe That Tiger*.

The keynotes of supermarket swing—relaxation, fun, and a storybook ideal of happiness—were never better celebrated than in the Champagne Music of Lawrence Welk.

"Light," "sparkling," "effervescent," and "bubbly" were only some of the enthusiastic terms his fans used to praise Welk in the stacks of letters he received after his Honolulu Fruit Gum Orchestra made an auspicious New Year's Eve appearance at Pittsburgh's William Penn Hotel. Performing at the hotel's "exclusive"

Italian terrace, Welk felt an instant, almost vertiginous, synaesthesia between the players and the luminous atmosphere. Welk's own descriptions of that night in his autobiography *Wunnerful, Wunnerful!* reveal how his music followed the landscape's logic: "There were toasts of champagne and we played lots of waltzes and romantic dance music, while the lights from the chandeliers reflected in all the mirrors and the whole room seemed to sparkle and glow."

Welk's announcer Phil David looked through the fan mail and coined the term "Champagne Music," realizing that "bubbly" was the adjective most frequently used to describe the music. From that moment, the Honolulu Fruit Gum Orchestra became Lawrence Welk and his Champagne Music Makers. The style was official: bouncy and steady with lots of accordion, violins, clarinets, flutes, organ, and soft trombones for a potpourri of pop, polka, swing, country, Dixieland, Latin, and some inspirational.

Welk had previously written "a sweet legato ballad" on the birth of his daughter called "You're My Home Sweet Home." He speeded up the tempo, held a contest to give it the best name, and turned it into "Bubbles in the Wine"—the Champagne theme song.

But according to Welk, the Champagne style came about by chance and duress. Not able to employ adept musicians all of the time, he had to settle for itinerant players who in some cases could barely stay in key, let alone maintain the correct pitch on the longer notes. Welk wrote arrangements suited to their limitations. The pairing of "short, light, delicate musical figures" with the lively accordion led to the accidental but subsequently profitable fizz effect.

During the late 1950s, Welk contributed several arrangements under Muzak's "Dance" category. Among them: "I Get Up Every Morning," "Million Miles Away," "Stormy Weather," "Lullaby of Broadway," "There's a Small Hotel," "Moon over Miami," and "Hurry! Hurry! Hurry! (Back to Me)."

His television show started regionally in 1951, then went national on ABC-TV in 1955 (the same year Disneyland opened). *The Lawrence Welk Show* eventually became the longest-running program in TV history. Watching reruns today, we can see how

the show's entire look anticipated the disco ambiance of the 1970s: the purple background lighting, the soft-focus contours, the sequined outfits, and the rhinestone chandeliers anticipating the cotillion ball.

Welk earned the distinction of becoming the second-wealthiest performer in show business. He garnered more than twenty hit singles from 1956 to 1965, including "Calcutta" in 1960, with Frank Scott on harpsichord. *Billboard Music Week's* 14th Annual D.J. Poll named "Calcutta" the "Favorite Instrumental Record of 1961."

Raised in a heavily ethnic German community in North Dakota, and the child of immigrant parents from Alsace-Lorraine, Welk was imbued with strong Catholic values that stressed good works and frugality. He thrived in the shadow of religious tenets that, like his humorous German accent, he could never relinquish.

This probably explains his very simple remedy for what he saw as the growing level of stress in American life: "Champagne music puts the girl back in the boy's arms—where she belongs." His prescription also consisted of a friendly smile, pretty colors, "family values," and an unflagging willingness to steer toward the middle of the road. Champagne music was bound to connote conservative politics—a stereotype that only got reinforced when Welk performed at President Eisenhower's second inaugural ball in 1957. Still his stunning visual and aural phantasmagoria can suit anyone open-minded enough to enjoy it, regardless of their social convictions. Take, for example, the androgynous (and far from conservative) k.d. lang, who basks in the "Champagne" luster in one of her music videos.

Ray Conniff had also won the silent majority's seal of approval, when Pat Nixon revealed that she was one of his fans. During one White House concert for the Nixons in the early 1970s, the ghost tunes managed to smooth over an embarrassing incident that can only be done justice in Conniff's own words:

Nixon's office called and wanted me to appear for the fiftieth anniversary of DeWitt Wallace, who founded Reader's Digest. I did a repertoire that went back 50 years, five or six songs for every year. We used 16 sing-

ers and the Air Force Rhythm Section from D.C. One of the girls that was a substitute was sympathetic to the anti-Vietnam war cause, and we found out later that she was living in a commune of other people against the war.

First she said she wouldn't be seen in the White House, but she called back, and we took her in. She came on stage with the singers before I did. I came on to start the show and announce the singers. She was one of the first out. I suddenly hear this voice on the mike which was not the announcer's but hers. Nixon is sitting right in the front row and she starts saying: "Mr. Nixon, you go to church on Sunday; so how can you let all this killing go on in Vietnam?!" She held a sign that she wore as a piece of cloth on her dress that said something like "Stop the Bombing."

The incident was covered on local television and went all over the world. I struggled to get the sign from her but couldn't. The thought then came to me: when the ship's sinking, start the music. During the first tune, I was so mad. It dawned on me that the President was insulted in his own home with 500 or 600 people in the room. They thought I might be in on it. One newsman shouted "Throw the bum out." I talked to the girl and asked her to stay, but the Secret Service wheeled her off. I told the President it was as much a surprise to me as it was to him. Nixon said "Don't worry about it. If it hadn't happened, no one would have known you were at the White House. Now all the world will know!"

Gregorian Cocktail

Tired of singers screaming into your eardrum? Fight those prima-donna doldrums with a Gregorian cocktail! This blend of soft, subtle, mysterious, and not-in-your-face vocals is the sonically secular answer to yesterday's Gregorian chants, cathedral choirs, and the Sirens of classic lore . . .

Featuring: *The Alan Copeland Singers, The Anita Kerr Singers, The Living Voices, The Norman Luboff Choir, The Ray Charles Singers, The Ray Conniff Singers, The Sandpipers, and The Swingle Singers.*

In the synthetic music machine the sound-track roll began to unwind. It was a trio for hyper-violin, super-cello and oboe-surrogate that now filled the air with its agreeable languor. Thirty or forty bars—and then, against this instrumental background, a much more than human voice began to warble . . .

—Aldous Huxley, *Brave New World*

In his early 1970s hit "If You Could Read My Mind," Gordon Lightfoot sang the line "You know that ghost is me" with the folksy cry of a lovelorn innocent. But his earthy style fit incongruously with a song shrouded in otherworldly images of dark castles, old-time movies, haunted wishing wells, telepathy, and encounters with poltergeists. That is why it took an ectoplasmic transfusion from the Ray Conniff Singers to liberate the ghost from Lightfoot's body and let it float through the echo-chamber unscathed.

Conniff's technique of pairing voices with instruments conferred a stunning afterlife on popular songs. But by 1972, when the Ray Conniff Singers performed their Lightfoot séance, such shadow choruses were already in their waning days. Gone would be the Johnny Mann, Anita Kerr, Ray Charles, and Enoch Light Singers, the Norman Luboff Choir, the Living Voices, the Swingle Singers, the Cascading Voices of the Hugo and Luigi Chorus, and other acts that crooned in a utopia where girls went "la-la," boys went "ba-ba," and the human voice impersonated waterfalls, rus-

tling breezes, hives of swarming insects, and electronic resonators.

Shadow choruses were so common by the late 1950s and early 1960s that few instrumental artists prospered without featuring them on at least one album, and hardly any pop singer could decline to enlist their powerful background magic. The singing style went completely counter to the sweat-passion of jazz, soul, rock, and folk. When not voicing wordless choruses, these singers practiced subdued lyricizing with a willingness to be as self-effacing as the quiet, dreamy fiddles sharing their space.

If T. S. Eliot was right to equate the cocktail party to a modern-day holy communion, then surely the shadow chorus loomed in the cathedral loft. The connection is not incidental, since the vocal delivery of the mood music chorus bears many similarities to Gregorian chants and to polyphonic choral music.

R. Murray Schafer's *The Tuning of the World* describes how the architects of Norman and Gothic cathedrals had stone walls and floors engineered to produce an exceedingly long reverberation time of about six seconds. The power of chants and polyphony lay in their disembodied echoes—an enveloping aural massage that came from nowhere and everywhere.

Modern ensembles like the Ray Conniff Singers re-created the Gregorian style in the service of commercial pop. And like all mystical disciplines, it worked best as an applied science. Conniff got so precise that he wrote “Da-Da,” “Ba-Ba,” and “Do-Do” right on his arranger score sheets.

Leon Theremin, on the other hand, created an Ether Wave device that evoked the sound of the ancient Sirens when its operators moved their arms and legs around a magnetic field. The Theremin machine's alien twang became a familiar science-fiction soundtrack in the *One Step Beyond* television theme and in the movie *The Day the Earth Stood Still*.

The ability to send the human voice into technological reverberations was discussed as far back as in Francis Bacon's *New Atlantis*: “We have also divers strange and artificial echoes, reflecting the voice many times, and as it were tossing it, and some that give back the voice louder than it came, some shriller and some deeper; yea, some rendering the voice differing in the letters or articulate sound from that they receive.”

Capitol Records in the early 1950s was the Studio of Sirens. Les Baxter's album *Music out of the Moon* was purportedly mood music's first attempt to use the "choir invisible," with singers and Theremin playing simultaneously. According to Baxter, Capitol's studio (under Paul Weston) was worried because normally voices were never recorded that high. The record was destined to be a cult favorite, and it impressed astronaut Neil Armstrong so much that he reportedly requested hearing it through NASA's speakers during his Apollo moon excursion.

Capitol Records soon offered *Oooo!*, Jackie Gleason's holy cocktail hymnal. Artie Malvin, a vocal arranger who had worked with Ray Conniff and organized background vocals for many singers, assembled Gleason's voices and remembers that "Gleason told his producer Jack Philbin that he wanted to do an album with choir as orchestra." *Oooo!* turned out to be Gleason's most gorgeously perverse and memorable romp into the mood-control funhouse. Demure piano and guitar whisper on one end of the stereo spectrum; a half-saintly, half-possessed antiphony broods at the other. The results: standard love complaints like "Willow Weep for Me" sound at times like choirs at a coven.

Though many background vocal selections became markedly more modern and only vaguely resembled their medieval predecessors, others were near duplicates. Bert Kaempfert's version of "Sweet Maria" leads in with his signature bass line, followed by a beautifully anachronistic Gregorian send-up.

In 1960, Horst Jankowski put sixty-five voices through an informal audition for his Jankowski Choir. He assembled six individuals from diverse backgrounds, including a mechanic, a model, and a teacher. Jankowski describes the music as "somewhat like a motion picture sound track: On the screen you see one man seated at the piano in his lonely apartment. As he plays, from out of nowhere a full string section and choir add drama to the scene."

In the early 1960s, RCA's A&R chiefs Hugo Peretti and Luigi Creatore formed "The Cascading Voices of the Hugo and Luigi Chorus," which featured strings, occasional brass, and enchanting arrangements of popular songs redone with a rippling soprano background and a foreground chorus of male tenors and baritones. Norrie Paramor took full stereophonic advantage by having "mod-

ern-day Ariel” Patricia Clark’s “in-and-out” soprano voice weave through thirty-three stringed instruments on his Capitol album *Autumn*.

The Norman Luboff Choir also set a high vocal standard. Summoning tender memories of remote times and places, the choir took listeners through the wild west, the Caribbean, the sea, and the grandeur of Broadway. Weston, who had worked with Luboff’s choir when it backed Jo Stafford on *The Railroad Hour*, recalls:

I took seven singers, three girls and four guys, and made a series of records. One of them, called “Nevertheless (I’m in Love with You)” was a hit on my first year in Columbia. I said to Norman, “I’m gonna let you make an album with your choir.” So we decided to call it Songs of the West. It was a gigantic hit, despite the fact that Columbia’s president always called him “hopalong Luboff.” Luboff’s singers were the best in Hollywood.

The Living Voices also thrived in those halcyon days when many studio vocalists could secure contracts from one ensemble or venue to another. These background singers were as adaptable as quicksilver, moving through albums, television performances, movie soundtracks, and commercials. One of the Living Voices, Linda November, was later hired by Henry Mancini to help with some of his movie themes. Mancini’s title song for *Breakfast at Tiffany’s* illustrated the wordless chorus at its most pristine and evocative. Males “do-do” across the soundtrack like guardian seraphim, gently quelling one of Holly Golightly’s frequent “mean reds” spells.

The wordless chorus also got a boost following James C. Petrillo’s notorious American Federation of Musicians recording strike of the early 1940s. He permitted no orchestras to play, forcing choirs to replace instruments. Since vocalists were excluded from the union, they attained prominence over instrumental bands—especially since they worked for less money. Although this may have been disastrous to big bands (which were doomed to extinction by the end of the war, anyway), the AFM strike enhanced the art of background vocals by giving many previously unheard singers exposure that they probably would not have gotten otherwise.

Shadow voices also dominated many of the nicotunes (cigarette

jingles) that appeared on radio and television, up until the very last one to hit the airwaves on New Year's Eve of 1971, just prior to a federal ban on broadcast media advertising of smoking tobacco. Among the best were the Brass Ring's chorus for Benson & Hedges 100's, the Singers Unlimited vocalization for Kent, and Dorothy Collins's "Luckies Taste Better" ad for the American Tobacco Company.

When Ray Charles was choral director for "The Perry Como Show," he fashioned a well-planned *mezza voce* guaranteed never to overwhelm. A native of Chicago, Ray Charles started as a singer in other people's bands. One of his earliest television jobs was for a show sponsored by Ford Motors where he arranged for Ethel Merman. But by 1948, he had gotten involved with Perry Como and was part of a vocal group called the Satisfiers. He also formed the Double-Daters, which consisted of a girl and three guys for an NBC show called *Million Dollar Band*, sponsored by Colgate Palmolive. He was also the Choral Director for the *Hit Parade* show from 1950 to 1957.

Charles's first recording dates with his Ray Charles Singers were for Essex Records out of Philadelphia. The albums were, as Charles claims, "really contrived to sell the suggestive pictures of naked women draped by large handkerchiefs on the covers." The graphics were randy, but the music was fuzzy and romantic, with very soft voices and album titles like *Faraway Places* and *Slow Boat to China*.

Charles himself is very exacting when describing his choral combinations:

My whole theory of singing is that you were singing to someone no more than 2 feet away, like a lover. Don't yell at me! Any choir is a multivoiced extension of myself. I had a big argument with the engineer on our first recording date because I wanted soft, almost whispering sounds. They kept arguing that you could not hear it through the surface noise on the record. I told them it was their problem. The New York singers were difficult because most of them studied to be soloists and were often under the influence of bad singing teachers. I wanted to get rid of their bad habits, to make the

voices blend and sound like one. The California people didn't study voice, so the style came more naturally.

After making two 10-inch LPs for Essex, Charles went to MGM for an eight-album contract, then on to Decca to record five more. But his breakthrough occurred when he got an offer from Enoch Light at Command Records that was good enough to keep him and his singers around for fifteen more LPs.

The Ray Charles Singers did many of the jingles for S&H Green Stamps, Lipton Tea, Chesterfield, and Lucky Strike. They also performed a well-remembered Robert Hall commercial that played on radio throughout the Cold War's chilliest days and was heard not long ago as background in Bob Balaban's movie *Parents*. Charles won an award for his Cover Girl cosmetics radio spot, which featured a then-unknown folk singer named Judy Collins. On *The Perry Como Show*, he got to meet the *other* Ray Charles in person and convinced the soulful singer to perform "America the Beautiful" long before he did so at the 1984 Republican National Convention.

By the mid-1960s there was a craze for quasi-Baroque chorales paired with jazz and pop accompaniment. Many singing groups rushed in to try a hand at fugue fluctuations from baritone to falsetto. The Alan Copeland Singers had proved their vocal revisionism by turning Leadbelly's Deep South country blues "Cotton Fields" into a sweet, suburban incantation. But their Baroque interpretations of Mason Williams's instrumental "Classical Gas" and Simon and Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair" crystallized the late 1960s tension between styles that were simultaneously wacky and severely ordered.

One of the most inventive and influential acts was the Swingle Singers, popular during Wendy Carlos's *Switched On Bach* days. The Swingle Singers were formed in 1962 by Fulbright scholar, pianist, singer, and arranger Ward Lamar Swingle. Their original intention was to vocalize big-band instrumentals, but they adopted Baroque music for sight-reading exercises. Their first album *Jazz Sebastian Bach* consisted of fugues sung by the wordless chorus with added bass and drums. The record made it to America's Top

15 and was voted best 1964 vocal category LP by a *Downbeat Jazz* critics poll. Swingle's goal was to reinterpret the great composers chronologically, leading to the album *Anyone for Mozart, Bach, Handel, Vivaldi?* CBS Records later released *Love Songs for Madrigals and Madriguys*.

The Anita Kerr Singers, emerging from Nashville to tackle other aspects of the pop scene, produced such albums as *The Anita Kerr Singers Reflect on the Music of Burt Bacharach & Hal David* and *Velvet Voices and Bold Brass*. Memphis-born Kerr formed her Singers in 1949, with Chet Atkins producing their first albums. Kerr was one of the first women to produce country records in Nashville, including Skeeter Davis's album *The End of the World*. Her Singers also graced the background to Eddy Arnold's "Make the World Go Away"—the song Arnold's manager Gerald Purcell claims jump-started the subgenre of "countrypolitan" music.

Kerr got more specialized when she produced the Mexicali Singers. Here the "slightly Baroque" wordless chorus comprises "vocal instrumental impressions" replacing marimbas, violins, and trumpets. Legend has it that Anita Kerr discovered them by a mysterious coincidence. Making a wrong turn 3 miles beyond Prescott, Arizona, she came to a village square in Mexicali where she heard the alto, first tenor, baritone, basso, and two sopranos singing to the townsfolk. With skills honed in what the liner notes to their first album describe as "the Juilliard School of Doo-Wah," the Mexicali Singers switch from Bert Kaempfert to Beatles to Tijuana Brass—a progression highlighted by Kerr's phantasmal little-girl voice, particularly when she breaks out her trumpet impression on "Bye Bye Blues" played à la Kaempfert.

The Sandpipers, a vocal trio based in Los Angeles, continued the art of subdued singing, aimed at an intergenerational audience. Jim Brady, Michael Piano, and Richard Shoff started in the Mitchell Boys Choir, but teamed up to form their own group, and in 1966 they stunned the world with a rendition of "Guantanamera," which went up to *Billboard's* #5. They followed with a smoky version of "Louie Louie" that same year and made another impression in 1970 with "Come Saturday Morning," from the film *The Sterile Cuckoo*. That same year, they managed an equally engaging, though seldom recognized, performance with their

theme song for Russ Meyer's notorious cult classic *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, with dreamy lines like "Beyond the days of now and then/ Far above reality . . ." blending precisely with their vocal vapors.

They are also intriguing for their mystery guest, an elusive and rarely seen female who sang background on many of their tracks and who even toured with them. The woman, Pamela Ramcier, would appear as a human backdrop to the performance, often clothed in go-go boots and mini-skirt. A reviewer for *Variety* summed up a 1969 performance at Detroit's Elmwood Casino as follows: "The girl is kept in the shadowy background so there will be no mistaking her for one of the Sandpipers. Her wordless descants fit her in with the violins rather than the vocals. But they have never been able to keep her still. She moves on her own little darkened platform and the audience strains to see what the boys have hidden back there."

The wordless chorus has found a new mode of generation in the synthesizer. Brian Eno utilized some of the available synthesizer techniques in his angel-devil choir on *Music for Airports*. His chorus fulfills an ambiguous spiritual role, the secular answer to the Mormon Tabernacle Choir as the airport replaces the palace of worship, guiding our shadow voice as it evolves from Siren to medieval monk to cocktail crooner to programmable MIDI.

Mai-tai Melodies and Space-Age Bachelor Pad Music

Pleasure ports beckon inside this mixed-tempo travelogue of songs and sound effects capturing the lusts of the Congo, mirages of Arabian sands, phallic festivals of the Orient, and electro-whiz slumber parties where the dream dates are from Venus . . .

Featuring: Les Baxter, Martin Denny, the Electro-Sonic Orchestra, Enoch Light and the Light Brigade, and Robert Maxwell.

In the 1950s, when conservatives and fundamentalists fought against rock-and-roll's "jungle" influences, the hypnotic beats of "real" tom-toms entertained many a cocktail lounge enthusiast,

with nary an eyebrow raised. Just as we annexed Hawaii as a full-fledged state of the union, thousands of American and European tourists, never before exposed to the Pacific side of paradise, heard the best symphonies of conch shells, wind chimes, ukeleles, koto, bamboo sticks, and tropical bird-calls in the confines of hotel lounges, nightclubs, and shell bars. This was “exotica” music—an enchanting, teeming, intoxicating, and festering easy-listening sub-genre that vexed many an unsuspecting ear with the dark forces of “foreignness” while staying within the bounds of propriety.

Nothing better captures the exotica spirit than the now-legendary Tonga Room in San Francisco’s Fairmont Hotel. This tropical-themed interior has an “Oriental” lounge act singing “authentic” island folk ballads in English, a cocktail menu of maitais and other paradisaical drinks, and a simulated rainforest where showers descend at least twice every hour.

Exotica, like the Tonga Room, thrives as an environmental recreation, a musical whirlwind tour inspired by the notion that the entire non-Western world—from the dynastic palaces of China to the straw hut promenades of New Guinea—really is an assortment of devil-masks, radiant volcanos, coral reefs, stone gods, jungle rivers, and enchanted seas compiled from fantastic travel brochures.

Les Baxter, known for his impressive movie and television scores, is the exotica craze’s initiator and tour guide. A former arranger for Nat King Cole, and one of Mel Tormé’s original Mel-Tones, Baxter put our ear to the forbidden conch-shell with his *Ritual of the Savage* (*Le Sacre du Sauvage*) and its exotica anthem “Quiet Village.” Described on the liner notes as “a tone poem of the sound and the struggle of the jungle,” the album paired recorded-noises of the Belgian Congo with symphonic strings, brass, and occasional kazoos.

Ritual of the Savage came with separate stories for each track: the frenzy of coastal traders on “Busy Port”; the soft romanticism of “Jungle Flower”; the ritual allure of a “Stone God” ceremony; and the incessant congas and chimpanzee wails of “Love Dance.” The final cut, called “The Ritual,” presents a thoroughly Baxteri-

zed version of African native ceremonies that the white man has rarely seen.

Baxter made most of these Afro-Caribbean-themed songs long before he ventured to Cuba. He never did make it to Africa, but his follow-up album *Tambo!* attempted authenticity at the same time that it milked every “Dark Continent” stereotype. Putting it on your turntable is like stepping into a Tarzan or Mondo movie. The violin festoon on track three provides incontrovertible evidence that this is a genuine imitation of a previously fabricated wilderness.

The Sacred Idol (music from a film never released) came to Baxter as he stared out a window in Mexico. Alongside the “authentic” South-of-the-Border instruments, Baxter must have been hearing an after-echo of strings and choirs beckoning him from back home. This meeting of North and Central America (with North predominating) had proved salable enough for him to stray farther south, producing Yma Sumac’s first album *Voice of the Xtabay*. Sumac, a Peruvian princess with a four-octave range, sang invocations to her people’s ancient mountain gods—a show that had its worldwide debut at the Hollywood Bowl.

Earlier, Baxter made *The Passions*, a safari in vocal violence that attempts to capture a woman’s emotional palette. Bas-Sheva (the consummate moanstress) was like Yma Sumac with fewer octaves. The recording, consisting of several 10-inch LPs, came with a complete reference guide explaining “Love,” “Hate,” “Lust,” “Romance,” and “Terror,” and their mythical implications.

Baxter’s music demonstrates how the most ancient tribal symbols had become fungible studio fixtures equally at home in the Gold Coast, the South Pacific, the Andes, and the Moon. It had much in common with Rodgers and Hammerstein’s *South Pacific*, which was not so much a South Sea Island romance as a science-fiction celebration of America’s power to mold the unknown in the image of reconstructed psychosexual fantasies of G.I.s who had been stationed in the islands during World War II.

While Baxter’s pet sound was the full orchestra, Martin Denny preferred smaller-scale intoxicants. He manipulated xylophones, chimes, and jungle drums to sound like alien cradlesongs. Baxter’s

version of “Quiet Village” is a savage symphony of brass and cymbals; but Denny’s is much slower, beginning with a dissonant low-frequency piano accompanied by the croaks and hoots of lurking swamp predators—a village far *too* quiet!

Denny owes much of his fame to industrialist Henry J. Kaiser, who owned Honolulu’s Hawaiian Village nightclub—a shell bar famous for its coconut trees, pupu platters, and table lanterns. Denny’s first combo consisted of Arthur Lyman on vibes, Augie Colon on bongos, John Kramer on bass, and Denny himself at the piano. Julius Wechter (who would later form the Baja Marimba Band after being a sideman to Herb Alpert) filled the gap when Lyman left Denny to form the Arthur Lyman Group in 1957; the latter’s premier album *Taboo* sold close to 2 million copies.

Denny is remarkable for drifting into the strange while keeping close to the sweet, melodic shore. Among his chief fans was Alice Faye, who was reportedly mesmerized by Denny’s band during the last five nights of a Hawaiian vacation.

James A. Michener, responsible for turning Hawaii into a volume of American folklore, praised Denny in the liner notes to *Hawaii*, a Denny album that included a piano rendition of the title theme and other tropical delights: “Why do I go for Martin Denny’s type of music? It’s professional and very expertly put together for the public. It uses instruments and rhythms most usually found in popular music. It’s witty, and much to the taste of people who like a little humor for the long haul.”

As a single, Denny’s “Quiet Village” became a chart-topper in 1957. Denny got sublime compliments when many island visitors credited it for inspiring great bedroom “matinees.” He invented his trademark animal sounds when some bullfrogs began croaking intermittently in a man-made pond by the bandstand. He put the sounds into the act, having his band members imitate birds while he duplicated the *ribbits* by grinding on a grooved cylinder. Denny became as much of a packaged tourist attraction as Diamond Head or Pearl Harbor.

Denny’s first album, *Exotica*, was recorded in Honolulu, at the

Aluminum Dome, a part of Henry Kaiser's Hawaiian Village complex. The Dome offered a natural three-second reverberation, due to its half-sphere contour. "Quiet Village" was on the charts for thirteen weeks. Denny's idea of the ultimate Hawaiian sound was much different from what he encountered among the indigenous peoples. Disillusioned over the extent to which "genuine" Hawaiian music depended on steel guitar, Denny sought to superimpose a variety of international rhythms to get the "feel" of the South Seas.

Exotic Percussion made the best use of Liberty's "Visual Sound Stereo," with water; Japanese lutes; Hawaiian gourd; a miniature celeste; steel, wood, and wind chimes; Burmese gongs; and boom-bams tinkling from ear to ear. This album marked Denny's transition to focusing on the wonders of the Far East. His use of "tuned Burmese gongs" attempted to meld the charm of Buddhist temple ceremonial rites with the clatter of cocktail trays.

Associates who worked with airlines would bring Denny strange instruments from around the world. He believed that all sounds represented colors and once reconstructed a xylophone for a perfect glissando. He once stated that dissonance, not harmony, makes the most interesting music. Just listen to his koto version of "My Funny Valentine" to hear how he loved sounds grating against each other and thrown into improbable contexts.

Ironically, a generation of Japanese youth, among them Ryuichi Sakamoto and other members of the Yellow Magic Orchestra, were inspired by this Caucasian musical missionary. Denny knew the extent of Western influence on Japan after the war and recorded a Shogun-Elvis piece called "Sake Rock" that combined the magic of the koto with a rock-and-roll beat. This was, after all, the era when Disneyland brought us the Jungle Cruise in Adventureland and the Tiki Bird Room, and when engineers masterminding the Gemini rocket launches dwelled in a prefabricated "Tahitian Village" in Downey, California.

Everywhere, the combination of science and entrepreneurial ingenuity was introducing such wonders as the Vanguard satellite and Christine Jorgensen. So it is no wonder that the exotica ethic

branched out into other vistas of sexuality and space exploration.

At the height of the Cold War, when American technology intimated that utopia was at hand, a new sound that was both easy-listening and unlistenable invaded hi-fi and stereo spectrums. Weird “outer-space” operas, electronic zithers and way-out harmonies form the category popularly referred to as “Space-Age Bachelor Pad Music.”

Byron Werner, a Hollywood special effects man coined the term “Space-Age Bachelor Pad Music” and designated its patrons as “Lonely guys with too much disposable income who are nitpicky about their stereos.” Here’s how Jerry Nutter of New York’s WNYC radio defines the genre: “Imagine what George Jetson would be like if he hadn’t married Jane: ‘Hubba-hubba!’ ”

Unlike the established Mantovani and Percy Faith, the space-age bachelor pad musician knew no predictable audience and no push-button sales formula. Werner goes on to say that these records are “not any good for dancing, like Latin music, or seducing, like Jungle music, or anything else, *but* showing off that new hi-fi set.” The music arrived just when feral man was going soft, pampered by urban technology and dainty white-collar duties. His greatest pacifier was the stereophonic incubation chamber, where proper speaker placement became as essential as air vents.

The space-age bachelor pad aesthetic is best summed up on the jacket of *Presenting a New Concept in Sound*, by the Electro-Sonic Orchestra: “This *is* electronic music. Not the weird machine-made sounds usually associated with the term, but music based on popular melodies, and played on conventional instruments that have been ingeniously electrified.”

The album’s conductor Dick Jacobs made this unique contribution through a device called a *transducer* that attached directly to six violins, two violas, a bass violin, a piano, a drum, an electric bass, an organ, an ondioline, and a cello. Each transducer also had its own *potentiometer* for volume control. Transducer output was put into a premixing unit and was, in turn, fed into a multichannel console. Without using any conventional open mikes, the Electro-Sonic Orchestra got sharp audio separation effects while applying

its electrified outlander sound to such standards as “Tammy,” “Volare,” and “Itsy-Bitsy Teenie-Weenie Yellow Polkadot Bikini.”

Another characteristic of space-age bachelor pad music is its tendency to use otherwise conventional and tame instruments for maniacal purposes. Besides the Ferrante & Teicher experiments with prepared piano, there was Ruth Welcome, a zither enchantress who kept New York audiences spellbound. Albums like *Hi-Fi Zither* and *Zither Magic!* promised “sheer sorcery” in her interpretations of “It Might as Well Be Spring,” “Wunderbar,” and “Memories Are Made of This.”

Robert Maxwell mixed his hellion harp with whimsical saxophones, banjos, and electric guitars. He also had a supper club stage act for places like New York’s Persian Room, where he adorned his harp with multicolored lights that blinked to the pressure of a foot-pedal.

Maxwell’s major contribution is the song “Ebb Tide,” recorded by many easy-listening legends. He is also remembered for composing two of the most formidable themes from the Golden Age of Television: “Shangri-La,” which appeared regularly on Jackie Gleason’s variety show to usher in Reginald Van Gleason III; and “Solfeggio,” the jungle theme for the *Ernie Kovacs Show* that played during the infamous Nairobi Trio sketch.

Dean Elliott, who had recorded soundtracks for the animated feature *The Phantom Tollbooth* and such low-budget Albert Zugsmith epics as *Sex Kittens Go to College* (with Mamie Van Doren), is best known in space-age bachelor pad circles for his *Zounds! What Sounds!* album. In addition to his big band, Elliott utilized such high-tech extras as automobiles, axes, coffee cans, dog barks, frog croaks, mechanical teeth, and underwater detonations.

Jack Fascinato’s *Music from a Surplus Store* offered a soundscape by which “a collection of seemingly un-musical implements, such as trowels, putty knives, and crowbar, sound out melodically from all points across the stereo stage.” Each original composition included a star implement. “Oily Boid” paired a center stage trumpet with the rhythmic squeezing of two needle-nosed oil cans. “Sweepy Time” adorned its pizzicato string quartet with “a real

drone of a GI scrub brush that's dashing furiously from side to side." "Latin Hardware" was an orchestration of loose-jointed pliers, "soprano crowbar," and a "putty knife gone Latin," with the semblance of electric guitar, flute, and vibes attempting some form of jazz rhumba.

There was a mixture of neurotic big-band spoofs and blissful babes babbling on Bob Thompson's *Mmm Nice!*. The depth-of-sound got perfected in *Riot in Rhythm* and *Music for the Weaker Sex* by Henri René and His Orchestra, along with Kenyon Hopkins and the Creed Taylor Orchestra's *Lonelyville: The Nervous Beat* and *Ping, Pang, Pong, The Swinging Ball*.

Command Records had put out a series of *Persuasive Percussion* albums full of more stereo gimmicks masterminded by Enoch Light. Between his stints with the Grand Award and Command labels, he produced such albums as *Big, Bold and Brassy*, *Persuasive Percussion*, and *Provocative Percussion*, and later the Project 3 ("Total Sound Stereo") series recorded on stereo 35mm film instead of on tape. Between 1957 and 1970, the Enoch Light series produced over thirty chart-making albums.

Many different names traveled through the Enoch Light recording sessions. Terry Snyder and the All-Stars, Command All-Stars, the Light Brigade (from Enoch's radio days), and Enoch Light and the Brass Menagerie. Light's most prominent musicians were Doc Severinsen on trumpet, Tony Mottola and Bucky Pizzarelli on guitars, Stan Freeman on electric harpsichord, and Phil Bodner (who would go on to form "The Brass Ring") on flute.

Light, had wanted originally to be a physician but ended up playing in early radio broadcasts. Tony Mottola remembers: "Enoch was one of the few people who gave the working musician a chance to become a recording artist in his own right. Stereo was just a concept, just a thing with two speakers. He was the first guy to utilize it, first to do it brilliantly, with percussive effects, coming out of left, to right, to center."

Jean-Jacques Perrey and Gershon Kingsley are responsible for bringing the Moog synthesizer into easy-listening pop. Both had disciplined backgrounds before their foray into zany futurism. Perrey, born in the north of France in 1929, pursued music after

leaving his ambitions for medicine. Kingsley was educated at the Los Angeles Conservatory of Music, Columbia University, and New York's Juilliard. He was musical director for several Broadway shows and received two Obie awards and two Clios for commercial music before organizing the First Moog Quartet.

Vanguard Records set Perrey & Kingsley up in an experimental New York City laboratory to apply their "electronic sonosyntheses." One CD compilation describes them as "The first music for easy-listening ever recorded on the Moog." Many of their compositions—including "The Unidentified Flying Object," "Electronic Can-Can," "Jungle Blues from Jupiter," and "Girl from Venus"—suggest "Baroque Hoedown," the theme song to Disneyland's Main Street Electrical Parade, which they also composed.

Despite their vaunted weirdness, exotica and space-age bachelor pad music are almost invariably placed in the murky miscellany with the Mantovanis and Winterhalters. They took mood music as far as it could go but, in turn, provided a flashy doorway into the larger easy-listening manse that may seem less "cool" at first but gets equally (if not more) beguiling on closer listen.

That Sex-Behind-the-Gauze Sound

Airport intrigues, groovy discothèques, eroticism of the European cinema . . . these lava-lamp love themes merge easy-listening with Baroque, jazz, bossa-nova, and soft rock, for a timesweep back through the days of the late 'sixties and early 'seventies . . .

Featuring: *Serge Gainsbourg/Jane Birkin, Antonio Carlos Jobim, Francis Lai, Michel Legrand, Paul Mauriat, Sergio Mendez, and Franck Pourcel.*

Once upon a time in 1969, the noises of a simulated orgasm set to music caused an international incident. The song “Je T’Aime . . . Moi Non Plus,” recorded by French composer Serge Gainsbourg and British actress/model Jane Birkin, became an instant pop culture classic precisely because, at the time of its release, few people were allowed to hear it. Ears burned around the world as the Vatican denounced it; police in Milan seized it from customs; and the airwaves of Boston, San Francisco, New York, the BBC, and Denmark banned it.

Gainsbourg had previously recorded the song with Brigitte Bardot, but that version was never issued, due to Bardot’s after-the-event disapproval. Birkin (who had already shocked middle-class sensibilities only a couple of years earlier with her role in a simulated ambisexual “paper” orgy in Michelangelo Antonioni’s *Blow-Up*) had no qualms about joining Gainsbourg for an effusive recording session. With a driving rock bassline and romantic strings, Birkin and Gainsbourg provided the French poetics and slurps, culminating in *her* orgasm and hints of a sequel made possible by *his* endurance. Hard on the heels of all this publicity money couldn’t buy, “Je T’Aime” sold well internationally; sales were propelled further through the song’s exposure in after-hours clubs, discothèques, and boutiques across Europe and North America. It made #1 in Portugal and inspired subsequent covers by artists as diverse as Ray Conniff and Donna Summer.

This randy contribution from Alsace is important for another reason: it demonstrated how creative and outrageous the union of mood music with rock had become by the end of the 1960s. “Je T’Aime”’s popularity parallels that of Claudine Longet, who had used a similar style on her version of “A Man and a Woman.” Longet’s whispering voice was more of a contour that blended perfectly with her surrounding strings and harpsichords. The “Je T’Aime” style proved once again that mood music and easy-listening were downright sexy.

The previous year, Paul Mauriat’s “Love Is Blue” combined the Percy Faith spirit with European panache and hit #1, selling over 2 million copies within a year. Written by André Popp and Pierre Cour, it started out as an entry in the 1967 Luxembourg Eurovision Song Contest but was destined to be America’s first bestselling instrumental since 1963.

With Caravelli, Raymond Lefevre, and Franck Pourcel, Mauriat was among France’s four major instrumentalists. He was the “Je T’Aime” era’s most intriguing success story. An alumnus of the Marseilles Conservatory, he altered his childhood dream of being a concert pianist at 17 when he got more interested in modern styles from rock to jazz. He formed his own orchestra and toured France and other parts of Europe, before finally settling in Paris, where he soon became Charles Aznavour’s arranger.

By adding light classical touches to pop and rock songs, Mauriat revealed a latent musical conservatism that managed to thrive throughout the 1960s. Songs like the Beatles’ “Penny Lane,” Procol Harum’s “A Whiter Shade of Pale,” and Herman’s Hermits’ “A Kind of Hush” contained easily recognizable and often complex melodies that could be adapted to Baroque stylings with little difficulty. This explains why so many different musical charts declared “Love Is Blue” #1 in the United States for seven consecutive weeks.

This French–Baroque pop influence (helped by the novel sound of the Swingle Singers) spread to many radio and television commercials. With it came those late 1960s and early 1970s images of foppish playboys donning ascots, frilly dress shirts, paisley blazers, long sideburns, and an arsenal of syrupy poeticisms.

It also reflected an international mood born of unprecedented travel industry growth. People flew between America and Europe more than ever, and teenagers had the advantage of airline discounts offered to anyone between the ages of 12 and 21. France, in particular, enjoyed most of the glamour. With Charles de Gaulle's political bipolar disorder, the slapstick of the May 1968 student unrest, the media-contrived scandals involving Jean-Luc Godard's "Maoist" cinema, and the semi-grounded fears that the French now had a nuclear weapons arsenal, the country exported a more fun-loving self-image to ward off potential critics.

The sex-behind-the-gauze sound varied from the orchestral majesty of Raymond LeFevre's "Âme Câline" to the discothèque guitars of "No Matter What Shape (Your's Stomach's In)," recorded in 1965 by the T-Bones from a hip Alka-Seltzer commercial jingle. Such catchy styles helped smooth out the rough edges of 1960s and early '70s counterculture (which soon looked remarkably dated, anyway). It was a sound premised on the salability of pretty locales, beautiful people, complicated yet never kinky sexuality, the studied urbanity of international fashion shows and style magazines, and the prevailing rhetorical atmosphere of constant profundities that threatened to change our lives but never materialized.

Aside from the musicians and some crafty record producers, the greatest proselytizer for Franco-Brazilian seduction music was filmmaker Claude Lelouch. This renegade free-spirit obtained a movie camera the day after he failed his college exam and proceeded to make anti-capitalist documentaries and low-budget erotic thrillers, before winning worldwide respect in 1966 with *A Man and a Woman*. This film tells the story of a love affair between a widow and a race-car driver who struggle to find each other in a labyrinth of montages and pregnant close-ups, and the general ambiance of an existential television commercial. Lelouch's film would never have been such a success, however, without Francis Lai's never-to-be-forgotten score.

Francis Lai began as a songwriter for Yves Montand and a piano accompanist for Edith Piaf, for whom he wrote such songs as "The Right to Love," "Take Me With You," and "The Dirty Little

Canal." His main *A Man and a Woman* theme (co-written with Pierre Barouh) combined harpsichord, piano, and a constant yet bewitching volley of Gregorian cocktail la-la-las. Lai's entire score was built on the ever-present strings, with additional support from organ, horns, electric bass, pop percussion, and an occasional acoustical guitar. But *A Man and a Woman's* addition of Antonio Carlos Jobim's Brazilian beat had just the right amount of ethnic anomaly to render it disturbingly alluring and ambiguous. This became the ideal music for representing international jet-setters who, like the film's protagonists, sleep then fight one moment, conduct soul-searches the next, but always manage to catch the next racing car or plane on their itinerary.

The Franco-Brazilian charm of songs like "Theme from *A Man and a Woman*" and "Love Is Stronger Far Than We" surfaced again and again in such popular permutations as the theme song for Yardley of London cosmetics (heard regularly in commercial breaks during episodes of *The Monkees*), the Brass Ring's "The Disadvantages of You" for Benson & Hedges 100's cigarettes, and the Mason Williams–Nancy Ames theme for *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* (sung by the Anita Kerr Singers during the first shows). Sergio Mendes's collaborations with Jobim on such albums as *The Swinger from Rio* prepared us for his Brazil '66 group and their Euro-bossa-nova covers of songs like Burt Bacharach and Hal David's "The Look of Love" and the Beatles' "The Fool on the Hill."

The follow-up Lelouch and Lai collaboration, *Live for Life*, cast Yves Montand as a media reporter in love with a kittenish model played by Candice Bergen. Here again, the film score stresses musical images that suggest but never commit, with all metaphysical hunger sated by airy yet filling layers of *l'amour*.

Lai's transition from Franco-Brazilian sophistication to the more sentimental *Love Story* period was rewarded when he was nominated for an Oscar for his composition of the 1971 film's main song. In 1977, Lai teamed up with director David Hamilton (who had made a name for himself with soft-focus nudie coffee-table books) to score the film *Bilitis*. At this juncture, Lai attained his sex-behind-the-gauze perfection.

Sex-behind-the-gauze music and movies became an ongoing market by the early seventies. Serge Gainsbourg composed the score for Claude Berri's 1972 film *The Sex Shop* while Pierre Bachelet and Hervé Roy gave us the haunting and hypnotically repetitive soundtrack to Just Jaeckin's *Emmanuelle* in 1974. This movie followed the picaresque adventures of a ravishing French tart who traipses from France to the night clubs and opium dens of Thailand. Gainsbourg went on to work with Jaeckin in scoring the 1977 film *Madame Claude* and one of several *Emmanuelle* sequels, *Goodbye Emmanuelle* (directed by François Leterrier) that same year.

Another influential Frenchman was Michel Legrand. A pianist, composer, and one-time Swingle Singer, Legrand wrote music for the films *The Umbrellas of Cherbourg*, *The Go-Between*, and *The Thomas Crown Affair*. His "The Windmills of Your Mind" won an Oscar for best song. He is probably most remembered for his best score Oscar in 1971 for *Summer of '42*. The Lai-Legrand presence is obvious on the Barry DeVorzon-Perry Botkin collaboration for the music to "Bless the Beasts and Children," later known as "Nadia's Theme" for both the soap opera *The Young and the Restless* and the background score for Romanian gymnast Nadia Comaneci.

Credit for easy-listening's excursion into the pop market does not go only to France and Brazil. Back in 1962, Riz Ortolani and Nino Oliviero's score for the Italian cult documentary *Mondo Cane* gave birth to "More." The Italians also gave us Nini Rosso's melancholy but gorgeous trumpet ballads and the music of Ennio Morricone, who paired spaghetti westerns with melodies so Esperanto and eclectic that they appeared to have been composed on another planet in "the Earthling style."

Sex-behind-the-gauze continued with Gato Barbieri's theme to *Last Tango in Paris* and even slipped into some of Giorgio Moroder's Euro-disco mannerisms. Disco was the last bastion of gauzy eroticism, with its track-lit dancefloors, spinning ball of mirrors, layered orchestrations, and the choral backings of Donna Summer and former porn star Andrea True of the Andrea True Connection—not to mention the millions of stray voices mouthing "Love To Love You Baby" and "More, More, More."



9 / World Music Originals

**THE 101 STRINGS AND THE
MYSTIC MOODS ORCHESTRA**

The 101 Strings and the Mystic Moods Orchestra stand as two lustrous American institutions unsurpassed in the arts of *packaging* and *atmospherics*—the vodka and tonic of every good mood music concoction.

Responsible for what is essentially the *original* world music, the 101 Strings capture the global aspirations of today's "world" sound but without any pretense to ethnomusicological "accuracy." Theirs is a *wider*, more overtly American world view—a macrocosm incarnate, now gobbling up nations and cultures; now regurgitating them into readily recognizable sounds and symbols; now groom-

ing, duplicating, and selling them in the discount racks of Woolworth's, K-Mart, and other mainstream emporia at budget prices.

The 101 Strings do not practice any tongue-in-cheek exotic game. The Martin Dennys of yesteryear may have fooled around with ersatz jungle beasts and cultural cartooning, but the 101 Strings concentrate earnestly (and consequently much more successfully) on giving Middle America an exact replica of the world it wants.

Niceties of history, anthropology, and (of course) musicology became as moribund and dusty as mummy tissue exposed to oxygen when the 101 Strings released their first hit album *The Soul of Spain*. This Iberian "tapestry of emotional colors and contrasts" features dashes of Flamenco and folk song overwhelmed by an ever-present orchestra that lingers from the "Malagueña" opener to the "Sunday in Seville" finale. What we hear is the true Spain of Don Quixote and Ferdinand the Bull—a wish-fulfillment fantasy that thrives in storybooks, the cinema, and restaurant menus.

The 101 Strings' *Soul of . . .* series captured Les Baxter's "feel" for foreign lands as culled and reassembled from Hollywood/Broadway stockpiles of color-treated sunsets, papier-mâché pyramids, and polystyrene Parthenons. Yet the Strings went much farther, by exoticizing Europe: letting it stand out in all the theme-park charm imagined by its second- and third-generation immigrant offspring.

With their practiced hands on the market's pulse for orchestral porridge and ethnic spice, the 101 Strings proceeded to capture the souls of Mexico, Greece, Russia, Scotland, and Israel on vinyl before pursuing more domestic themes such as *Hit Sounds from Hit Movies* and *The Sounds of Love*.

All of the so-called authentic instruments and rhythms on 101 Strings albums prove most effective as props for a secondhand sightseeing tour where, again, the postcard is the looking glass. For instance, in *The Emotion of the 101 Strings at Gypsy Camp Fires*, "Dark Eyes" starts with the Hungarian violin buttressed by a vocal chorus, cascading strings, brass, and accordion. Before we know it, the "lights on dimmers and gypsy violins offstage" cliché

touted by the cynical theater critic in the movie *All About Eve* has materialized in our stereo-friendly living rooms.

Though the orchestra dominates, *Gypsy Camp Fires* uses just enough local color to evoke “Olive-skinned girls, with flashing dark eyes.” Old Hungary is paired down to simulations of already simulated source material. “Brahms’ Hungarian Dance No. 6” is followed by Victor Young’s “Golden Earrings” from the movie of the same name, whose gypsy is played by a dyed-brunette Marlene Dietrich. As in all 101 Strings recordings, the festive liner notes (deployed with Cook’s Tour fervency) complement the music: “The lovely rich tones of a violin fill the heart as it speaks of love that is old, new, lost, or yet to be discovered; for the music of the gypsy speaks of a spirit that is restless, free and beautiful.”

East of Suez captures an Arabian Desert expanse more congenial to the duets of Kathryn Grayson and Gordon MacRae in the musical *Desert Song* than to the arena of violent Biblical prophecy it represents today. *I Love Paris (The Sounds and Moods of the City of Light)* includes “Frère Jacques,” “Under Paris Skies,” and other metaphor-melodies about things quintessentially “French.” Here, bearing “all the charm and flirtatious caprice of La Vie de Paris,” the ensemble “paints a picture of your unforgettable impressions of the city of light. From *Sacré-Coeur* atop *Montmartre* to a stroll down the *Champs Élysée*—this is *Paris*, home of painter, dreamer and everyone who has ever been in love.”

Hawaiian Paradise includes sea sounds and “The Beachcomber Chorus” vaporizing in and out of exuberant Polynesian ditties such as “Little Grass Shack,” “Sweet Leilani,” and “Lovely Hula Hands.” *Caribbean Cruise* (wherein the 101 Strings masquerade as “The Rio Carnival Orchestra”) offers “A High Fidelity Travel Panorama” in “Spectra-Sound,” featuring “Shipboard Romance,” “Jamaica Jamboree,” and “Club Tropicana,” to name but a few. Each track captures the lure of this hot, moist, mysterious land “with its moon drenched nights filled with thoughts of love and strange voodoo secrets.”

Not long ago, a school of anthropologists propounded a “village theory” based on the results of a widely distributed questionnaire.

It revealed that most people in the well-traveled Western hemisphere share the same limited range of significant experiences as those in small, hut-bound African villages. The average person in each setting is allotted two important lovers, two teachers, a memorable doctor during childhood and another during adulthood, an impressive religious figure, two best friends, perhaps one special family member, and one or two outstanding puberty rites. From there, we must each rely on our imaginative impressions of the outside world to define ourselves as individuals. In this sense, the 101 Strings are right on target when a "village" treatment such as *Italia con Amore (From Italy with Love)* contains musical strains and rhythms interchangeable with those found on *Caribbean Nights*, *Mood Vienna*, *Songs of the Seasons in Japan*, *African Safari*, and *Americana*.

Even the more miserable pages of world history have Strings attached. Their remarkable adaptation of Edmond De Luca's *Conquerors of the Ages* arranges violins and woodwinds to accompany Alexander the Great's invasion of Thrace; oboe solos as Rome forges her Byzantine Empire; ear-splitting percussion to attend Attila the Hun's sweep through Central Europe; a gong for Genghis Khan; a brass crescendo for Cortez; the "Marseillaise" to honor Napoleon; and the "Sieg Heil" operettas of Hitler's beer-hall putsch.

When they began in the early 1950s, the 101 Strings recorded at the Musikhalle in Hamburg, Germany, under director Dick L. Miller, arranger Joseph Kuhn, and conductor Wilhelm Stephan. They were billed as "The World's First Stereo Scored Orchestra," brandishing the latest in binaural technology with their Stereo-Fidelity sound spectrum.

The cover of *101 Strings Play the World's Great Standards*, arguably the first 101 Strings entry, shows a photo taken in Germany during a 1957 recording session. It shows approximately 121 musicians, including "eleven concertmasters in the first chairs," and a conductor. The men are wearing tuxedos, tails, and white bowties; the two female harp players are garbed in long black gowns.

Three years after their inception, the 101 Strings were market-

ing their product to at least twenty-eight countries, selling over 10 million albums. Their contribution to stereo-mania came second only to their wanderlust. Like Mantovani, they modernized the classics by exposing them to new acoustic technology, by experimenting with the “stereo depth” of microphones, and by practicing the art of layering to generate sounds rarely heard at live concerts. The liner notes to their albums came with cryptic graphs of a sound spectrum (“all the human ear can sense and hear”) ranging from 30 to 16,000 cycles of vibration per second.

The fundamental 101 Strings arrangement depended on a meticulous procedure. According to Robert Lowden, a Strings conductor and arranger from 1957 until 1967: “We would try to make a Chopin piece contemporary and more danceable. We did the classics in a more modern style, making the music less dense. The melody was important. Low strings played a melody, and high strings played a counter-melody. That was the shtick of the 101 Strings; then it would alternate.”

In 1964, Al Sherman and Alshire International bought the 101 Strings and moved the recording sessions from Germany to London. Thenceforth, the Strings were made up principally of British session musicians from the London Philharmonic and the London Symphony Orchestra, and were never a “set” ensemble. After Joseph Kuhn died at the age of 34 from a spinal tumor, composer Monty Kelly took over the arrangements and masterminded a new packaging scheme, with the “Stereo Fidelity” tag.

Kelly also had a flair for embedding the “inimitable style” of his own compositions between famous cover songs whose lyrics he reworked into titles. His “When the Trees That Are Green Turn to Brown” and “Trav’lin Again” had enough of a “Sounds of Silence” style to fit on *101 Strings Play Million Seller Hits of Today Composed by Simon and Garfunkel*. Another Lowden original called “Orange Grove Avenue,” besides being a gloss on Simon and Garfunkel, was the address of Budget Sound, Inc., the Burbank location where all of the Alshire records were pressed.

On *The 101 Strings Play the Hits of the Beatles*, songs like “Sixpence and You” and “Tropic of Chelsea” made great strides to fit in unobtrusively among the actual Beatles melodies. The

Strings could play funny games with unwary listeners who might believe that such songs as “Freeway Fantasy,” “Pandora’s Smile,” and “Torna Sundra” were real screen themes on *Hit Sounds from Hit Movies*. *The Sounds of Today* attempted to bridge the generation gap by incorporating electric guitars, sitars, and psychedelic organs into lush versions of “California Dreamin’,” “Never My Love,” and one priceless original called “Blues for the Guru.”

Lowden looks back on the 101 Strings of the 1960s and early 1970s as a cultural panacea: “I think it was a market for a certain people. During the Viet Nam war, it helped to cool things down a bit. An awful lot of records sold, around 50 million. Alshire put albums out for everybody: big-band aficionados, mood music people, rock people.”

To prove that our own backyards are just as committed to cinema-memory, the 101 Strings’ interpretation of the *Grand Canyon Suite* continues Ferde Grofé’s attempt to miniaturize one of America’s vast tourist treasures into snippets of theme songs that were subsequently played over and over on television shows and commercials.

The 101 Strings managed to reproduce America as it might be seen through the eyes of touring foreigners. Their music elicits a feeling akin to the one we experience when watching German tourists visiting the micro-Bavaria at Busch Gardens. The world America thought it had conquered and flattered through imitation flatters it back with French intellectuals deconstructing the cowboy, Japanese entertainers impersonating Vegas lounge singers, or Saudi Arabian and Indian adventure movies that ape American culture but never get it quite right, since they lack the precise intricacies of dress, gesture, and language to which we cling for identity.

Inside-out Americana abounded in the 101 Strings’ releases of doppelgänger easy-listening versions of almost every conceivable genre and composer: Broadway shows; film scores; pop classics; country and western; covers of compositions by Victor Herbert, Nelson Riddle, Burt Bacharach, Hank Williams, Jimmy Webb, and Carole King; wedding songs; soul; marches; hymns and prayers;

music of the Catholic church; big-band Swing; outer-space themes; and countless tributes to such stars as John Wayne, Elvis Presley, Richard Rodgers, Dolly Parton, the Dorseys, Otis Redding, Glenn Miller, the Beach Boys, the Carpenters, and of course the eponymous honorees of *Hits Made Famous by Gladys Knight and Stevie Wonder*.

By the early 1970s, the 101 Strings responded to the "Je T'Aime" trend by following the by now well-rutted trail into the regions of eros. They pressed a couple of X-rated singles on Alshire's A/S label; then they released *The Sounds of Love* under the name "101 Strings Orchestra." It included Bebe Bardon's all-breath-no-words interpretations of various sexy pop hits, including a version of "Je T'Aime . . . Moi Non Plus" reworked into "Love at First Sight." *The Sounds of Love* alternated Bardon's sigh-alongs with Joe Adams, a Peter Lawford sound-alike, poeticizing about wistful, unrequited love over instrumentals of "This Guy's in Love with You" and "Yesterday."

The Strings followed with *The "Exotic" Sounds of Love*, a much more flagrant and kinky affront to their wholesome-music-missionary position in the mood music cosmos. Embellished with an "Adults Only" warning, the jacket cover shows an eager young woman's head being held by an out-of-frame male; the inside cover gal is a leather-clad dominatrix wearing an eye-patch. Each track gets the *Emmanuelle*-in-Hell treatment with the sound of martinets and masochists on "Whiplash" or the Oriental pornomystique of "Karma Sitar" and "Instant Nirvana."

Despite their assembly-line zeal, the 101 Strings were seldom predictable. Each album encompassed specialized styles and musical instruments to go with each theme. *Astro Sounds* proceeded to colonize the cosmos with an aggregation of noises inspired by budget science-fiction movies. With liner notes billing it as "the far out sounds of tomorrow's uncharted trip beyond the now generation," *Astro Sounds* combines "The Astro-Sounds of Magnificence" with guitar distortion. But tracks like "Astral Freakout," "A Disappointing Love with a Desensitized Robot," "Trippin' on Lunar 07," and "Bad Trip Back to '69" did not strike a homely chord with the

typical 101 Strings crowd. According to Al Sherman: “We had many weird albums like *Astro Sounds*, but got so many letters from the midwest objecting to the zany formats that we stopped.”

In contrast to the 101 Strings’ macrocosm, The Mystic Moods Orchestra appropriated the microcosm. Using the most advanced audio equipment, it treated music as a backdrop to everyday life’s “authentic” sounds—thunderstorms, ocean waves, trains, auto races, horses, cattle, footsteps, and the minutiae of insects. Instead of using music to mask noise, the Mystic Moods Orchestra tricked the ear by putting the noise right into the music.

The Mystic Moods Orchestra is significant for many reasons. It was among the very first ensembles to use on-location sound effects for musical purposes, although it was predated by Snuff Garrett’s *Lonely Harpsichord on a Rainy Night*. The Mystic Moods’ audio technology anticipated many of the four-channel sound environments currently being developed by IIDS (High Definition Surround), IMAX, and other businesses specializing in home theaters and theme park simulators.

Mystic Moods inspiration comes from sound technician and producer Leo Kulka. In 1961, while in Burbank, California, Kulka used two stereo mikes and an Ampex tape machine to record a violent storm outside his bedroom window. He subsequently played the tape whenever he needed to relax.

Moving from Los Angeles to San Francisco in 1964, Kulka opened a studio and started experimenting with storms and other sound-effects combined with his favorite music. He converted the results through a four-channel recorder. Music and effects accounted for three of the channels, while the fourth contained wind-chimes and subtle percussion. Kulka timed the songs and the storm so that thundercracks and musical crescendos coincided.

These sessions formed the Mystic Moods prototype. Kulka claims to have previously done arrangements for Muzak and contributed recordings and mix-downs for Chicago’s background music company Seeburg between 1960 and 1961. With the help of arranger Larry Fotine, Kulka arrived at a folk remedy for the proper background music formula: “I take a popular tune and turn it upside down and inside out. The result: you’re sure you’ve heard

the song before, but cannot identify it because it doesn't sound the same."

In 1959, Kulka indulged in a naughty little experiment that involved recording the piston pops of oil wells on Long Beach, exploiting their coital associations, and marketing an X-rated gem sold under the bar at Nick O'Dell's restaurant in Hollywood. A somewhat prurient gentleman by nature, Kulka later made a record of romantic Wurlitzer tracks called *Organasm* that the Postmaster of Illinois confiscated as "obscene." It therefore comes as no surprise that the Mystic Moods Orchestra packs such a psychosexual punch.

Not until he teamed up with sound-effects wizard Brad Miller, however, did Kulka's concept really come to life. In 1965, Kulka and Miller mastered a series of similar four-channel tapes and installed them at the San Francisco Airport's Hilton Inn.

The Hilton had a large, circular cocktail lounge on the top floor called "The Tiger Room," which Kulka and Miller proceeded to divide into four sections, subdividing each section into ten windows and equipping each window with an equalizer filter connected to different-colored lights that were, in turn, analyzed into ten frequency octaves. The bass descended to deep red, and the higher frequencies grew lighter up to white. With some of their tapes connected to the equalizer, they attempted to make a pre-hippie light show for the scotch-and-soda crowd. To add to the illusion, they applied perfumes and the smell of new-mown hay throughout the room, turning up the air-conditioner not only to make the room cooler but to complement the sound of rain.

Kulka says that he and Miller had hoped to market this as a "synaesthesia": "When the brain gets so confused, you don't know whether you're seeing lights or seeing sounds. When designing the Hilton program, we stayed away from pulsation and stuck to melodic sounds that kept the lights mostly in the red. We used big orchestras and string basses. The ear delights in variety; so does the eye. I always saw music in color."

At first, Kulka and Miller saw their ideal venue as being Las Vegas night clubs. Some Vegas club representatives sat through a demonstration and loved it, but they declined to install it in their

own establishments because they noticed that the Tiger Room patrons were spending too much time watching and listening, instead of drinking. Moreover, the Tiger Room management began to tinker with the system design. "They decided the music we provided wasn't sufficient," Kulka claims. "Against my wishes, they used a rock band. But it did not work. If you confuse the mind too much, you can evoke a *petit mal* seizure."

Someone at the Tiger Room did have such an attack one day, forcing the Hilton management to throw the entire system out. Another *petit mal* incubus occurred when Kulka demonstrated his synaesthesia system to the Audio Engineering Society. Someone in the audience rapped his cane on the table and complained of a near epileptic seizure, due to the constant, pulsating rhythm of a jazz tune. Kulka recalls the incident with bemused embarrassment: "A doctor friend, a psychiatrist, later told me that kind of pulsation might create problems. I've gone into markets, telling them they are killing their business with high-speed rock."

With their Las Vegas ambitions shattered, Kulka and Miller decided to repackage the product for the retail record market as a kind of "total home theater." Their big break came when deejay Ernie McDaniel, a good friend of theirs at San Francisco's KFOG radio station, agreed to play some of their tapes for a lark.

Brad Miller, who would go on to produce, engineer, and record subsequent Mystic Moods ventures, remembers how lucky they were: "In the mid-'60s, FM stereo was the new toy on the block. McDaniel was at KFOG and had a free-for-all show in the evening. We took a copy of the master tape to the radio show one night, and the phones went nuts!"

People called in to tell about the memories the music inspired, the delightful romantic evenings it spawned, and their conviction that it was the safest form of an artificially altered state. To show appreciation for the community's zeal, Kulka and Miller left it up to the listeners to determine the ensemble's name. "Mystic Moods Orchestra" was the winner from a pile of over 100 entries.

Kulka and Miller took the Mystic Moods concept to Chicago and approached Mercury Records, which listened to the music and laughed. Undaunted, they approached Mercury's Philips sub-

sidary, which was more receptive. Weeks went by, until one evening when the Philips A&R man, accompanied by his wife, telephoned Kulka from San Francisco's Fisherman's Wharf. Kulka recalls: "The man came to see me, dripping with water from a big rain storm. He started railing because he couldn't get a cab and that the tape I sent him started out with rain and thunder. He kept complaining, but his wife said to him, 'Shut up and listen!'"

The first Mystic Moods release was the album *One Stormy Night*, recorded at Goldstar, the studio Phil Spector made famous. The ensemble consisted mostly of freelancing Los Angeles musicians playing standards like "Autumn Leaves" and "Sayonara," along with a library of backlog songs not used for their intended movies. Miller clarifies that "The orchestra was a nondescript group of players which I assembled. It was really built around arrangements, not a fixed orchestra."

One Stormy Night promised among many things "a time of soft and glowing sentimentality when the drops tapped out their special message on the window pane." What could easily have been a fluky experiment with very little commercial potential drew many more adherents than ever expected. Although *One Stormy Night* (the most successful of the series) only inched its way to about 98 on the charts, the Mystic Moods had already become legendary.

Both Kulka and Miller insist that the orchestra, while important, was always subordinate to the sounds. According to Miller:

Many radio people in that era thought the sound effects were annoying. The Philips people always said that, if I took the sound effects off, people would like them more. But I took them off, and they didn't play them any more or less. I'm not really Mancini or competing with Percy Faith. This is very unique with a special niche. I'm not suggesting it was original. On AM radio, we didn't work at all because the rain sounded like frying bacon. This whole concept was really directed at hi-fi and FM stereo. My forte has always been realism and quality.

Recalling the listening public's reaction to *One Stormy Night*, Kulka told a special anecdote: "I'm sitting at the Bohemian Club. One man sits beside me with his drink and comments on *One Stormy Night*. He bought it, took it home, brought a girl to his house. He complained about the sound of a freight train during his seduction and the girlfriend bursting out laughing. He told me he'd like to get his hands on the guy who made it. And there I was."

Miller took full control of engineering in time for the recording sessions of *Nighttide*, the second Mystic Moods Orchestra album. *Nighttide* was, in some respects, a more ambitious effort, with great songs from the cinema such as "Theme from *A Summer Place*," "Days of Wine and Roses," "Nevada Smith," and "Lara's Theme" (from *Dr. Zhivago*) paired with appropriate sounds ranging from pounding surf to horses. Miller had gone to specific locations for each effect. All beach settings were recorded at Carmel's Monterey Bay. The crickets chirping on "Strangers in the Night" were recorded on an autumn evening in a setting overlooking Hollywood Hills; the horses neighing and galloping into the opening bars of "Shane" were miked at Southern California's Santa Susana Pass-Chatsworth section, a former Chumash Indian gathering site turned movie ranch for westerns.

The cinematic theme continued into the third album, *More Than Music*. A trademark Moods thundercrack introduces John Barry's tune "Wednesday's Child" from *The Quiller Memorandum*. The theme song from Cinerama's *Grand Prix* includes a sense-submersion effect of race cars roaring from right to left. A marching band accompanies "Paris Smiles" from *Is Paris Burning?*, until crashing waves introduce the "Theme from *The Sand Pebbles*."

The Mystic Moods of Love—re-released as *Moods for a Stormy Night*—came with a specially scented cloth to enhance the listeners' pheromones in case the amorous audio was not enough. It climaxes with Wagner's "Tristan and Isolde" played over cricket mating chirps. *Love Token* fuses heavy orchestrals with trippy electric guitar to cover "Both Sides Now," "Hurt So Bad," and a "Jimmy Webb Collage."

Arriving contemporaneously with the poetry-and-music collaboration between Rod McKuen and Anita Kerr on their album trilogy of *The Sea, The Sky, and The Earth* was the Mystic Mood Orchestra's *Highway One*, which offered brief interludes of mood music blending with the sounds of midways and seaside resorts. The narrator, Rosko (a New York deejay, the voice on many Busch beer commercials, and a recent CBS announcer for the Winter Olympics), speaks to what seems an imaginary woman, his words suggesting the ravings of a desperately kitsch Casanova or a psychopathic voyeur. Location sounds on a beach and at a carnival boardwalk in Britain taunt us in the background as we try to decipher some coded meaning in such poetaster brainstorms as "My fingers as I wandered into your private love affair. . . ."

The Mystic Moods Orchestra always managed to employ expert studio musicians for a sound-and-sense feast that gave pleasure to the young and the middle-aged alike—just in time for San Francisco's "Summer of Love." "A young, hip crowd was interested," Miller recalls when asked to explain how acid rockers could slide with such ease into mystic easy-listening:

I was in downtown San Francisco in 1966. One Stormy Night was released in March of that year. It was already top ten in the Bay Area. I was in an elevator, and here was this young lady about 20 years old who had a copy under her arm. Part of the pop culture at that time was going through experimentation. All music has classical origins. So, the pop culture at that time was trying to provide more texture as opposed to the usual electric rock bands.

If the electronic experiments of Perrey & Kingsley constituted space-age bachelor pad music, the specialized sound explorations of the Mystic Moods Orchestra were psychedelic crash pad symphonies that used the stereo sensorium instead of drugs for mind expansion. The Mystic Moods philosophy was very similar to Timothy Leary's dictum that "set and setting" were essential for the right psychochemical excursion. Before the appearance of the

Beatles' *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* and of the Moody Blues' *Days of Future Passed* (which used the London Festival Orchestra), the Mystic Moods Orchestra encouraged young people to leave the dance floor and float in an acoustically carpeted hole where the rain never gets in but can be heard all the same. The Mystic Moods may well have been an indirect impetus for Pink Floyd's *Dark Side of the Moon*, a musical story interwoven with constant background noise and dialogue.

The ambiance of lovemaking was always a crucial part of Mystic Moods recordings. Their erotic adventures graduated in the 1970s to soft-core pornography when a later distributor called Soundbird added a pull-out jacket sleeve to a reissued collection called *Touch*, to reveal two naked lovers about to embrace (perhaps in tribute to John and Yoko's *Two Virgins*).

The Mystic Moods Orchestra, in various incarnations, released close to twenty albums. Ironically, as the albums strove to become more "hip" (adding funk bands, combos, and so on), their popularity declined. In 1990, Brad Miller unveiled the first Mystic Moods album in fifteen years, with the orchestra reincarnated as a single grand piano played by Renée Hamaty against a turbulent seashore. The original intent—to make the sound effects just as important as the music returned. *Stormy Memories* proves that the Mystic Moods live on.

Music producer Don Graham stood before a *Billboard* new-age conference in the early eighties and proclaimed that the Mystic Moods Orchestra was the original new-age music concept. Today, amidst experiments in SurroundSound, wide-screen atmospheric, and other theme-park attractions, the Mystic Moods have once again proved to be ahead of their time.

When the world is seen through the anthropology of the 101 Strings and the psychoacoustics of the Mystic Moods, the words of Peter Crane, an IMAX publicist, make all the more sense: "With wide-screen simulators, you can see the Grand Canyon without worrying about the weather conditions, the 3 million other annual tourists or whether you'll fall off the edge. Besides just looking, you can get the history and geology of the place, all in

three minutes for around five dollars. It's a different way of seeing reality."

The 101 Strings, the Mystic Moods Orchestra and the myriad technologies executed in their spirit do not duplicate the world so much as replace it.

10 / Walls Talk!

I'm not in the least musical; I don't own a record player or a single cassette. In fact, I used to be the despair of my girlfriend when we traveled because I so clearly enjoyed canned music and used to turn it on in hotel rooms. But the subject is fascinating—all part of mood-control. For me the intentions of background music are openly political, and an example of how political power is constantly shifting from the ballot box into areas where the voter has nowhere to mark his ballot paper. The most important political choices in the future will probably never be consciously exercised. I'm intrigued by the way some background music is surprisingly aggressive, especially that played on consumer complaint phone lines and banks, airlines and phone companies themselves, with strident, non-rhythmic and arms-length sequences that are definitely not user-friendly . . .

—J. G. Ballard

As Saigon fell in April of 1974, U.S. envoys and Vietnamese refugees scrambled to the American Embassy rooftop as U.S. helicopters hovered down to rescue them from the approaching Viet Cong. The Embassy was deserted—an epitaph to Western ambitions—its corridors carpeted with broken window glass as paper money, bureaucratic documents, and personal ledgers rustled in the wind. But amid the chaos and desolation, the Embassy's Muzak system remained undisturbed, playing on like a tree falling in an abandoned forest, heard by none but making its global impact just the same.

Once again, Muzak had proved itself to be a beacon of order

in a world gone mad. These days from the late 1960s to the early 1970s were, in fact, among Muzak's finest hours. LBJ (nostalgic for his Austin franchise) had Muzak installed at his ranch. With the passing of the Presidential torch at the 1969 Inauguration, the Nixon Administration had Muzak broadcast from loudspeakers into Capitol Hill's open air. The Polaris submarines played Muzak to ease the pressures on crew members during their hair-trigger missile watch; and the U.S. Armed Forces listed Muzak among its "Optional Equipment."

Muzak served forty-three of the world's fifty biggest industrial companies. Germany, France, Great Britain, Spain, Norway, Finland, and Denmark shared the European market; Argentina, Uruguay, and Peru covered South America; and then there were the United States, Canada, and Israel. Total Muzak earnings exceeded \$400 million per year. And as if the world were not big enough, Buzz Aldrin and Neil Armstrong listened to it on their Apollo lunar cruise.

How did Muzak do it? What special, secret, and magical formula has enabled the music that everyone supposedly hates to please so many? One Muzak programmer suggests an answer: "When musicians are left to themselves to make art for the sake of art, not considering public taste, demographics or psychology, they will put together something that won't please everyone. My task is to amalgamate tastes. Imagine trying to please 80 or 90 million different viewpoints of the way things should be."

In his autobiography *Altered States*, British film director Ken Russell hit upon this very delicate balance. He discussed an "un-made script" called *Music, Music, Music* in which a young composer desperate to make a living "resorts to writing Muzak for TV commercials, resulting in a crackup with all the products associated with his jingles, including baked beans, detergent and chocolate, all erupting through the TV screen and engulfing him in goo."

When a company must take such elaborate steps to make music that enables denizens of the workaday world to feel relaxed and invigorated at the same time, the "normal" can become downright hair-raising. Muzak has to pick and choose modes and selections

stimulating enough to keep people engaged but sufficiently unobtrusive to prevent emotional or psychological paroxysms. A Muzak programmer could therefore regard the mood music revolution of the 1950s and 1960s as both energizing and irritating.

Muzak has always been at the forefront in producing music that directly addresses our role in modern life. Its efforts to use tempo and timbre to reflect parts of day and to adjust them to the human "fatigue cycle" reveal how walls, corridors, lighting, and the contours of man-made enclosures alter our perceptions and bio-rhythms.

This interest in environmental and ergonomic research was evident in 1967 when Dr. James Keenan (an industrial psychologist from Stanford University) spoke before Muzak's newly assembled Scientific Board of Advisers on the subject of the company's global importance. His address, "The Eco-Logic of Muzak," characterized Muzak as being "synomorphic" with the modern world and interrelated with all matters of time and place: "Muzak helps human communities because it is a nonverbal symbolism for the common stuff of everyday living in the global village. . . . Muzak promotes the sharing of meaning because it massifies symbolism in which not few, but all, can participate."

Throughout the 1960s, Muzak conducted several experiments through the U.S. Army Human Engineering Laboratories that were beneficial for many companies interested in using music to influence group behavior. These were masterminded by Dr. William Wokoun, a thin, bespectacled, taciturn behaviorist with a crew-cut—the perfect stereotype of the kind of professor preparing calculations and other paperwork for a trip to Mars. He was such a classic Army scientist that he would have driven some Muzak officials crazy had they been tempted to buy or sway him. His scrupulousness only paid off for them when his findings turned out in Muzak's favor.

In 1963, Bill Wokoun had set up the first Army test measuring Muzak's effects on personnel at a cordon of U.S. nuclear missile sites in Alaska, along the DEW (Distant Early Warning) line. The job of each observer (judged to be the Army's most boring post) was

to watch for radar blips that might signal intruding Russian planes. Wokoun had noted that the effectiveness of observers assigned to search for radar scope targets slackened after half an hour.

According to former Muzak vice president Bill Boyd: "They were doing things to make it a better job. They played with the furniture, lighting. Bill Wokoun started looking at music and quickly became aware that Muzak increased alertness in reaction time." As the study concluded, reaction time proved more steady when the subjects were reminded that their "buddy's life was in their hands."

Wokoun conducted his second and more elaborate missile test in 1968. This time subjects tackled a one-hour vigilance task. One group heard music with a wide frequency range while the other heard music with the high frequencies screened out. To observers watching through one-way mirrors, the subjects exposed to the wide frequency range were more alert and less inclined to press buttons when there was no proper stimulus. Wokoun also found that soporific strings posed the danger of letting minds wander and that Army brass worked much better to *brass* instruments.

These findings presage the results in another of Wokoun's Army tests: one that attempted to demonstrate how background music works as a better stimulus than other noise masks. This one involved 14 subjects (1 female and 13 males). They were assigned to work on a machine that measured reaction time to the nearest one one-hundredth of a second. The experiment's results: the subjects hearing a Muzak program proved to have a .27 of a second faster reaction time than those exposed to nothing but the white noise of a small fan.

Keeping soldiers vigilant even when nothing is happening has been a "persistent problem" in the military. Having proved music's worth, Wokoun went on to find out the types of music that did the best job. At Maryland's Aberdeen Proving Ground, he used a sample of 63 enlisted males, whom he assigned at random to three groups. They were placed in a soundproof room to perform vigilance tasks while 23 songs played. All three groups were exposed to the same Muzak selections but in varying orders. While the

music played, subjects had to observe a series of “magic-eye” tubes that flashed intermittently and had to press a button whenever a stimulus had altered.

The results once again vindicated Stimulus Progression’s Ascending Curve. The *increasingly variable* program, which mixed the tempo of the 23 songs for mood contrast, rendered the subjects’ vigilance task performance less predictable. The *descending* program (beginning with most stimulating and working down to the least) resulted in response times that grew longer and more variable. But the *ascending* program (Muzak’s usual functional service regimen, starting from the least stimulating and working up) yielded the best results.

Military vigilance workers may have performed better with Muzak’s standard format, but workers employed in the world’s oldest profession at a brothel in Stuttgart, Germany, grew concerned because their uptempo Muzak “Light Industrial” selections were not getting clients in and out fast enough to secure a profitable turnover. The proprietors had to make a special request for livelier music on their second and fourth quarter-hours.

From whorehouses to Baptist grammar schools, from mortuaries to pet cemeteries, Muzak’s trials were never more intriguing than in one situation in which it was challenged to quell the beast. Tom Evans, a Muzak representative in St. Louis, Missouri, corroborates a story that appeared in the January 18, 1973, issue of *Rolling Stone*: “There was a situation when the National Stockyards in Illinois had too many “dark cutters,” which happens when the release of adrenalin makes the blood congeal and the meat turn. They put the Muzak in and it calmed the cattle as they went to the hereafter.”

Entering the 1970s, Muzak had an awe-inspiring roster of responsibilities (and matching clout) for defining our social ecology. Slogans as “The ‘New Muzak’—A System of Security for the ‘70s” and “Muzak Is a Total Communications System” did little to allay the paranoia of Orwell obsessives below management’s upper tier. In a time when big corporations were subject to bomb scares from leftist terrorists, Muzak offered its circuitry for music as well as emergency instructions. Former Muzak researcher Bill Wokoun



General George Owen Squier: The Father of Muzak (REPRODUCED BY
PERMISSION OF THE NATIONAL ARCHIVE, WASHINGTON, D.C.)



The Magic That Changes Moods!



Musical Fun for Everyone

The old saying, "Two's company, three's a crowd," doesn't always hold. There are times when every couple longs for music, laughter and the companionship of a crowd.

Whenever you long for such diversion, you will find it wherever there is Wurlitzer Music. Before you bang up your hat, you will be leaving fun.

Like magic, you will find Wurlitzer Music will change your mood, brighten and lighten your outlook. You will go home refreshed and relaxed for having had a "wonderful time." The Wurlitzer Company, North Tower, 40th St., N. Y. 17. See Phonograph Section of Classified Telephone Directories for names of Wurlitzer Dealers.

The Stars of the Musical World
 perform in this portable jukebox
 with 100 songs - 8 settings.



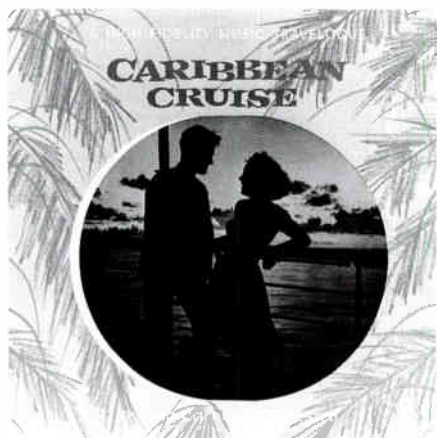
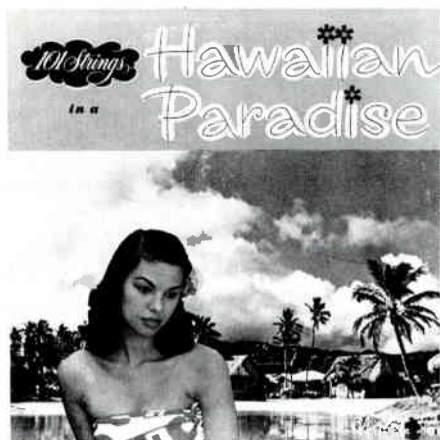
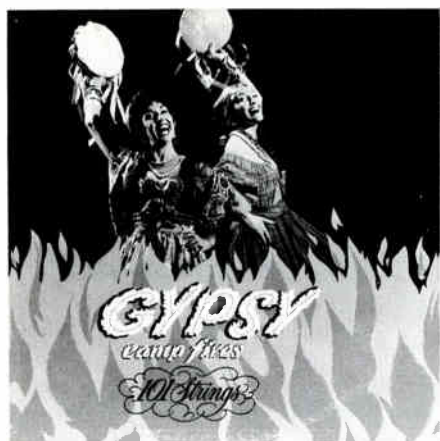
THE NAME THAT MEANS **WORKING** TO BILLIONS

The name of Wurlitzer means **recreation** and **entertainment** in phonographs as heard round the world. Wurlitzer Company's largest manufacturer of piano-all-positions makes one more. Also America's largest and most successful manufacturer of jukeboxes and more than one has its production a great new electronic organ.

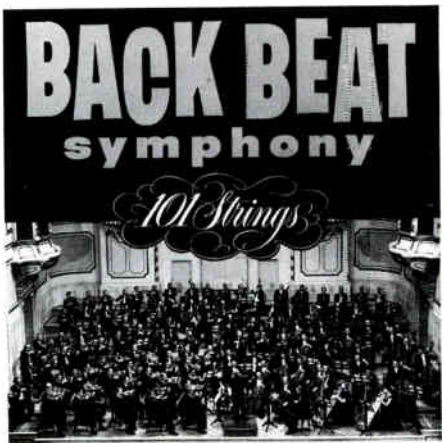
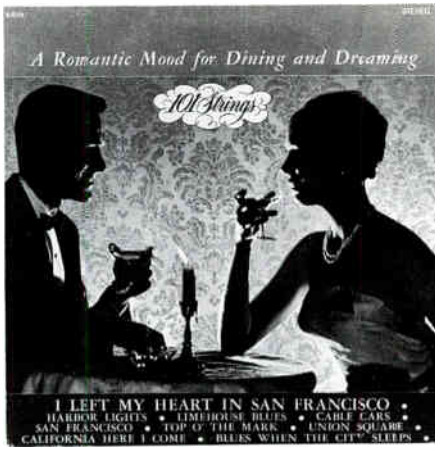
Besides providing decades of lounge serenades with its famous pianos and electronic organs, the Wurlitzer Company also helped to change our relation to music with its portable jukeboxes. This 1947 ad demonstrates how push-button technology transforms melody into a mood elevator. (REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE WURLITZER COMPANY)

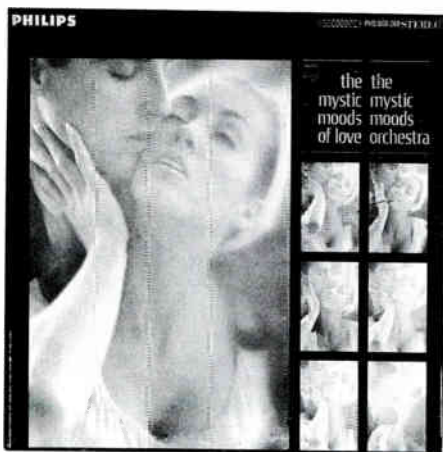
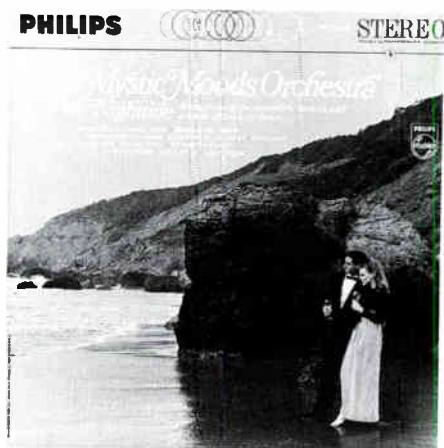


Annunzio Paolo Mantovani: His layered strings brought Heaven to vinyl. (REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF THE MUSIC DIVISION OF THE NEW YORK PUBLIC LIBRARY FOR THE PERFORMING ARTS, ASTOR, LENOX, AND TILDEN FOUNDATIONS)

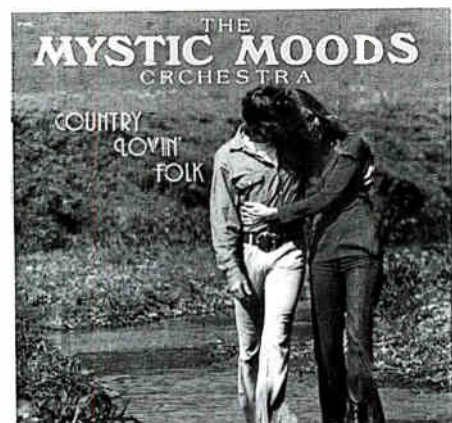


Around the world with the 101 Strings (COVERS REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF
ALSHIRE INTERNATIONAL, INC.)



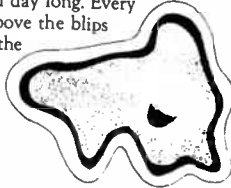


Ideal moods from the Mystic Moods Orchestra (COVERS REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF MILLER NEVADA LTD., INC.)



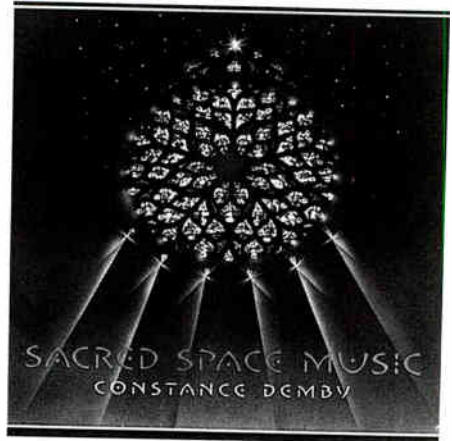
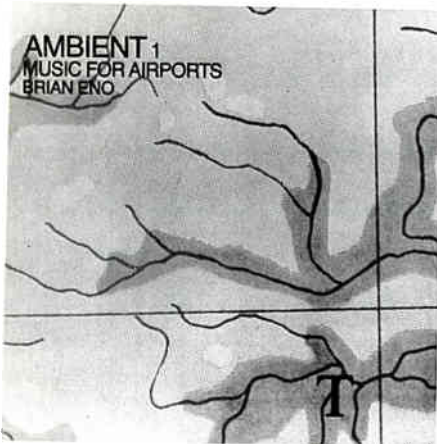
**Spend a day
on the Quiet Island.
You may
never leave it.**

Isn't the rattle of your neighbor's garbage can lids enough without having to listen to freaked-out music? Pull yourself out of your old radio routine and get onto something nice and sweet. WDBN. The Quiet Island in radio's sea of noise. We'll give you a chance to feel human again. With good music all day long. Every day. At 94.9 FM. Above the blips and the bleeps and the static and the talk and the blare.



WDBN FM STEREO 94.9

A 1970s ad from one of many discontinued "Beautiful Music" radio stations (REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF ROBERT M. MILLER AND UNITED STATES BROADCASTING CORPORATION)



Elevator Music for a new age (MUSIC FOR AIRPORTS COVER REPRODUCED BY PERMISSION OF CAROLINE RECORDS, INC., USA, AND WORLD USE COURTESY BRIAN ENO © 1978; SACRED SPACE MUSIC COVER REPRODUCED COURTESY OF HEARTS OF SPACE RECORDS)

once told a *Rolling Stone* interviewer that plans in one municipality to install Muzak in a police station interrogation area were nixed following the appointment of a new police chief.

Around 1972, Muzak engineer Paul Warner concocted Muzak-Controlled-Time, a plan intended to synchronize the world's clocks so that not a second would go to waste. With the help of Bulova, Warner had built a model of the clock on Long Island. The idea was that subscribers to the music service could hook into a signal that would send a cycle-pulse from a satellite network through a Muzak radio network that was tied to Greenwich Mean Time. "We actually sold the concept to the Sears Tower in Chicago when they were building it," Bill Boyd recalls. "But the clock couldn't get UL approval fast enough, and the plan fell through."

Warner is the same man who, when confronted with the constant question of whether Muzak ever used subliminals, retorted: "We're lucky to get music on it!"

The specter of another civil liberties versus background music bout had lurked again in October of 1969 when UNESCO's International Music Council convened on the "Right to Silence" question. Violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who served on the Executive Committee, vocally rebelled against having to be a "captive audience" as background music played on an airplane. After a vehement discussion, the Committee (with support from the International Council of Women) passed a resolution that denounced "unanimously the intolerable infringement of individual freedom and the right of everyone to silence, because of the abusive use, in private and public places, of recorded or broadcast music." The resolution also called for a "study from all angles—medical, scientific and judicial—without overlooking its artistic and educational aspects and with a view to proposing to UNESCO in the first place, and to the proper authorities everywhere, measures calculated to put an end to this abuse."

Years later, when Westinghouse took control of the company in 1981, Muzak seemed to have found the ideal owner. After all, Westinghouse was among the very first corporations to sponsor market research probing the idiosyncrasies of workers and consumers. This made it all the more puzzling when Westinghouse sent a steering

committee to tour the Muzak studio, interview the personnel, and assure themselves that Muzak *wasn't* manipulating minds.

Elfi Mehan, a Muzak engineer who had been with the company for over twenty years, recalls the initial encounters with the new owner: "Westinghouse gave us a hard time. They asked questions about us brainwashing people. I was absolutely furious and told them no. I told them not anywhere as much as television. I made reference to all the nukes that Westinghouse produces and that they are not interested in brainwashing but in brain destroying."

Former Muzak custom-programming coordinator Amy Denio recalls one of few incidents when Muzak was approached by subliminal scientists: "We would get subliminal tapes. I remember getting these weird flyers and circulars. The closest to subliminals was a request for white noise from a think-tank in D.C. The idea was that white noise inspired creative thought, and that problem solving worked better."

As a business and music center, Muzak has always operated (like any other music company) on the basis of a remarkably effective system of ad hoc barter between a mercurial upper management and a (by comparison) artistically committed group of underlings in the programming department. The company's need to "stay in touch" with the needs of its corporate clients and its listeners gets all the more complicated each time a new president takes control and tries to institute changes that may simply reflect idiosyncratic tastes.

Among the more flamboyant and influential Muzak heads was Umberto V. Muscio, who took the company's helm in 1966 and immediately proclaimed: "This is the new Muzak, the contemporary environment! The age of Mantovani and strings is behind us."

Muscio's previous job as an executive at Fedder's air-conditioning disposed him to apply principles from the science of temperature control to the field of mood control. In the 1950s, Vance Packard, in his famous book *The Hidden Persuaders*, discussed how the advertising agency Weiss and Geller probed the psychology of people who preferred air-conditioning to fan ventilation and concluded that the product had a "hidden security

value” since people “need to feel protected and enclosed and to keep the windows closed at night while they sleep so that nothing ‘threatening’ can enter. These people, it seems, are subconsciously yearning for a return to the security of the womb.”

Muzak distinguished itself as an emotional buffer in otherwise intimidating environments by combining motivational psychology with the aesthetics of “cash flow.” Instead of making music with the science of notation, scale, and time signatures in mind, Muscio used marketing terms that measured bottom-line impact over everything else. In 1967, he told the *Christian Science Monitor*: “Muzak no longer thinks of itself as just nice, bland background music with no commercials. Today, we think of music as our raw material. Our service actually lies in its sequential arrangement to gain certain effects and to serve a functional purpose.”

Besides lending a distinct character to the company, Muscio doled out considerable money and time for various studies on ergonomics to determine how places of work could be optimized to take workers’ psychological and biological rhythms fully into account. Muscio did all he could to plug Muzak into the “jet age,” with a “mod” Jackson Pollack-style painting hanging behind his desk (supposedly Muzak portrayed on canvas) and a phalanx of secretaries with beehive hairdos responding to his every command.

Muscio was among the very first Muzak executives to insist on the term *functional music*, emphasizing Muzak as a management tool. But in the process, Muscio made statements and set priorities that would eventually backfire on the company’s image when it finally contended that “Music by Muzak” has aesthetic worth. Two examples: Muscio’s absurd contention that Muzak was meant to be heard but not listened to and the nasty (and since abandoned) Muzak koan: *Boring work is made less boring by boring music.*

Through the years, a few prescient people in the company have acknowledged Muzak’s unwitting role in creating a style that many artists in the mainstream music world have inadvertently imitated. The more Muzak distanced itself from “art,” the closer it came to being a distinct art form. Muzak programmer Elfi Mehan recognizes and welcomes this paradox: “We have to make the music

low-key enough not to intrude but good enough for people to keep the service. No matter who took over the company, there was always a spirit.”

According to former Muzak programmer Jane Jarvis: “You can program music to make it sound differently. If you put two slow numbers together, you cannot really apprehend the difference. The stimulus comes from the changing tempos and the tonality.”

Jarvis, who joined Muzak in 1963, almost single-handedly computerized the company’s music library, putting thousands of titles into memory banks that conformed to the Ascending Curve, while preventing any repetition of songs within a 24-hour period. Jarvis also wrote a few of her own tunes for Muzak that would play about 200 times per year, mostly short tunes to fill up empty space at the back of the quarter-hour sets. Many of her song titles bore the names of Muzak franchisees.

When not working as a programmer, Jarvis had jobs as an organist at Milwaukee County Stadium and Shea Stadium, counterpointing her background music to the pirouettes and pivots of the Braves and the Mets. During her sixteen years at Muzak, she not only heard it while performing her nine-to-five duties but listened to it at home while she dressed, made breakfast, relaxed in the evening, and entertained guests. She remembers: “A lot of musicians thought I was selling out. But what a dreary world it would be if we could only listen to Bach. That is why tribute should be paid to the top-grade musicians that contributed to our station and understood what we were doing.” These included Dick Hyman, Grady Tate, Nick Perito (arranger for Perry Como and Ferrante & Teicher), Frank Hunter, Richard Hayman, Elliott Lawrence, Arthur Greenslade, and Tony Mottola.

In a 1965 article for *Horizon*, journalist Alan Levy related an experience he had. He was listening to a compilation of songs that Muzak was then distributing as its “Anti-Competitive Tape”—fashioned to outmaneuver its background music rivals. The tape began with one example of a musical arrangement that Muzak would avoid using, as being too “dreamy” and soporific: “How High the Moon” by the Jackie Gleason Orchestra. It followed this with a Dave Brubeck arrangement of the same song that was too

bouncy. Next came a too-distracting Stan Kenton version. And last, Muzak's approved "office version" of the song played—a rendition Levy described as "Sprightly, cool, and as invigorating as a mentholated cigarette commercial."

In late 1971, the congenial Jack Wrather sold Muzak to the New York-based Teleprompter Corporation, which had made its fortune by supplying visual prompts—idiot cues—for talking heads on TV shows. Once his \$25 million bid won out, Teleprompter CEO Irving Kahn envisioned Muzak being piped through Teleprompter's existing cable TV lines, available to households the way it was originally intended. Unfortunately, one detail thwarted Kahn's ambitions: he was on trial in federal court on extortion and bribery charges in connection with a Johnstown, Pennsylvania, cable television franchise. Ultimately he was convicted and sentenced to a two-year jail term. Although Teleprompter paid for Muzak with its then plummeting stocks, other Muzak franchises got panicky about Teleprompter's notoriety and decided that they had a vested interest in keeping Umberto Muscio at the Muzak helm.

Teleprompter was owned by Canadian-born Jack Kent Cooke, a self-made tycoon who also owned the Washington Redskins and a house designed by Frank Lloyd Wright. According to Muzak lore, Cooke went to dinner one night at a nice Las Vegas restaurant beneath a starlight roof. As he sat there trying to digest his meal, he suddenly gazed up at the ceiling, called the headwaiter over, and started railing against the "disgusting" sounds. The headwaiter identified it as Muzak, the company Cooke had just bought. Now that he owned it, Cooke was determined to "fix" it.

After instituting some draconian personnel shake-ups, Cooke finally enlisted the services of Rod Baum, who had previously programmed selections for Bonneville's easy-listening radio syndications. Cooke handed Baum a book by Alec Wilder called *The American Popular Song*, which analyzes all of the major composers and explains what they did to make a song popular, both musically and narratively. Cooke indicated that he wanted all of the songs listed in the book's index to be recorded for Muzak consumption.

Faced with such a tall order, Baum hired all of the string orchestras he could find and retained such noted composers and arrangers as Frank Chacksfield.

The Teleprompter days form a fascinating chapter in Muzak's history, taking place as they did during that baffling social transition from the revolutionary 1960s to the disco 1970s. Teleprompter's overweening ambitions reflected its musical appetite. At one point, Muzak boasted a six-week lag time between a hit song's topping the charts and metastasizing on their channel, with more than one thousand new songs added each year. Nick Perito's arrangements of the *Last Tango In Paris* theme and Helen Reddy's "I Am Woman" even smuggled in such previous instrumental contraband as electric guitar, while producer Phil Bodner plied his trademark style of playfully regimented jazz on such pop songs as "Amy's Theme." Bodner was especially tuned to the right Muzak formula. He had previously formed an ensemble called The Brass Ring, which had two Top 40 instrumental hits in the 1960s: "The Phoenix Love Theme," taken from the film score to Robert Aldrich's *The Flight of the Phoenix* (released the same year) in 1966 and "The Disadvantages of You" (originally the theme to a Benson & Hedges 100's cigarette commercial) in 1967, which included hypnotic Latin rhythms paired with a caressing female chorus of *la la las*.

For all the talk about Muzak's being too mechanical and anti-human, the company did not have a single synthesizer tune on its channel until the late 1970s. Some of the personnel at Muzak (who also happened to be musicians and composers themselves) would put their original works onto the channel for filler and collected royalties from their own employers—a situation that, Baum claims, got so far out of hand that he endeavored to license an unprecedented amount of new (and cheaper) music to increase the library. One of his solutions was to employ songs recorded by an inexpensive but efficient foreign orchestra.

In 1979, Baum was so impressed by a Czechoslovakian ensemble called the Brno Radio Orchestra that he purchased a library of their more recent scores for the company's use. For a few years at least, their alternately sanguine and brooding hybrid of classical,

jazz, and spacey techno-pop served as the company standard. Baum recalls:

Around 1948, when the Cold War was just starting, the Soviet government wanted to discourage the Czechs from tuning in on the German bands. It started the Brno Radio Orchestra to attract audiences and to sell the Stalinist party-line. Brno became one of the finest light music orchestras in Europe, rivalling the BBC groups. Since Muzak merely replaced Red propaganda with propaganda from the Ford Motor Company or Budweiser, I figured they were ideal.

Other Communist bloc ensembles like the Opus Strings also joined Muzak's library, exuding an eerie enchantment precisely because they were so foreign.

Among the many reasons Baum became Muzak programmer was "to *elevate* the musical tastes of the American public": "When I joined Muzak, the president wanted to know if I could put some music to tape that he could sell to trucking companies to keep drivers awake. I said no, they had No-Doz already."

In 1976, the first salon for background music was held at the Meridien Hotel in Nice, France. The background music business had grown far beyond the confines of Muzak, with splinter organizations offering on-site tape systems and music broadcast at special FM frequencies. Seeburg had grown to offer three main libraries of slow-, fast-, and medium-tempo songs available either on a forty-hour-long automatic record system or on eight-hour reel-to-reel tapes. Background music's "aesthetic law" also reigns for Muzak's two main competitors: AEI (Audio Environments, Inc.) and Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company's Sound Products.

In 1968, Yesco emerged to provide one of the very first "foreground" music services. Founded by Mark Torrance and Michael J. Malone, Yesco replaced background instrumentals with original artist songs. Torrance later briefly served as Muzak's president in 1987 after Marshall Field V bought Muzak and merged it with

YESCO. In 1971, Malone started AEI (Audio Environments, Inc.) which later became AEI Music Network, Inc. Oddly enough, AEI programs its foreground "business music" in a similar manner that Muzak treats background music, stressing "elements" over "musical style" and using melody as a dramatic device for the retail and hospitality stage.

Though priding itself on its "alternative" to the standard background music format, AEI certainly has not abandoned it. Two channels, *Lifestyle* and *Interiors*, are purely instrumental and unobtrusive in their execution. "*Lifestyle*" is programmed with tempo-controlled songs and careful attention to creating a progression through textural changes. Living up to its motto, "Wire the world," AEI has made several corporate acquisitions, including Britain's Rediffusion Music Limited.

3M Sound Products started in 1964 as an on-premise tape system that, like Muzak, focused on sound environments for business settings and optimum spending. Today 3M uses only a DBS system that runs via custom-built, random-access playbacks. It offers several categories including foreground music, but its ever-popular background instrumental channel includes renditions ranging from "Stardust" to "Theme from *Entertainment Tonight*."

Besides paying attention to tempo and volume, 3M's system takes into account such problems as how well the sound bounces off tables. One 3M Sound Products dealer remembers an embarrassing incident at a restaurant chain outlet in which the company installed speakers designed for a particular floor plan. When the restaurant subsequently moved its counter, one of the speakers ended up transmitting music directly over the cash registers so that the microphone for announcing orders picked up nothing but music, and the business transactions were chaotic.

Another striking feature of Muzak, 3M, and other background music services is their monaural transmission system. Although the songs are now recorded using the best digital stereo technology money can buy, the companies broadcast the selections through a single channel. The result is a series of ceiling sound-vents emitting exactly the same depth-of-sound and frequency.

This may initially appear to be a miserly and inferior solution, but it has its justifications. In a modest-size McDonald's in Connecticut, I witnessed the splendidly homogenizing effects of this process. At the time, the establishment was packed with groups of customers, each carrying on its own conversation in one or another language. This intolerable mishmash was somehow alleviated by the carefully assembled speakers piping in the near-subliminal music. The reconstituted version of a song like "Both Sides Now" neutralizes nature's multichannel distractions into a single, benevolent source. The mono effect provides the paradoxical service of standardizing noise, enhancing private conversation, and even making the food taste better. The net result is a triumph for both acoustics and social order—at least until you leave McDonald's.

Muzak has more than once created a unique listening experience from what began as a response to technical and economic limitations. In keeping with this tradition, Muzak found that its unidirectional speakers and limited range had advantages in business environments not found in the more advanced stereophonic and quadraphonic wonders that were touted throughout the 1970s. Much as General Squier used electronic wires to standardize geography for military interception, Muzak (perhaps by accident) demonstrated that monophonic music piped through a public address system could facilitate order over otherwise unmanageable surroundings.

Another example of good use of monaural sound involves the series of long corridors at Newark International Airport that radiate from the main terminal to the various departure gates. A person walking through might notice at this and other airports the seemingly endless succession of ceiling apertures broadcasting light instrumental versions of such songs as Olivia Newton-John's "We Are Magic" at uniform volume.

A few years ago, Britain's Rediffusion Music, Ltd. (formerly RediTune), attempted to make a stereo machine. According to the company's Managing Director Chris Ring: "We did introduce a two-hour version of our usual four-hour mono cartridge system, but it was never popular and I finally withdrew it from the few

remaining customers in 1991.” According to Muzak’s Rod Baum: “When you play stereo music in a restaurant, you can’t get people to sit in the right spot to enjoy it.”

The style of background music is related to the consumer context. A fast-food outlet like McDonald’s, with its large turnover of patrons, may tend to pipe in up-tempo music to encourage fast eating and fast exit; while a supermarket may play a lower-tempo selection to encourage shoppers to linger over items that might otherwise be overlooked.

Several studies probed this tempo-to-eating correlation. In one, sponsored by Muzak in the late 1980s, the subjects were drawn from Fairfield University’s faculty and staff cafeteria. The sample group consisted of eleven people (ten men and one woman) between 25 and 60 years old, none of whom were aware of being monitored. The music was broken into two sixty-minute instrumental (nonclassical) tapes played at a constant volume. The music on one tape was performed at slow tempo (56 beats per minute); the music on the other tape was performed at fast tempo (122 beats per minute). Music was played on weekdays between noon and 1:30 P.M., in a sequence going from fast to slow to no music at all during the 16-day trial. Two experimenters pretending to be cafeteria patrons observed each subject under different conditions, activating timers the moment subjects took their first bite of food. They concluded that the fast-tempo music increased eating speed, although the converse hypothesis that slow music made slower eaters did not apply. But if the sequence increased from no music to slow-tempo music to fast-tempo music, the number of bites increased with each newly introduced condition.

A Muzak Research Study conducted by researchers from Eastern Kentucky University explored “Utilizing Music as a Tool for Healing.” *Environmental Music by Muzak* was installed in such places as the preoperative area, operating rooms, and recovery rooms at Union Hospital in the Bronx, New York, with favorable results in common patients, visitors, physicians, and staff. Muzak’s programming for the ICU unit at St. Joseph’s Hospital in Yonkers led researchers to conclude that special music preferences included:

an emphasis upon major modes, rather than minor modes; tunes that were melodious, but not sad or somber; music that would not evoke wistful reminiscences about the “good old days”; and music that would be bright and melodious, yet not exciting. Their rhythm had to be regular, although not predominant, with enough variation to avoid monotony. Variations in loudness were controlled in the music programs to insure that no sudden loud musical peaks would precipitate a fatal cardiac arrhythmia.

Muzak’s Stimulus Progression format seems to work best in reverse order for other patients. For them, starting with overly stimulating music and working down to softer, more soothing sounds—“entrainment”—functions as a kind of biofeedback.

Regardless of the empirical research on the subject, the final verdict on background music’s effects and aesthetics lies with daily listener encounters. Complaints about background music song content prove that people *do* listen, although its presence in these instances has an impact that companies like Muzak do not encourage. When Frank Chacksfield arranged a version of Judy Collins’ version of “Amazing Grace,” clients in the South were offended and threatened to cancel subscriptions. A religious school in Tulsa, Oklahoma, played Muzak in its administrative office, but the school dropped the service, contending that it feared that the lyrics of popular songs might have a bad effect on kids.

Muzak executive Barry Freedman recalls working for another background music company in Chicago that got frequent calls from employees in a high-tech engineering firm. They complained that an old Russian Army song kept cropping up on the tape and was offending the majority of their workers, who were recent Eastern European immigrants.

Rod Baum, ever the raconteur, loves relating an anecdote that demonstrates Muzak’s primary social benefit:

In an office for a garment factory outside of Atlanta, the workers got tired of the Muzak and used a radio

for their background music. If they turned on rock, 25 percent of the people in the workplace didn't like it. So they got a committee together and took a vote. They played the classical station, and only 10 percent of the people ended up liking it. So they tried a country station, and 60 percent didn't like it. They had another meeting. They decided on one day for each format: country one day, classical the next, disco for maybe half a day. But the 10 percent who liked whatever was playing got tired of people glaring at them. Finally the office manager called us and asked if they could have the Muzak back. It proved what I was doing was working. Muzak proved the least of all possible evils.

In 1979, when Muzak made its first attempt to launch a satellite, the craft had reentered the atmosphere and burned. Ironically, among the songs included in the launch was a version of the Fifth Dimension hit "Up, Up and Away." But after several tries, Muzak's Direct Broadcast Satellite system at last transmitted its music from Raleigh, North Carolina, to its satellite orbiting the earth at a distance of 22,300 miles.

Muzak, which always avoided vocals, transmitted the human voice on its instrumental channel for the first time in quite a while when it agreed to include the now legendary "We Are the World" broadcast in 1985, simultaneously with radio stations across the country. According to Rod Baum: "We had read about the broadcast in *Billboard*, so we thought we'd join in. They could have called it 'Hands Across the Muzak World.'"

By 1985, before it merged with Yesco, Muzak was operating its own original artist channel called FM (Foreground Music) One. When Chicago department store heir and magnate Marshall Field V took over in 1986, Muzak concentrated on its domestic product with the goal of replacing 20 to 25 percent of its library per year. The company has since changed hands again, this time becoming the property of Centre Capital Investors, L.P., which is pushing for Muzak's entry into more high-tech markets. Muzak has a custom-made tape service called TONES and several "foreground"

Muzak channels of classical, contemporary instrumental, and Adult Contemporary vocal. "Hitline," which features current AM rock favorites, is especially popular with clothing stores. The company also started ZTV in 1992, a video program of music and special shows. Yet despite the wide assortment of alternatives, the Environmental channel (in the "elevator music" tradition) remains Muzak's top seller.

On the surface, the sonic adventures of an Itzak Perlman seem much loftier and more exciting than the productions of the typical Muzak composer/programmer. Without the artistic license to experiment with "tone colors," Muzak appears doomed to reconstitute ditties like "Danke Schoen" to make them sound more jejune than the originals, but the process is more complex.

Today, Muzak is increasingly sensitive about its philistine image and is taking great pains to have its instrumental covers remain as faithful to the originals as possible. The motivation for this rests on practical business considerations far more than on aesthetics. According to Elfi Mehan: "People will complain if they recognize a song they like has been revamped too much."

Muzak keeps fine-tuning. Saxophones are often used to substitute for vocals, although guitar also suffices. Songs are still computer-encoded by their rhythm, tempo, instrumentation, and original recording artists. You will never hear two Beatles songs in succession or one piano melody followed by another.

Former Muzak designer Christopher Case always stressed the need for careful modulation of obstreperous saxes, plodding guitars, and gawky drums into a "mellow groove." An ex-disk jockey, King Crimson fan, and former employee at Muzak's one-time competitor Seeburg, Case was described by one man who worked with him as an obsessed and haunted man who would usually sit at his desk with his jacket fully buttoned. But during his brief tenure, he helped Muzak revamp its public and self-image.

In an interview, he claimed: "There was an old Muzak philosophy. But now it's not cut and dry, whether you listen or don't. It is just something that doesn't interfere. To think that people don't listen is stupid. People are listening." He defined Muzak as "music artfully performed in a manner to uplift, not intrude":

Some of the things I listen for are present in Pythagorean number theory. It has to do with harmonies. Pythagoras states that there's a certain harmony in nature. You see it in the circumference of the earth, angles and positions between planets, seeds in a particular flower. Nature expresses number and mathematics; music is mathematics, with time signatures, chord structures, vibration rates. You take it another step, and conclude that, if music does not reflect what occurs in nature, it is disruptive. If it's harmonious, it is a benefit. One of the things I considered before taking the job is that Muzak touches everyone. It was an opportunity for me to benefit the world."



11 / “Beautiful Music”

THE RISE OF EASY-LISTENING FM

Wouldn't it be great if you could turn down the world?

—Ad for WDBN's “The Quiet Island”

Lite FM—home to such wistful voices as Karen Carpenter, Phil Collins, and Gloria Estefan—is just one of many mood-monitored soundscapes that radio has offered us through the years. In fact, the latest spate of Adult Contemporary formats stressing original-artist vocals and dispensing with light instrumentals has interloped upon a once-thriving format called “Beautiful Music.”

Beautiful Music radio was an effort launched in the mid- to late 1960s that provided soft and unobtrusive instrumental selections on a very structured schedule with a minimum of commercial interruptions. Of all existing FM formats, Beautiful Music was the most carefully thought out and disciplined—almost to the point

of functioning as a free background music service, with a day-parting regimen designed to please listeners on their way to work or while relaxing at home.

The history of these adventures in mood radio is intimately tied to the advance of FM technology. When Edwin Howard Armstrong discovered the FM (frequency modulation) signal in the 1930s, technicians were already aware of subsidiary communications authorizations (SCAs)—FM signals that can only be accessed with a special receiver. During World War II, the U.S. Army used SCAs, with some success, to send top-secret messages to troops. Once the military stopped using them after the war, Congress passed the Subsidiary Communications Authorizations Act of 1956, directing the FCC to permit radio stations to lease SCAs for commercial purposes. Seeking to replace relatively expensive and inefficient phone lines, companies such as Muzak also leased SCAs from radio stations to get better sound with fewer technical interruptions.

The FCC ruled in 1964 that FM stations catering to cities with populations in excess of 100,000 could no longer use FM just to simulcast their AM shows; instead, they had to provide original programming during at least 50 percent of their broadcast day. In the 1940s, the FCC had supported the opposite approach: authorizing parallel broadcasting so that listeners could make the transition from AM to FM with less confusion. At a time when many broadcasters (and listeners) still considered FM to be simply an auxiliary medium, simulcasters were furious with the ruling, since they normally used their FM franchises as SCA reserves. That soon changed, however, when FM radio began developing its own character and became immersed in two main musical styles: classical (which catered to a more finicky audience) and light instrumentals (which had the larger following).

While mood music companies were using radio waves for private gain, mainstream commercial stations were gradually adopting Muzak-type formats of relaxing orchestrals, light classics, and showtunes at no charge and with a minimum of on-air chatter.

Christopher Case had worked at such a station for seven years before becoming a Muzak programmer. He recalls: “FM bands

had a much better signal-to-noise ratio than AM. They were more conducive to serious and quiet music. Back then, all commercial formats were already covered on AM with jazz, rock, and country. Light music offered a relatively untapped market and generated big profits.”

The advent of FM mood-waves is due largely to the efforts of Jim Schulke, the “Godfather of ‘Beautiful Music’ Radio.” Schulke, a lean and somewhat reclusive man, was the kind of analytical genius who could dissect a ratings book as if it were a lab animal. While working as a director of advertising for Magnavox, he devised a method of buying airtime on FM stations in bulk and then reselling the blocks to interested advertisers. He perceived the FM band as a lucrative frontier and made a deal with NAFMB (the National Association of FM Broadcasters) for FM usage after agreeing to pay annual dues. Upon hiring a ratings service to conduct a ten-market study on FM listening, he not only discovered that the band had a substantial following but confirmed his suspicion that light instrumental was the most popular mode.

Schulke noticed that a few stations had their own way of juxtaposing songs so that they were mood-consistent or formed a “matched flow.” According to Schulke, whose ear-opening study eventually led to his becoming NAFMB’s president: “These weren’t very scientific methods, but they worked.”

The art of “seamless segues” was also practiced by Philadelphia’s WDVR (now WEAZ), where station manager Jerry Lee used an album-rotation system to produce similar fare. A flamboyant and crafty promoter, Lee managed to make his the first FM station to rake in million-dollar profits. In the mid-1970s, Lee maintained his high business profile by driving around in the original “super-car” from James Bond movies, which he had purchased.

Schulke eventually started a firm called QMI (Quality Media, Inc.) to sign up sponsors for FM independents. To help his stations get better ratings and to pull in more agencies, he later formed SRP (Stereo Radio Productions), bringing in Phil Stout as his vice president of operations. Schulke was, in effect, FM’s first

bona-fide *mood-musicologist*—so precise in his philosophy that he concocted a list of “do’s and don’ts” commonly referred to in the industry as “Schulkeisms.”

Schulke forbade the playing of any songs that contrasted with one another or varied too much in tempo or tone. There were no overbearing voices to draw attention; only the less fevered singing of such performers as Andy Williams and of choruses such as the Anita Kerr Singers and the Johnny Mann Singers were permitted. He likened his science of “matched flow” to the ebb and flow of tides, in an era when the average radio listener still had an attention span of longer than seven minutes.

Ironically, his stations, designed to attract advertisers, had to limit the number of commercials for fear of compromising the aural atmosphere and detracting from the impact of each advertiser’s message. He also saw rock music as occupying the highest level, and light instrumental music the lowest, on a scale of “intrusion levels.”

Schulke measured his success through direct listener response. Disk jockeys were told not to announce the songs’ artists, in order to prevent excess chatter and to avoid alerting listeners to the repetitions in programming necessitated by the small pool of artists in the station’s library. His most conclusive finding was that soft strings were the surest guarantor of listener approval in a focus group consisting mostly of women between the ages of 18 and 49. According to Schulke, “Females have the ability to hear higher frequencies than men. They are better gauges for good fidelity. The gender demarcation was so important that we concluded, if we lost our dynamic range, we lost our females.”

Thanks to Schulke and Stout, the breezy and at times hypnotic tunes of such light greats as Ray Conniff soothed women in their kitchens when not serenading them in supermarket aisles. Schulke became so adept at determining his program’s direction that a colleague once credited him with being “the only guy who can dust off three or four Mantovanis and five or six Percy Faiths and make a million dollars.”

Schulke remembers how good he became at ad-libbing a pitch for potential clients: “I would experiment by switching on a Xerox

machine during business consultations. After surreptitiously turning it off, I noticed that the voice levels dropped and everyone seemed so much more relaxed. I'd then tell them that is exactly what my music does. Turning on my stations was like turning off the machines."

Beautiful Music's other distinction from competing radio formats was the syndicator's centralized control—an arrangement that squelched the whims or quirks in taste of local deejays and general managers.

According to Phil Stout, co-pioneer of Beautiful Music with Schulke and a mood music programmer since 1960: "It wasn't like there were hundreds of people involved in Beautiful Music. It was a rather incestuous little group that not only knew one another but branched off into other companies." Stout always made Schulke's programming work best, as he commandeered the backroom studio of SRP's New York headquarters. His trial-and-error approach to music selections called for up to two days' work to put together a one-hour tape.

SRP did have genre competitors, however. One of these was Marlin Taylor who, in September of 1967, started WJIB, the Boston area's first mood music FM station. After just two months on the air, the station was overwhelmed by letters and phone calls from advertising agencies and newspaper editors lauding the concoction of Percy Faith, Ronnie Aldrich, Ferrante and Teicher, Roger Williams, and various selections from the London Phase 4 series.

In 1969, Taylor convinced the president of a company called Bonneville to bring a similar format to New York City's WRFM, which wanted to outdo a successful mood music "gaslight hour" emanating from WPAT in Paterson, New Jersey. "They let me be my own program director," Taylor recalls. "In seven months, the station jumped [from] #23 to #5 in the Arbitron ratings."

Bonneville, a corporation run by the Mormon Church in Utah, asked Taylor to put his program into a salable package for more of its FM clients. Out of this endeavor came Bonneville Broadcasting System, a syndication firm that listed Taylor as its founder and president from 1971 until 1983. Bonneville spread its FM

tentacles from coast-to-coast, relying on its own version of Schulke's "matched flow" with four quarter-hours of music recorded on reel-to-reel tapes.

The "Schulke format," which Schulke and Stout soon christened "Beautiful Music," became very successful. The "Beautiful Music" label stuck, and the format reigned at such stations as Atlanta's WPCH and Miami's WLYF (the first FM channel to make #1 in a major market).

Smaller syndicators attempted similar experiments. Al Ham, a former A&R man for Columbia Records, came up with *Music of Your Life*, an AM nostalgia format that commingled instrumentalists like Frank Chacksfield with vocalists like Bing Crosby. Ham's knack for putting together the proper balance of singing and music came from his intense involvement with much of Columbia's early mood music fare. He—as both producer and bass player—had worked with Ray Conniff, Percy Faith, Johnny Mathis, the Four Lads, and Mitch Miller.

Avoiding the direct competition it would have faced on the FM dial, *Music of Your Life* proved to be a successful cottage industry. Radio stations would sign a contract, pay Ham a flat fee per month, and rent reel-to-reel or vinyl recordings all segued with Ham finesse. The only remotely similar AM animal was WAIT, a Chicago AM station that started in 1962 and claimed to be the first format of its kind; but its style was much more like today's Adult Contemporary, with a 1:1 ratio of vocals to instrumentals and announcements every quarter-hour.

Medina, Ohio, was home to WDBN, a Beautiful Music forerunner and one of Schulke's first inspirations. The station styled itself as "the Quiet Island" ("in radio's sea of noise"). It signed onto the air in October of 1960 and was already broadcasting in stereo by November of 1961.

The Quiet Island seemed destined for good fortune. When the FCC imposed a maximum FM power ceiling of 50,000 watts on stations in the Ohio region, the Island, being an older station, enjoyed "Grandfather" rights that allowed it to retain its ERP (Effective Radiated Power) of 118,000 watts. The Pulse, Inc., an audience-rating company for national broadcasts, published a

study in 1964 showing that almost 30 percent of all American homes enjoyed FM reception. The following year, the Mediastat Research Company cited FM penetration of up to 50 percent of all homes.

By January of 1970, when an American Research Bureau study of FM listening showed that WDBN commanded the nation's sixth largest FM audience, the Quiet Island tightened its iron-clad music policy. The plan centered on three basic elements. The first of these, *Orchestration and Instrumentation*, specified the use of pianos, guitars, heavy strings, horns, and even vocals, with no "improvisational bridges and saxophones" to jar the audience. The second rule involved *Tempo*, which varied according to the time of day: the wake-up hours between 6:00 and 9:00 A.M. required "Orchestra-Up" consisting of bright and exciting music to enhance that first cup of coffee; from 9:00 A.M. to 8:00 P.M., Jack Jones-style "love tunes" were the main course; and from 8:00 P.M. to midnight, basic string orchestras with "only sentimental vocal chorus" were allowed. The third and final rule related to *Memory or Familiarity*, with each quarter-hour containing "a musical appeal to an age group between 25 and 49 years of age." Former station owner Bob Miller admits that the quarter-hour division might have been influenced by Muzak's "Stimulus Progression."

WDBN ran such ads as this: "People seem to like each other better when they're on The Quiet Island. One of these days around dinner time, take your family on a vacation away from it all. From your husband's bad day at the office. From your children's hard day at play. From the little aggravations you had to put up with from seven to six."

Thriving until 1988, The Quiet Island not only entertained; it offered punchy manifestos against what it considered rock-contamination:

*Isn't the rattle of your neighbor's garbage can lids
enough without having to listen to freaked-out music?
Pull yourself out of your old radio routine and get into
something nice and sweet.*

They say many young people today will be deaf by

the time they're 30. Their own music is doing them in. Life has gotten louder for the rest of us, too. The song bird, the cricket, the soft crunch of snow underfoot are all becoming lost in the roar of the Seventies. . . . Fortunately, there's still one place where you can hear something beautiful. WDBN-FM.

The mid-1970s marked a change that had far greater impact on everyday musical perceptions than most people could ever realize: “Beautiful Music” evolved into “easy-listening”—a label that caught on and still sticks, but has been misinterpreted and misused ever since. “Easy-listening” is not a copyrighted term or a registered trademark, and it has uncertain origins. By the late 1960s, “Easy-Listening” was already being used as a Top 40 chart hit category in *Billboard* magazine to designate light instrumentals and vocals—anything from Paul Mauriat’s “Love Is Blue” to the Lettermen’s “Our Winter Love.”

SRP’s other major change was its graduation from strictly playing commercial records and other preexisting music to using custom-made instrumental covers. Schulke and Stout made a deal with the British Broadcasting Company to purchase music recorded by some of Britain’s best composers, arrangers, and conductors on both sides of the Atlantic.

SRP’s first custom recordings were made in London in 1973, under the direction of Leroy Holmes, who sold 1 million records of the “Theme from *The High and the Mighty*.” According to Stout:

The idea behind custom music was to record the very popular or familiar pieces unavailable in string format. The bottom line of my easy-listening programming was familiarity, I would scatter original material by people like John Sbarra with the “down-homers”—those very familiar pieces.

While supervising the 1973 London sessions with Leroy, I heard some fantastic instrumental string music on the BBC. So I called them and discovered they had a number of string orchestras on staff. They used ma-

terial on the air twice and then erased it so they could continue to give work to these musicians. I asked about a deal to sell some of the stuff to us for exclusive use in the U.S. They agreed and provided us in excess of 1,000 cuts per year, and we gave them lists of what we wanted them to record. This arrangement went on for seven or eight years.

Ronnie Aldrich, John Fox, Tony Mottola, Ron Goodwin, Norrie Paramor, Geoff Love, Syd Dale, the BBC Midland Orchestra, the Cascading Strings (arranged and conducted by John Gregory), and a cadre of other talents launched their careers in this venue; some, including Mottola and Dale, moonlighted for Muzak and various background music production libraries.

Ron Goodwin, most noted for "633 Squadron" (a toe-tapping march that still prods London tube riders on workday mornings), had a facility for bouncy yet understated tunes fit for any civic occasion. He got one job replacing Henry Mancini to score Alfred Hitchcock's *Frenzy* when the mercurial director suddenly decided that he wanted a lighter score in place of the macabre one he had initially requested.

Syd Dale was another composer who offered valuable stylistic innovations for both SRP and Muzak. He invented "The Double Dozen," a simulated big band that dispensed with gangly saxophones, trombones, and trumpets but kept the bass clarinets, oboes, and other woodwinds to create a kind of "burnished brass" with a far less blaring texture.

John Sbarra belongs to a new generation of composers committed to the "Beautiful Music" sound—replete with string arrangements, subtle background choruses, and low-profile synthesizers. As Phil Stout claims in his liner notes to Sbarra's CD compilation *Movie Themes of Tomorrow*, the music of John Sbarra goes "right next to a perfect martini and gorgeous sunsets."

Of course, other musicians, arrangers, and conductors, including James Last and Franck Pourcel, gained considerable easy-listening radio exposure even though they did not make custom recordings. Stout remembers:

At one point in the 'seventies, Roger Williams came by the SRP studio. He told me: "As an artist I understand why you play the material of mine you do, but I want to know why you don't play the rest of it." I explained to him that we were not interested in overarranged, intrusive cuts, and I think at that point he walked away more comfortable and understood the slot we found for him.

Compared to most other radio formats, Bonneville and SRP stations followed a strict regimen. Their diligent plan to stroke the public's heart and soul sometimes paid off with fevered responses from overzealous, sometimes loopy listeners. Stout reminisces: "I got a letter in the late sixties from a psychiatrist. The doctor was treating a woman who was a huge listener to one our stations. A particular piece of music we had in rotation was a favorite of hers, and when we took it out she went bananas. It prompted her psychiatrist to drop SRP a line, asking why we weren't playing it, and if we could put it back in."

Stout also received another letter, this time a two-pager, from a woman who accused SRP's programmer of wallowing in lost love. Although just about all of the music was instrumental, the woman could not help perceiving that the titles tended to allude to failed romances.

Marlin Taylor encountered an even more unsettling situation:

One horny woman in New York claimed a song we played pushed her "hot" button. She complained that WRFM was using it and other songs to send her subliminal messages. She'd leave gifts for me as a bribe to stop playing them. After I had long since departed from the station, she took me to court in lower Manhattan because I didn't return her gift. The judge threw it out. He discovered she was loony, but I still had to hire an attorney!

There were also censorship problems with some SRP subscribers in the Bible Belt. For example, if the program included a vocal

version of "What Kind of Fool Am I?" Stout would have to cut the song out because of the line "I don't give a damn."

Among their other cultural contributions, Beautiful Music stations have more than once brought a particular deserving song or artist out of obscurity. Stout, while sifting through old records, retrieved Johnny Pearson's "Sleepy Shores," a song previously unappreciated by many despite its frequent appearance in television commercials. The public got to enjoy it all over again thanks to SRP's faithful airplay. Another Beautiful Music hit attributed to SRP was Caravelli's instrumental recording of Bob Dylan's "Wigwam." Dylan's original version was also listed in *Billboard's* "Easy-Listening" Top 40 in the latter part of 1970.

Taylor recalls other instances of uncovering obscure gems:

I played a song called "Dolannes Melody" by Jean Claude Borelly that had a pan-pipe. People started calling in asking what the instrument was. Nobody ever heard it before. I later picked out "The Lonely Shepherd" performed by Zamfir with the James Last Orchestra. It was an unfamiliar melody which drove the listeners crazy. We generated as many as 15 to 20 calls a day for a single play. Nobody else was playing it. My peers told me it was nuts, but the listeners loved it. After that, Zamfir sold over 500,000 albums in television promotions alone.

The advent of Beautiful Music coincided with a historically sensitive period in America's demographics: a time when the generation gap was much more apparent than it is today. The music catered to an adult audience that had spending power and tended to shut itself off from the blaring counterculture.

As hippie-oriented underground radio experiments died and the promotion of product (versus art) reasserted its dominion over the airwaves, mainstream FM rock stations resorted more and more to Beautiful Music's entrepreneurial system. AM was also feeling the draft. When the Carpenters segued into the 1970s with "Close to You" and Neil Diamond went from his gritty "Cherry Cherry" to the legato "Song Sung Blue," the music industry was already

sneaking Beautiful Music motifs into the pop charts to accommodate the baby boomers' metabolic meltdown.

SRP's influence became so pervasive in the following years that *Billboard* magazine, in the fall of 1979, issued a front page encomium, citing Beautiful Music as the #1 format in the United States. About 80 percent of that audience was listening to SRP.

Yet Bonneville, under the aggressive entrepreneurship of its head John Patton, had encroached on Schulke's territory to become the biggest Beautiful Music syndicator. Bonneville greatly expanded its music library, launched a satellite transmission system, and hired Lex de Azevedo and his Million Dollar Custom Orchestra to record more music. By the spring of 1980, many of Schulke's customers had been coaxed onto Bonneville's ledger.

Despite selling his SRP to Cox Broadcasting in 1981 for \$6 million, Schulke continued to concentrate on the music. But something was happening: Despite the optimistic 1979 findings in *Billboard*, Schulke began to realize that the older adults who listened to his stations got older, their spending power weakened, and their incomes became fixed. Schulke describes the unmistakable signs of easy-listening's impending demise:

*Beautiful Music started to slide by 1980, then slipped as its audience got older. Before Lite FM as we know it caught on, I created a format that highlighted original artist vocals. I sold SRP to Cox Broadcasting just before the *Billboard* article proclaimed Beautiful Music as Number One. I was accused of selling the oil well before the oil leaked. But I needed something that satisfied a new demand. After a lot of research, I came up with soft vocal programming called Schulke II.*

Before Schulke II was implemented, Schulke took the first step in luring clients away from Bonneville by making a phone call to Bill Moyes of the Research Group. He convinced Moyes to finance a \$400,000 Comprehensive Music Testing study that would span four years. Schulke's research involved conducting tests in an auditorium where prescreened subjects listened to about fifteen seconds of a particular cut and then wrote down what they liked

about it. He found that vocals were their cutting edge. From there *Schulke II* started broadcasting a nearly all-vocal program, interspersed with occasional instrumentals—the opposite of Beautiful Music and the forerunner of today's Lite FM or Adult Contemporary.

"Lite FM had driven the nail into the Beautiful Music coffin," according to former Muzak programmer Rod Baum. "Beautiful Music didn't contemporize enough and started sounding schmaltzy. People started preferring songs sung."

Consequently, few industry observers were surprised when the May 26, 1990, issue of *Billboard* read: "Fallen on Hard Times, Easy Moves Toward Soft AC." Even though easy-listening's defenders continued to hope for an imminent comeback, the vocal strains that enticed listeners between ages 25 and 54 were the fashion.

Desperate stalwarts kept suggesting alternatives. Ed Winton, an easy-listening veteran, launched a "Mello" program for WEZI in Memphis and WMLO in Tallahassee, Florida. Bob Carson, another syndicator, conjured up "The Renaissance" as an adult-alternative hybrid.

But other FM classical and jazz stations started upstaging easy-listening by adapting Beautiful Music's principles. They opted for lighter and more contoured concertos while retaining the figleaf of high-brow integrity. James B. Oestreich, in the *New York Times*, lamented that "classical music is to be treated not as art, but as entertainment or background." For example, WNCN in New York reportedly reduced the number of vocals, choral music, and atonal and aleatory compositions it played in favor of works by more feathery composers such as Vivaldi, Telemann, and Boccherini—easy-listening for Bonwit-Teller patrons.

With easy-listening moribund, critics redirected their bile toward Lite FM. Stephen Holden, in another *New York Times* piece, grudgingly admitted that "lite radio embraces a larger segment of modern pop history than any other current radio format." But he went on to call the format "an innocuous musical purée." Notwithstanding its "original artists" pretense, Lite FM manages to appropriate Muzak's knack for placing ambiance above discrete

musical identity, mixing genres and historical contexts with such aplomb that John Lennon's "Imagine" plays right alongside Perry Como's "It's Impossible."

But even as easy-listening withered away on the public airwaves, it found a new niche on private cable radio lines. To re-create Muzak founder General Squier's dream of music-wired homes, companies like DCR (Digital Cable Radio) have replaced Squier's wires with the wonders of today's satellite down-link. DCR (located in Hatboro, Pennsylvania) transmits digital sound to subscriber stereo systems via their existing cable television service. ("It's cable for your stereo!")

Phil Stout now programs six of DCR's easy-listening adult-oriented channels. An ensemble to which Stout currently gives considerable air time is the London Studio Orchestra, alternately titled the Starlite Orchestra. Its intricate, varied, and, at times, impressively eccentric output—Beautiful Music blended with folk, new age, pan-pipes, some hints of techno, and an intermittent chorus—is the culmination of several recording sessions conducted in Holland during the mid-to-late eighties. A single London Studio Orchestra compact disc can contain tracks that fluctuate from a relatively serene cover of "My Way" to an innovative and haunting rendition of Erik Satie's "Gnossiennes"—all done in the elevator music tradition of amalgamating arrangements, instruments and styles previously assumed to be incompatible.

Looking back, Stout concludes:

Beautiful Music generated a hardcore loyalty. The listeners had a private relationship. When the stations started discontinuing it, there was a groundswell of resentment. You ended up with a disenfranchised audience. We are getting a good response from our easy-listening channel. People are saying they're glad to have this music again because they're not getting it on radio.

Japan is considered a nation of background music junkies, and digital radio serves a teeming market there, as well. Since 1961,

businessman Mototada Uno has been piping background music into homes, offices, and train stations. For him, ordinary TV, radio, and stereo did not provide enough ear candy for the average Japanese household and workplace; something more "ambient" was in order. Over the past decade, as profits in his country's service sector multiplied, Uno eventually controlled 70 percent of Japan's cable radio outlets, serving more than 1 million homes and businesses—mostly upscale people. His Osaka Yusen Broadcasting Corporation provides Japanese zither and koto music, pop confections, and the sounds of bells, insects, animals and even synthesized street noises (in case an employee wakes up late and needs to give the illusion of being stuck in traffic when phoning the boss). Osaka Yusen sees the private home as a modern ganglion of the workplace and a perfect outlet for aural seductions once reserved for business establishments.

Until the fall of 1992, WPAT of Paterson, New Jersey, retained easy-listening traces, with livelier music during the day, more subdued sounds at dinner time, and a much softer after-midnight program containing fewer interruptions than usual; then it, too, succumbed to the AC virus. According to Ralph Sanabria, who once worked with Schulke and later became WPAT's program director: "Karen Carpenter is a big part of this new format, but Gloria Estefan has captured another generation in the same spirit. Now, the battle lines between rock and easy-listening are less clear than they were twenty years ago."

But as Adult Contemporary mollifies a generation of aging former hipsters, the growing popularity of various contemporary instrumental categories threatens to spawn a new breed of programs that blend the old and new. Today, such meditative formats as KTWV's "The Wave" in Los Angeles and Stephen Hill's syndicated *Music from the Hearts of Space* come closest to filling easy-listening's void. The fact that new-age music blossomed just as Beautiful Music started to wilt is no coincidence.

TOP TEN BEAUTIFUL MUSIC INSTRUMENTALS:

[as listed in the April 1983 issue of *Radio Only*]

1. Percy Faith: "Theme from *A Summer Place*"
2. Henry Mancini: "You Don't Know Me"
3. Peter Knight: "Tonight"
4. BBC, Johnny Douglas Midland Orchestra, exclusive SRP Custom-recording: "Words"
5. Roger Williams: "Theme from *New York, New York*"
6. Vangelis: "Chariots of Fire"
7. Hollyridge Strings: "Theme from *Love Story*"
8. Henry Mancini: "Evergreen"
9. Living Strings: "If I Were a Rich Man"
10. Hagood Hardy: "As Time Goes By"



12 / Violins from Space



Dateline: Peoria, Illinois. November 12, 1981. On a freezing midnight, Connie Cook, a divorced middle-American housewife is awakened by the white light of a spacecraft hovering outside her bedroom window. After being transfixed by its glare for close to ninety minutes, she returns to bed and proceeds to dream of four aliens “sort of standing in the sky.” The aliens reappear several dreams later at her bedside, combining tactile affection with predictions of “good will for the earth’s peoples.” Ms. Cook (who previously had trouble with “Chopsticks”) begins to compose several pieces of music a month later that she claims to receive via telepathic dictation: a fusion of soft, dreamy jazz and rock with

lyrical translations from “the Pleiades,” a star cluster whose messages include:

*By and by we learn to fly
 Within each other's heart.
 Space and time, the ancient rhyme,
 Is overcome in our heart.**

Connie Cook's “encounter” touches the heart of an elusive category many still prefer to call “new-age” or “space music.” With its slow, diaphanous, wistful, and often droning style, space music builds on musical textures and precedents that are as much a mystery to the recording artists as they are to the listener. To quote Stephen Hill, a leading space music connoisseur, who heads the Hearts of Space label: “our supermediated techno-culture has undergone an extraordinary increase in its rate of change, with dynamic and unpredictable psychological reactions. One of these, I believe, has been the need for a healing, deepening, slow-paced sound food to balance out the overwhelming forces of banality and hyperstimulation.”

To sate these needs, space music evokes vague images of regal landscapes perhaps encountered in past lives or the tones of a harmonic convergence between earth and other celestial bodies. Harpist Andreas Vollenweider had expressed to *Newsweek* in 1985 the desire to “build a bridge between the conscious and the subconscious.” Some practitioners boast of their music's mysterious healing properties, capable of curing body ailments, relieving tension, inducing better plant growth, or simply making the average workday seem less hellish.

Space music is just as important for its ability to confound our spoon-fed sense of time and place. Its mercurial stirrings create openings between worlds: inner and outer space; ancestral rhythms and ultra-civilized electronics; the clock on the wall and the hallucinatory “psychonaut” time that drifts in and out of waking life. Most of all, space music negotiates the margin between

*From “You and I” by Connie Cook. © 1990 Cook 'n Mark Productions, Box 405, Canton, IL 61520. Reprinted by permission.

a composer's imagination and the complex digital technologies at his or her disposal that seem ready at any moment to assume a life of their own.

Listening to Constance Demby, Andreas Vollenweider, Richard Burmer, or Yanni, we cannot help suspecting that their compositions modeled on "half-formed dreams" are subject by their very nature to alien intrusion. The mystique of communing with some larger, transpersonal, extraterrestrial Gaia is commonly included as part of space music's packaging. Explaining compositions such as "The Galactic Chalice" and "Celestial Communion," Constance Demby refers to "the transformative journey" with "sounds to awaken and activate soul memory of our true origin." One Chicago musicologist was so intrigued by Connie Cook's "other-worldly" sounds that he claimed that some of her notes had no terrestrial musical precedent and could not even be put on paper.

While claims of extraterrestrial inspiration or tampering are difficult to refute and impossible to prove, one earthly influence can illuminate at least some of space music's stylistic origins. In classic Oedipal fashion, many new-age artists have overlooked the most obvious and least loved aliens of all—their parents' Mantovani and other mood music records.

New-age music differs in obvious ways from its "Beautiful Music" predecessors. Its insistence on unfamiliar and fluid "sonic landscapes" avoids Beautiful Music's familiar melodies, its full (un-synthesized) orchestras, and its up-front appeals to nostalgia. Pianist David Lanz once professed to *Musician* magazine that he rarely uses "thirds," the intervals that usually determine whether a chord will be major or minor. He claims: "So rather than voicing a chord with a major third, we'd use the root, two, and five. Or root, five, dominant seventh. It implies both major and minor, which is nice. Kind of a Zen thing."

Regardless of the studied ambivalence, the press's repeated comparisons of new-age music to elevator music reflect something more than smug critical dismissal. Space music is, in fact, easy-listening with amnesia, sounding like the future but retaining unconscious ties to elevator music of the past.

In effect, space music currently faces an identity challenge sim-

ilar to Muzak's. Some baby-boomer Muzak personnel (previously enthralled by rock music) are tempted to wipe their library clean of anything suggesting the "schmaltz" their elders imposed on them long ago. Now, however, their bread and butter depends on their cranking out background music that retains precisely those elevator aria shades.

New-age music miraculously attained glory just as the Beautiful Music generation was being nudged aside by a younger, but equally upwardly mobile generation. While the *Chicago Tribune* described new age as "the soundtrack to the Brave New World," *Business Journal* characterized the average new-age connoisseur as being "predominantly white, college-educated, mostly 25 to 40, professional—some campus age, but not with discretionary income." Josef Woodard in *Musician* magazine designated new age as "music for Yuppie mating rituals." Young adults no longer energized by rock and alienated from the classics may latch onto this kind of music with the same élan their post-World War II parents displayed in discarding Swing in favor of mood music.

The first new-age formula was a mixture of Pink Floyd's trippy art-rock, the Mahavishnu Orchestra's jazz-rock fusions, and Tangerine Dream's synthesized brainscapes transformed into a softer, floating style performed with synthesizers, harps, electric pianos, and other hypnotic effects.

New-age musicians valiantly tried to pass their craft off as purely artistic but inevitably encountered the same pall of condescension and scorn that their Muzak and easy-listening predecessors endured. From its beginnings, new-age music was doomed to controversy and censure from a musical establishment still wedged into nineteenth-century prejudices that equated good music with direct listening.

The initial foreshadowing of the new-age sound occurred in 1964 when Tony Scott unofficially kicked off the movement with his album *Music for Zen Meditation*. He proudly described it as a passive product in a "twisted" world of competition and sensationalism.

These criticisms of Western culture and of the tensions inherent in its musical structure played on years later when new-age pianist

George Winston (the star of the Windham Hill label) recorded self-described “sound incense” that was so trance-friendly that Keith Jarrett (himself an improvisational creator of jazz soundscapes) felt obliged to distance himself from it with this critique:

*The implications of his [Winston's] music are interesting, because it's used for meditating, for relaxing, for falling asleep, for having conversations—the exact opposite of my reasons for playing. If someone can fall asleep or meditate while the music is going on, to me that's spiritually not right.**

Many new-age musicians and record producers tried to change their sound by adding jazz riffs and acoustic guitars. They also altered their press releases to make their enterprise sound more musical and less mystagogic. Some eschewed the “new-age” label altogether. For instance, once Andreas Vollenweider won a Grammy for “Down to the Moon,” his press shunned “new-age” in favor of “instrumental pop music.”

Nevertheless, new-age/space/adult alternative music proponents keep reviving the debate over background music's aesthetic value. New age, like Muzak, claims to be “more than music,” but its packaging (from the sounds to the album art to the liner notes) aims at something loftier than simply animating the business world.

Connie Cook is a walking testimonial to the space music panacea. If her alien arias sound too logically discordant to cynics, her fellow new-age practitioners' promises of music to realign the spine, help rediscover past lives, strengthen the human immune system, and promote general peace of mind are hardly more tenable. Soviet educators, during the Union's final days, used Cook's music to teach Ukrainian students to speak and read English. Igor Shpak taught the lyrics to Cook's “White Light” and had advised her to visit Russia as a gesture of positive communication, especially since the Soviet Union had hundreds UFO witnesses of its own.

*Judie Eremo, ed., *New Age Musicians* (Milwaukee: Hal Leonard, 1989), p. vii.

In 1985, new-age musician Steven Halpern came out with his book *Sound Health* to advocate music as an aid to meditation and healing. Speaking in the October 1988 issue of *Keyboard*, synthesizer player William Aura described his experiment with a fusion of new-age and dance music by performing several biofeedback tests on the effects of polyrhythms:

I'd put a rhythmic zither strum in the right ear of a person hooked up to biofeedback gear, and they'd start pacing to that strum. When we introduced an arrhythmic strum in the left ear, and their consciousness attempted to follow both, they lapsed into a hypnotic state in about two minutes. We had discovered something that people knew eons ago—that polyrhythms can be used for hypnotic induction, for altered states of consciousness, even for soul travelling.

Robert Rich, another soundscape specialist with a psychology degree from Stanford University, is fascinated with REM sleep and “hypnagogic” states, which fuel his “all-night concerts for sleeping audiences.” He once set up a “Rainforest” exhibit in San Francisco to serve as an environmental forum—an eco-friendly mixture of technology and nature intended to fill spectators with awe and concern for the endangered earth.

For all the attendant talk of cosmic cures, new-age music raises a nagging question: Is the supernal sound that heals souls and aligns spines any different from the easy-listening music that soothed martini drinkers after a day at the office decades ago?

The first noticeable similarity between Beautiful Music and new-age music relates to the functional role of lush strings in the former and synthesizers in the latter. Vangelis, for one, stunned the world with his opalescent *Chariots of Fire* film score, which re-created the timbre of a full orchestra merely through the pressing of a few sequencer buttons. What is most remarkable is how well much of new-age music blends in with that of the Percy Faiths of the world. If David Lanz were to do a rendition of “I’ll Never Smile Again” or if Raphael applied his arpeggios to “Softly,

as I Leave You," the two genres would be more apparently interchangeable.

New-age and easy-listening music also share an affinity for a sound that surrounds listeners with aural gauze and coaxes them into forgetting their troubles. The two space music artists with the most obvious parallels to Mantovani are Constance Demby and Raphael.

For her album *Novus Magnificat*, Demby used an Emulator II Synthesizer to create digital samples of real symphonic instruments. She then compressed them on magnetic disks in order to re-create them on a keyboard. The effects of violas, harps, piano, organ, French horn, tympani, cello, and a chorus recall Mantovani's intricate weaving. It is also significant that both Mantovani and Demby use the metaphor of the cathedral to describe their music's inclinations toward the sacred.

Like Demby's *Novus Magnificat*, Raphael's *Music to Disappear In* suggests a "sound bath." Raised by Benedictine nuns when his family got ill, Raphael spent his solitary childhood becoming well versed in Gregorian chant and classical music. In 1967, he participated in the San Francisco Summer of Love, masquerading as a velvet-caped European count who serenaded passersby with his gypsy violin. He studied piano and composition at the San Francisco Conservatory and soon moved to Big Sur's Esalen Institute, where he worked as a staff musician. He was so impressed by a contemporary shaman during his Esalen stay that he started pursuing music as therapy, mixing world rhythms with Western melodies to heal and relax.

Space music can then be best regarded as an outgrowth of easy-listening that is even further removed from the musical foreground. Beautiful Music supplies ghost tunes of originals, whereas space music distills the ghost tune's mood, its sound, and a smidgen of its style and reprocesses it into an "original" composition once again, this time unanchored to any distinct emotional or historical context. It avoids nostalgia mainly because its uncertainties force us to look back and ahead simultaneously. It derives power from the clash between the musician's emotions and the space-station grandeur of high-tech gadgets and computer wizardry.

Some of its best examples suggest science-fiction fantasies rooted in comic books and optimistic space tales. Space music thus celebrates a nostalgia for the future as it paradoxically looks ahead toward unsolved childhood mysteries.

Space music is, however, entering another phase. Some artists have grown less unconscious about their easy-listening predecessors and are actively reaching out to these forgotten ancestors to absorb their influences directly and intentionally. Richard Burmer (from the American Gramophone label) describes himself as a "composer of lush sonic tapestries" influenced by dreams: "I love Percy Faith, especially the 'Theme from *A Summer Place*.' I want to do my own version of it. It makes me feel so good, looking back on growing up at that time period." This interest in sentimental themes shows up in titles like "The Rain Will Bless the Love" and "Shining by the River."

Seeing no inherent conflict between the *terras firma* and *incognita*, Burmer uses mellotron, autoharp, and an Emulator II synthesizer equipped with a library of digital samples to reinterpret hand-me-down melodies inspired by preexisting cinema icons:

Walt Disney was a big influence on me. I think about some of his animated things. Fantasia, Sleeping Beauty . . . they are surreal landscapes. All heightened, with Tinkerbells and stars. That is sort of what I feel in my music, a lot of these sprays and cascades here and there, mainly making a person feel good. Though there are some percussive, aggressive moments, my album Bhakti Point is about a journey to an imaginary paradise.

Burmer is among many artists appearing on American Gramophone's "Day Parts" CD series, which was conceived by Chip Davis, founder of Mannheim Steamroller and *Fresh Aire*. Designed to capture what Davis calls "the four major mood groups," they reflect the predominant emotions and thoughts of people at various times of day, with styles ranging from quasi-Baroque to new age to solo acoustic, and a smattering of soft rock.

Davis, a former radio disk jockey who claims to have written jingles and over 2,000 pieces of original music for Levis, Lee

Jeans, Black & Decker, McDonald's, and AT&T, has no compunction about directing elevator music principles into the private lives of those who live among high-tech condos and nouvelle cuisine. Another reason for his easy-listening congeniality may be his first post-college job: singing with the Norman Luboff Choir.

His four mood groups—*Sunday Morning Coffee*, *Dinner*, *Party*, and *Romance*—are also marketed with special gift packs that include coffee with mugs, recipe books with napkins, barbecue sauce, or a Japanese bubble-bath with scented candle. Except for the Afro-Caribbean themed *Party*, all titles mix Baroque stylings, classical piano, and predominant synthesizers. The effect not only encourages meditation but suggests well-defined and cozy situations in which to exist.

The best of the mood groups, *Romance*, combines the works of several American Gramophone instrumentalists with cameos by Debussy's "Claire de Lune" and Beethoven's "Moonlight Sonata." The result is a pleasant blend of classical, romantic, Beautiful Music and space music. Davis claims:

Romance is about man's need for companionship—not necessarily sexual, but friendship or giving time to yourself as well. Romance, by the dictionary definition, is more involved around adventure than love. So this music is geared not only to enjoy those times, but out of a deeper reason to point them out. The mood is there although you don't notice it. But if you put a frame around the picture, you tend to notice the picture more.

The relatively new term "transcendental romantic" is used to describe a sound that combines grand piano, wordless choruses, and strings (both real and synthesized). Mychael Danna specializes in melodic textures with intended emotional effects. Born in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Danna owes much of his musical inspiration to Canada's gray, monochromatic winter skies. He bought his first synthesizer the same day a hand injury dimmed his future as a piano player. Armed with a University of Toronto degree in music composition, he became composer-in-residence at Toronto's

McLaughlin Planetarium and also scored many of Atom Egoyan's independent films.

Danna's album *Skys* adapts music to a series of photographs he took during a 1986 spring trip. In his liner notes, he writes: "The relentless rain and fog over wet sand dunes made for poor sunbathing, but left a strong and distinctively moody impression in my mind of these skies which dominated the landscape." Besides working with his digital sampling keyboard, Danna uses "monochromatic arpeggios" on real pianos, and a "murky string sound" along with "long legato oboe and trumpet calls." Danna is representative of a number of younger instrumental artists who are willing to appreciate the more nostalgic, sentimental music of their elders, albeit with a slightly darker edge.

Windham Hill's Liz Story, who usually plays the piano with a bass player providing accompaniment, has converted to more recognizable, traditional melodies. David Darling takes the cello into the twenty-first century by blending acoustic cello with eight-string electric cello to give the illusion of a full string orchestra. But in the tradition of Mantovani before him, Darling relies on the unique sonic delights of the recording studio for his effects, putting the cello into a digital delay pattern that evokes atavistic memories of caverns and other undefined places where primordial time and space linger.

By adapting to the dictates of commerce, space music has found some emotional footing. Since the early 1980s, new-age cover art alone has assumed what some in the business call "a corporate identity," with the emphasis on high-tech pastorals and interstellar sanctuaries. A study in the Fall 1990 *Journal of Popular Culture* identified five stylistic trends in new-age covers: stark designs, natural landscapes, impressionistic fantasies, abstract art, and the common practice of retaining mystery by omitting the recording artist's photo.

In the study Windham Hill's Anne Robinson expressed a desire for album jackets to "create an atmosphere for the listener. . . . We are really seeking to describe a mood with our records." Consistent with its delightful contradictions, space music intrigues because it resorts to high-tech manipulations extolling "nature" in a

manner perversely similar to the 101 Strings' evocation of foreign lands through color-treated photos.

New-age music ("Parade of the Tall Ships") provided the appropriate background sound for the 1986 Centennial celebrating the refurbished Statue of Liberty. Human-interest stories on network news broadcasts and commercials for everything from investment firms to breakfast cereals have also used the supernal strains of space music. For example, synthesizer specialist Yanni wrote the theme music for ABC's *World News Now*. A commercial for the Acura Legend uses space music to evoke the drama of near-death experiences while a narrator explains how a state-of-the-art air-bag can save lives. The music also shows up in hospital maternity rooms and surgery rooms and on airlines to help allay pain and worry.

New-age or space music may ultimately succeed better in getting us in touch with "artificial" chrome malls than with "natural" deserts; better yet, they may help our imaginations amalgamate both. Using space music to explore ourselves, many of us get so tangled in its consumer technology that every attempt to escape the wires and to groove to the quasar beat merely pulls us into another gorgeous "pseudo-dimension."



13 / Elevator Noir

"The world is so different in the daylight. In the dark your fantasies get so out of hand. But in the daylight everything falls back into place again. Let's have no more nights."

—Mary Henry, in *Carnival of Souls*

Sometime in the late 1970s, a background music company was broadcasting an instrumental collection it had licensed from Italy. Amid "O Sole Mio," "Santa Lucia," and other Mediterranean delights, a version of Nini Rosso's hit "Il Silenzio" played in its proper sequence. But the song's uncanny similarity to the military dirge "Taps" almost induced a woman to have a nervous breakdown in a hospital waiting room, thinking it a memento mori intended solely for her terminally ill husband.

Another woman listening to Muzak on an airplane flight started screaming as the plane went down the runway. The tune was "For All We Know," and even without the lyrics, its second phrase "We

may never meet again” played at the wrong place and time. Such stories prove that background music tinged with the slightest disagreeable song content, altered tempo, stray key, or change in order can cause “the Comfort Zone” to slip into “the Twilight Zone.”

Muzak, which until relatively recently used only major chords, has been aware for years that it could set a lachrymose tone with the simplest nuance. Among the songs Muzak had to delete from its in-flight service are “Stormy Weather,” “I’ve Got a Feeling I’m Falling,” and “I Don’t Stand a Ghost of a Chance.” “Yellow Rose of Texas” was dropped from the Muzak channel shortly after President Kennedy’s assassination in Dallas. For several days following the assassination, Muzak worried that other popular songs might spur unpleasant associations so it switched to an all-classical repertoire. Sure enough, one of the previously scheduled songs turned out to be the instrumental version of a popular 1930s tune called “I’ll Be Glad When You’re Dead, You Rascal You!” Even Muzak’s Christmas music ended up eliciting complaints from a hospital, because some of the patients found it depressing to hear the songs on the Monday after Thanksgiving.

Although most of us take background music’s melodic buffer for granted, we may sometimes get the urge to imagine counter-melodies’ sneaking into the environment to make the world a scary place once again. After all, elevator music accompanies us at the edgiest moments: anticipating a late plane arrival, approaching a pivotal office engagement, or awaiting execution in the dentist’s waiting room.

Some background music has been known to induce musicogenic epilepsy, triggering a chemical brain reaction that elicits thoughts of suicide or murder. One 39-year-old epileptic woman in Britain complained that, when particular background tunes played at her neighborhood supermarket, her eyes, fingers, and lips twitched; her thinking clouded; and she got sweaty and anxious before losing consciousness. Neurologists Peter Newman and Michael Saunders examined her under controlled circumstances to see if they could motivate a similar seizure. Nothing happened when they played Gilbert & Sullivan songs, Beethoven’s *Choral Symphony*, and

Handel's *Messiah*; but then a song by the Dooleys called "I Think I'm Gonna Fall in Love with You" produced a spontaneous fit. The woman's EEG readings showed abnormal brain waves in the temporal lobe, where sound is registered and interpreted. By the time of this incident, doctors had documented seventy-six similar cases.

If the music designed to soothe can be altered to torment, the field is open for misanthropes to play havoc with the canons of harmony and melody in the service of bad vibes. Many consumers are sadomasochistic enough to spend money to watch movies that will frighten or disturb them, so why should they hesitate to frequent establishments designed to set their nerves on edge or to kindle crying jags? Still, like easy-listening, the elevator noir field has thus far been touched upon mostly on record. Just playing Bernard Herrmann's *Psycho* soundtrack, for example, is sufficient to turn any dwelling into the Bates Motel.

Not until the mid-1970s did background music gain an intellectual avatar, Brian Eno, to champion a kind of sonic ambivalence that encourages grave contemplation or feelings of impending doom. Although sometimes hailed as the reluctant father of new-age music, Eno scoffs at the title, since new-age compositions lack the feelings of "evil and doubt" that pervade his work. Behind all of Eno's cold, metallic engineering is a frightening and moody world that is anything but emotionally neutral.

Eric Tamm, in his book *Brian Eno: His Music and the Vertical Color of Sound*, chronicles Eno's progress from his early days as a rock musician to a creator of beautiful "ambient" compositions "that could be listened to and yet could be ignored." Eno created "ambient" music by chance while putting together some background effects for a planned improvisation with Robert Fripp. He stored "two mutually compatible melodic lines of different duration" on digital recall and replayed them through an echo-delay system. Leaving the machine on by mistake, he was impressed by the spell it cast on the surroundings, especially when subaudible. The result was "Discreet Music," a piece consisting of repeated chord progressions not rooted in any set key.

Music for Airports, however, confirmed Eno's talent for ob-

scuring the deceptive divisions between Muzak and art. Despite Eno's strident anti-Muzak stance, this project differed from garden-variety canned music only in degree. It interwove lackadaisical piano phrases with an unearthly choir; and Eno borrowed a technique that Jackie Gleason had perfected decades ago by structuring entire pieces around such sensual utterances as "oooh" and "aaah." While Muzak merely re-creates sing-songy melodies, Eno invokes Stockhausen, whose own experiments with treated vocals and electronic tones claimed closer affinity to "high art" than to *Hit Parade*. Such credentials still did not prevent critic Ken Emerson's backhanded compliment that *Music for Airports* was "avant-garde Muzak."

Music for Airports' sound is unique and disquieting for several reasons, most of which are technical. The album's second piece consists solely of a female choir electronically modulated so that the pitch is limited and the fade-in and fade-out of the voices are delayed. Every long note was recorded on a separate section of tape, with each section made into a loop. The loops running at different lengths took on an aleatory authority—their random sequence sometimes producing extended moments of silence and other times unannounced sound clusters that Eno has described as "a sequence of notes that makes a kind of melody."

Eno's subsequent mood projects include *Music for Films, The Pearl* (a series of eerie collaborations with pianist Harold Budd), and an intriguing album called *Apollo* that consists of darkly romantic homages to the astronauts who heard Muzak while floating through space. Eno, along with his brother Roger and Daniel Lanois, had been commissioned to design music for Al Reinert's documentary film about NASA's moon missions. The results consist primarily of the usual drone and relay of magnetic tape; but at least two tracks on this album—"Deep Blue Day" and "Under Stars II"—flirt more with conventional harmonies and betray a closer than usual proximity to elevator music proper.

While accompanying Eno, Harold Budd also branched off into solo albums. *Abandoned Cities* consisted of two extended tracks: the title track and "Dark Star." The tone of both was partly inspired by William Burroughs's novel *The Places of Dead Roads*,

which addresses what Budd calls “haunted, lonely places; fat with history and totally forgotten.” “Dark Star” consists of low-frequency synthesizer drones paired with engineer Eugene Bowen’s “Stratocaster power chords,” while “Abandoned Cities” has scattered piano strokes and subtle chimes fading in and out. Both were initially installed at the University of Southern California’s Fisher Art Gallery.

In the background music tradition, Eno’s recordings are tailored for public places and events, and often are commissioned by major corporations. An Eno audio-video sanctuary recently appeared in Toyota’s 14-story Amlux Auto Salon in Tokyo. Other “multi-media” sculptures by him have surfaced in Venice, Milan, New York, and Los Angeles. In June of 1982, the Three Rivers Arts Festival in Pittsburgh put *Music for Airports* through the Greater Pittsburgh International Airport for a nine-day period from noon to 10 P.M. each day. Many patrons reportedly called airport personnel complaining about how uneasy the music made them feel and asked that the regular background music be restored.

Eno describes his ideal installation as “a place poised between a club, a gallery, a church, a square and a park. . . .” *Thursday Afternoon* is probably his most effective and chilling soundscape. Commissioned by Sony exclusively for compact disc, it consists of a low, unsteady 61-minute key modulation vitalized by soft cacophony and occasional chord changes. Here, his music comes closer to his other avocation: painting. He likens each slow, recurring musical cluster to a hologram made up of identical layered images in varying resolutions.

The closest Eno previously came to this scenario was in his treatment of Pachelbel’s Canon on his *Discreet Music* album, where the chordal harmonies that occur at the very beginning suddenly disintegrate into random, overlapping sound patterns.

We can compare Eno’s ambiguous chord progressions to the keyboard piece that the character Mary Henry plays during her unearthly possession in the cult horror film *Carnival of Souls*. A terminally confused woman survives what should have been a fatal car accident, moves to a quaintly off-kilter community in Utah to

become a church organist and is pursued by an apparition bent on taking her back to the land of the dead where she belongs. One evening, while practicing for her congregation, she plays what sounds like a nice, concordant Christian hymnal. Suddenly she stops, gazes at her bewitched hands and proceeds to alter the composition, making it sound like a carnival calliope that soon permutates into amorphous half-chords that drift farther into note sequences so out of whack and disconcerting that the head of the congregation accuses her of sacrilege.

Director David Lynch and composer Angelo Badalamenti have actually provided the best example of easy-listening irony with their soundtrack to *Twin Peaks*. This twisted homage to white-bread culture, and the corruption and death of homecoming queen Laura Palmer, is full of elevator music gone mad: monotonous finger-snaps, repetitive bass lines, somnolent snare drums, and the shadowy wails of singer Julee Cruise, whose style suggests an amalgam of Claudine Longet and the Doors.

New York Times critic Stephen Holden, after attending a Julee Cruise-Badalamenti concert in the winter of 1990 at New York's Symphony Space, described the sound as "surrealistic elevator music with quasi-symphonic textures that border on kitsch." Just compare the echo-chamber resonance of Cruise's "Rocking Back Inside My Heart" with the Ray Conniff Singers' rendition of "It's Dark on Observatory Hill" to see how easy-listening's good vibes can be twisted into something much more witchy but no less catchy.

Badalamenti's best *Twin Peaks* offering is "The Laura Palmer Theme," which fuses a spine-tingling dirge with a lavish soap-operatic crescendo for use in the show's most morbid scenes. The music made enough of an impact to receive three Emmy nominations. The dreamy and disturbing music that played throughout this television series underscored the experiences of denizens of a small town (similar to that in *Carnival of Souls*) vexed by electromagnetic spirits that loomed in air vents, telephone wires, and television noise, and even materialized as breezes rustling through sycamores. But the most fascinating ghostly appearances are

summoned through the shadow music that weaves in and out of the story and hypnotizes some of the characters to dance spontaneously.

The *Twin Peaks*—elevator music connection goes deeper. According to Muzak's Rod Baum, Badalamenti (under the less mysterious name Andy Badale) had previously created several Muzak arrangements in Nashville—mostly piano tracks and instrumental versions of country songs, with tenor saxes replacing the male lead's whiskey baritone. Badalamenti also adorned the *Twin Peaks* score with the drum work of Grady Tate, another past Muzak session man. When interviewed, Badalamenti was especially keen to illuminate the connection between movie soundtracks and the piped-in scores of our lives:

Blue Velvet and Twin Peaks explore the dark side of "normal" life. Does your use of easy-listening motifs with ominous overtones attempt to do the same?

In Fire Walk with Me, a good example is when Laura Palmer is walking by a tree-lined street. The birds are in the trees, singing happily; she's carrying her school books. There is a cut on the album, a montage, which starts out so nice and pretty, but then you have all of this high-string dissonance against it. It reflects that whole internal thing that this young teenager has gone through in her world. It paints the various worlds. From up above, down below, and everything in between. It's that peaceful world and the underbelly of it. It is really disguised. Things are not necessarily what they seem to be. We intentionally take the listening audience, start them out one way and then they just get caught up in something. I really try to write things that affect people and there is still nothing quite as effective as a beautiful melodic strain, whatever it is to different people. Melody is still the thing, it reaches people. There could be a very beautiful kind of melodic writing that is not over the top romantic, but more subdued. It just reaches the insides without getting sappy or overly

emotional. I try to write melodies that are really contained. There is a cut-off point. They never really explode at a great climax.

Why does "Laura Palmer's Theme" sound like a combination of "Nadia's Theme" from *The Young and The Restless* and the theme from *Dark Shadows*?

"Laura Palmer's Theme" starts off with her beauty coming out of the darkness, and then it goes back into the darkness with a brief moment of not-quite-real ecstasy. It starts out as if you're in the middle of walking through the dark woods; Laura Palmer comes out of it; you reach this climax that falls off very gently. "Falling" is the key word in a lot of the music. It reaches something, then falls down very slowly. Before you know it, coming out of this innocence and beauty, you are drawn right back into that dark world.

Do you have a psychological science to your moodscapes? Any musical influences?

*I like to think that I created my own kind of sound with the advent of the *Twin Peaks* series. There was something a little different, yet reminiscent of movie scores. If there is one influence, it is Bernard Herrmann. I like the music off-center, dark, just real cool. I like to go against. With the repetition of a certain noise, the audience learns very quickly, without being conscious of it.*

Have you done any television shows or commercials?

*I have done mostly the perfume companies like Opium—international spots. There are the four spots for Calvin Klein's *Obsession*, in black-and-white. I just completed Armani, the international spots for a product called *Gio*. I can keep my own style for all of this. The commercial is coming to the U.S. but is now showing in Europe. I did the *Paramount Hotel*, the one that*

showed at the time of the 1992 Academy Awards. It's where the guy slides up backwards into an elevator, onto a bed. Very abstract stuff. It won for best commercial at Cannes. I also did the Torch theme for the 1992 Olympics in Barcelona, where they shot the arrow and lifted the cauldron. I was up there conducting it.

Do you know if subliminal messages are being used in today's commercials?

No. Things are obvious and over the top today. Feelings are suggested in a subliminal way in movie scores. But I don't think Madison Avenue does that.

Some of the more interesting music was not included on the *Fire Walk with Me* album—all that droning background.

Fire Walk with Me has more of a jazz noir kind of thing. It felt right. This particular album is really being received well. Alternative college stations and jazz aficionados are picking up on it. There is a mood that grabs you. It's got an off-center thing about it and fits the mood of the characters so well. The dissonant flavor parallels the people.

Have you ever thought of doing a *Music for album à la Brian Eno?* *Music for Angst?* *Music for Wary Anticipations?*

*I have heard psychologists and shrinks, lots of doctors who have picked up the *Twin Peaks* album. They play it while doing work with their patients. The doctors say the music gets to the people. They get caught up without getting overly emotional. I was shocked. After I heard all of this, and had spoken to a few, it makes a lot of sense. Shrinks play the music, it gets the people to feel very good inside. This is done through private consultations, not hospitals. When I got to Barcelona for the Olympics, I got off the airplane, and there was the theme from *Twin Peaks* playing right in the Barcelona airport!*



14 / Metarock

Heavy metalist Ted Nugent hates Muzak so much that he once made a \$10 million bid to buy the company—just for the pleasure of erasing the tapes. A man who has taken rock music to its most aggressive extremes, Nugent was savvy to reinforce his rowdy image by using Muzak as a scapegoat for all things uncool, unrebelling and (worst of all) unloud. It is, of course, a quixotic stance: one more effort to preserve the ever-fraying battlelines between the hip and the square at a time when the generation that said “Never trust anyone over thirty” edges toward fifty.

So when the makers of “Beautiful Music” the Channel Four British documentary on elevator music visited Nugent and pre-

sented him, on camera, with a John Fox easy-listening arrangement of "Cat Scratch Fever," the audience could only watch with simultaneous feelings of empathy and jocularly.

As if putting Nugent's macho "Fever" through dainty arpeggios were not enough, Muzak's programming department decided to twit him in 1989 by recording an elevator-style cover of "Journey to the Center of the Mind," a tune Nugent made popular with the Amboy Dukes in the late 1960s. Refurbished by the Jim Devlin Orchestra and shrouded in a mellow wash of violins, piano, and moderate-tempo percussion, this once fulminating paean to psychotopia took on a brave new meaning—a beautiful companion piece to the Mr. Hyde prototype.

In fact, the Muzak and easy-listening versions of these songs reveal that Nugent and Muzak are not really enemies at all, but more like doppelgängers staring at each other through funhouse mirrors. Long before the Nugent—Muzak match, an unholy correspondence existed between rock's counterculture and elevator music's counterpunch.

Back in the 1950s, when the 101 Strings took holiday from exotic lands to begin exploring domestic themes, they plowed through the dense jungle of rock and roll at a time when fundamentalists and right-wingers complained about its baneful influence. Their answer to the Elvis Presley revolution was an album called *Backbeat Symphony* (subtitled "Rock and Roll in the Sound of Magnificence") that had "the majesty of the symphony—with a beat." Selections include "Rigoletto Rock," Verdi's theme set to bopping drums and sentimental strings that could easily have been instrumental backing for The Platters; "Sherabop," which consists of variations on a theme from Rimsky-Korsakov's "Scheherazade," refurbished with a full doo-wop vocal section; and "Swingin' at Igor's" takes a Borodin tune (already modernized as "Stranger in Paradise") and adds a chorus, brass, and rhythm section with a reverberating effect suggesting Phil Spector. "Twangy Serenade" (Schubert paired with electric surf guitars) sounds like the Ventures à la Philharmonic. The title tune, "Backbeat Symphony," anticipates the plunking piano chords and up-tempo violins that Percy Faith would use in "Theme from *A Summer Place*" and

many of his other pop adaptations. The entire *Backbeat Symphony* album is, in essence, a prototype of most subsequent easy-listening endeavors, which have fused elements of rock, pop, jazz, and long-hair.

Backbeat Symphony's liner notes assumed a high-school instructor's cautionary tone:

As a group, the teen-ager has the highest musical appetite in the world today. And too often this appetite for music (predominated by rhythmic, danceable tunes) must be satisfied with badly written songs with borderline obscene lyrics. For teen-age audiences, the beat is here. The longhair and parent alike should accept this fact. It is not wrong. It is wrong only when satisfied by material of inferior content. If the teen-ager is to develop musical tastes along with other maturities, it can be readily appreciated that an exposure to good music in some form is a prerequisite to this development.

The Red Scare veterans and juvenile delinquents may have kept each other at arm's length on the surface, but they were developing a backroom affinity. Elvis Presley eagerly mugged it up at a photo-op with Liberace. The "King" would eventually embrace some aspects of Mantovani's "gush of lush," using a chorus and full-string orchestra for songs like "Suspicious Minds."

Though the 1960s' "generation gap" was among the most publicized packaged controversies of the era, many observers overlooked the more subtle and important similarities between the two competing age groups. Music of the Beatles, (some of) the Rolling Stones, Donovan, and many others retained the traditional melodic structures, thereby supplying a cache of fresh material to easy-listening artists who wished to stay on the blunt end of the cutting edge.

This explains the barrage of metarock albums, including Percy Faith's *Themes for Young Lovers*; Liberace's *A Brand New Me*; Morton Gould's *Makes the Scene*; Danny Davis and the Nashville Strings' *Play Instrumental Versions of the Herman's Hermits Songs*—

book; the Johnny Arthey Orchestra's *The Golden Songs of Donovan*; Hugo Montenegro's *Dawn of Dylan*; *Sebastian Cabot, Actor*; *Bob Dylan, Poet: A Dramatic Reading with Music*; The Living Voices' *Positively 4th Street and Other Message Folk Songs*; and the 101 Strings' *Jet Set (The Musical Pulse and Excitement of the Scene Today Where It's Happening)*.

Mitch Miller, once described by critic Frederic Dannen in *Hit Men* as "the living repudiation of rock and roll," sounded exhausted trying to keep up with John Lennon's rhyme-by-numbers when he conducted his "Gang" through "Give Peace a Chance" for his 1970 *Peace Sing-Along*. To hear the Enoch Light Singers lending the variety-show sound to Steppenwolf's "Born to Be Wild" or the Doors' "Hello, I Love You" is to step into a cross-generational time fugue.

Todd Rutt, an "underground" filmmaker, claims to have had a revelatory moment while hearing a background music version of Iron Butterfly's "In A Gadda Da Vida" at a Mr. Steak restaurant in Colorado. He maintains that understanding metarock requires a different aesthetic law: "Strip away something original with orchestral strings and what you have is something so far removed from the real thing it assumes a new reality."

Television reinforced metarock more than did the record industry. Andy Williams could sport a Nehru jacket or host a "love concert" that mixed standard middle-of-the-road entertainment with just the right decorative touch of fuzztone and wah-wah pedal. The *Ed Sullivan Show* even aired a special dedicated to Lennon/McCartney compositions, with Peggy Lee singing "Maxwell's Silver Hammer" and Steve Lawrence and Eydie Gorme performing a duet of "Michelle." Media history noted a milestone on November 10, 1968, when *The Smothers Brothers Comedy Hour* hosted Kate Smith and Jefferson Airplane on the same bill.

Rhino Records puts out a *Golden Throats* CD series consisting of what the liner notes call a "vinyl landfill" of show-biz has-beens, falling stars, and hyperconfident hams whose intimations of mortality sent them thirsting for the elixir of hip. Mel Tormé singing Donovan's "Sunshine Superman" and Bing Crosby executing "Hey Jude" are among many digitized portraits of Dorian Gray

reminding us that the rock stars of the 1960s were only steps away from becoming as superannuated as their impostors.

The easy-listening incubi dogged rock fans at every turn. Eager kids would take home the soundtrack to the Beatles' movie *A Hard Day's Night* only to hear the Fab Four interspersed with George Martin's light orchestrals. By 1968, when Apple Records released the soundtrack to the animated feature *Yellow Submarine*, Martin's work occupied an entire side.

This all might seem a joke at first, but the joke quickly turns on its head as we discover how much metarock is beautifully arranged, professionally performed, spellbinding, and (at times) superior to the originals. No easy-listening mastermind better demonstrated the skill of adaptation than Stu Phillips.

A graduate of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York, Phillips readily directed his training to mercenary endeavors when Milton Berle hired him as a copyist for "The Texaco Hour." Besides writing commercial jingles for Yuban coffee, Q-Tips, and Tarreyton cigarettes, he scored incidental music for *The Donna Reed Show* and *The Monkees*, not to mention movie music for *The Gay Deceivers*, the cult biker film *Run Angel Run*, and Russ Meyer's *Beyond the Valley of the Dolls*, in which he worked with the Strawberry Alarm Clock and the Sandpipers.

Phillips is best known, however, for his years as resident arranger at Capitol Records. There, he not only arranged but produced, conducted, and wrote for the Hollyridge Strings, which did the very first Beatles instrumental cover sessions. Albums such as *The Beatles Song Book* and *More Beatles Hits on Capitol* gave the Hollyridge Strings their rightful status as the Ectoplasmic Beatles, with "tuneful, gorgeously listenable versions" of Lennon/McCartney songs played with brilliant pizzicato, piccolos, and studio reverb.

Phillips went on to do *The Hollyridge Strings Play Instrumental Versions of Hits Made Famous by Elvis Presley*, *The Hollyridge Strings Play Instrumental Versions of Hits Made Famous by the Four Seasons*, *The Beach Boys Song Book*, and a mood music excursion called *Feels Like Lovin'* that is so phantasmagoric you must hear it to believe it. Such selections as "Stop! In the Name

of Love,” “Goin’ Out of My Head,” “Goldfinger,” “Tired of Waiting for You,” and “Ooo Baby Baby” get treatment with not only a string section but “a lonely trumpet, a haunting trombone, and, of course, the ever-present rhythm, throbbing like a heartbeat, playing the tempos of love.” Throughout, a soporific, taunting rhythm holds sway, with an “ooh”ing chorus singing only the “mood words.”

The Rolling Stones may have been the Beatles’ juvenile delinquent foil, but even they had their light orchestral counterpart. Stones manager Andrew Loog Oldham wanted to capture something similar to Joshua Rifkin’s *The Baroque Beatles Book* album. With the blessing of Keith Richards, Oldham assembled the Arabee Pop Symphony Orchestra to record a few Stones songs, along with tunes by the Beatles, Sonny & Cher, and the Four Seasons, on his independent-label Immediate Records. The album, which was then called *Today’s Pop Symphony*, appeared in March of 1966, featuring a maniacal string variation on “Mother’s Little Helper,” a ghoulish “Play with Fire,” a chamber-style “Rag Doll,” and a Wagnerian “I’ve Been Loving You Too Long” (in which a surprise voice sounding too much like Mick Jagger sings a verse, then disappears). Keith Richards himself told *Melody Maker* magazine the album was “something I’d always wanted to do.”

Since the 1960s, Muzak’s acquisition of rock properties has been stunning. Many from Bob Dylan, the Doors, the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, the Mamas and the Papas, R.E.M., the B-52s, U2, and Van Morrison have been refurbished from loud, plodding, adolescent thunder to something tasteful, airy, and mystical. The Doors’ “Riders on the Storm,” whose electronic cocktail piano enraged Paul Rothschild to the point of quitting as the band’s producer, did not have to undergo any major instrumental surgery at all when converted to Muzak’s Environmental channel. A low-register guitar was substituted for Jim Morrison’s voice, but the rest of the composition remained almost identical to the original.

Muzak was so adept at mirroring the times that, in 1968, it was already piping out lyric-free versions of songs from *Hair* a week before the “tribal-love-rock” musical opened on Broadway. Mu-

zak's selections were played by the same orchestra that recorded the original soundtrack album, supervised by none other than *Hair* co-composer Galt McDermott. One reason for this timely move was that Muzak's music director Andrew Wiswell also worked at RCA and had produced the *Hair* album.

In the early 1970s, British rockers the Pretty Things contributed several tracks for the DeWolfe production music company. The compilation called *Electric Banana* consisted of nonvocal mixes of their "genuine article," tailored for business establishments anxious to cultivate a hipper image without risking abrasiveness.

Among the very first rock bands to be blessed with metarock inspiration was Devo, whose *E-Z Listening Disc* (pseudo-elevator music cover versions of their own songs) premiered in 1987. Their meta-"Mongoloid" suggests the theme song from *Jeopardy*, while their earlier interpretation of "I Can't Get No Satisfaction" gets yet another face-lift—one that reduces the beat and some shards of melody to a computerized, robotic anthem.

Mark Mothersbaugh, Devo's resident devolutionary philosopher, is himself a devout fan of Muzak and various forms of easy-listening. He explains how what he calls his "infra-music" came about:

Muzak helped me shape my musical politics. When I heard Muzak versions of the Beatles, the Byrds, and Bob Dylan, my goal was to do the same to my own music before anyone else did. Our E-Z Listening Disc has an interesting history. We were writing Muzak-style versions of our songs before we even had our first album out. We did a movie called In the Beginning Was the End: The Truth About Devolution in about 1976. It won first place in the Ann Arbor Film Festival. We recorded a Beatles song by running it through a frequency analyzer. I ripped a couple of things right off an easy-listening channel and put them through this instrument. It became this bizarre robotic version of Muzak-type songs. We were mutating Muzak!

When we first started performing, we wanted to have

something like "An Evening with Devo." We wanted it to be a total show. We didn't want people to come to the concert and have to hear Talking Heads. So we did our own Muzak versions, which was all part of The Devo Re-Education Plan. We'd derive from the "Andy Griffith" and "Leave It to Beaver" themes. Many people would come up to the soundman and ask to buy a tape. We recorded some for our fan club. The first E-Z Disc sold out so fast that we did a second volume a couple of years later. Rock and roll is so bankrupt that, out of desperation, they'll be mining those territories.

The Space Negros, a band from Cambridge, Massachusetts, released *The Space Negros Do Generic Ethnic Muzak Versions of All Your Favorite Underground Punk/Psychedelic Songs from the Sixties* in 1987 on the independent Arf Arf label. Erik Lindgren, the Space Negros' founder, operates his own mood music outfit called The Sounds Interesting Music Library and has scored commercial backgrounds for companies like Eastpak. As the album cover's watercolor landscapes of McDonald's and K-Mart suggest, this is a visionary salute to dime-store Americana. It features "ethnically generically correct" renditions of "Friday on My Mind," the Stooges' "We Will Fall," and the Balloon Farm's "A Question of Temperature"—all reconstituted with dulcimers, conga drums, mandolins, and mystical chants to "conjure up images of far away places."

These examples, however, are more in the spirit of good-natured Muzak parodies: creative reinterpretations of what the bands *think* Muzak sounds like, but only vaguely resembling real elevator music. Other artists are much more faithful and respectful to the elevator music spirit. Rupert Parker's album *Songs Without Words* uses the harp to reenact otherwise impossible melodies of Led Zeppelin's "Stairway to Heaven" and Queen's "Bohemian Rhapsody," revealing the melodic Sprite wriggling beneath the cacophonous shell. He is so effective that Muzak has used him on its Environmental channel.

Shortly before his death, John Lennon disclosed to *Rolling Stone* magazine that he enjoyed listening to “Muzak” at home throughout the day while Yoko Ono was out on business. A decade later, Morgan Fisher released *Echoes of Lennon*, an instrumental collection of melodic songs by Lennon set to synthesizers and subtle percussion in a soft, slow, haunted style that sometimes renders them barely recognizable. Yoko, enthusiastic about Fisher’s project from its inception, hailed it with typical Ono poetics: “By slowing down the music to its extreme limit, Morgan Fisher has allowed the musical notes to float in a space the size of the universe.”

Fisher’s previous musical background was far from easy-listening. He was once a member of Mott the Hoople and played keyboard for such raucous acts as Queen and the Dead Kennedys. But he also demonstrated a knack for lilting, smooth sound in his work with Julee Cruise and his collaboration on an “ambient” album called *Slow Music*. Fisher sees his mood music interests as representing a logical progression from his rock roots:

There is a tradition in Japanese art called “ma” in which the goal of the drawing or painting is to lead the viewer to a state of emptiness and relaxation. I have tried to incorporate those ideas into my music. The notes lead to pauses. If the notes weren’t there, the listener couldn’t appreciate the pauses. Just as, if I hadn’t played so much hard rock, I wouldn’t be able to play really tranquil music, which perhaps can create more space and relaxation than music made by people who haven’t traveled to the extremes.

Anne Dudley, who has furnished Muzak’s Environmental channel with several of her instrumental covers, is also a member of the Art of Noise, an ensemble whose influences extend from art-rock to techno-dance (or house). The Art of Noise’s *The Ambient Collection* (1990) uses the Mystic Moods Mixture of source music, string samples, and a hypnotic techno-pulse. The liner notes celebrate a “minimalistic embrace of everything good about the hard and uncompromising trance-dance of house and the surrealism of

ambient instrumentalism. . . . An unfocused daydream with no background or foreground. A sense of not being yourself, of being apart from what you're listening to."

Music critic J. D. Considine of the *Baltimore Sun* reinforces the techno-elevator connection in his review of a techno album by a group call Quadrophonia: "In an odd way, techno—the intensely robotic dance music that's all the rage in Europe these days—has much more in common with new age than old-fashioned disco. That's not to say techno bands share new age music's fondness for soft textures and quiet melodies, but both styles do tend to work better as a sort of functional background music."

Most curious is Sara DeBell, an independent synthesizer artist who works in Seattle and has arranged several Muzak-style versions of grunge rock hits on an album called *Grunge Lite*. Seattle has in recent years been a musical battlefield, with Muzak's headquarters holding part of the territory and the other end manned by Sub Pop Records, home to such grunge acts as Nirvana, Mudhoney, and Pearl Jam. In fact, however, many of grunge's most ardent proponents are former or intermittent Muzak employees (usually as clerical workers). Sub Pop founders Bruce Pavitt and Jonathan Poneman are among those formerly glued to the Muzak payroll by day to finance their nocturnal nihilism.

Grunge Lite seems to reveal a tacit soulmate relationship between Seattle's "alternative" scene and Muzak. DeBell, with just a modest supply of sequencers and a computer, has managed to capture a sound that comes closer to that of Muzak's Environmental channel than either Devo or the Space Negros, full of sampled strings, saxes, subdued piano, percussion counterpoints, and clockwork rhythms that are invigorating and relaxing at the same time. There are also hints of older metarocksters like Percy Faith and (DeBell's true spiritual predecessors) the Hollyridge Strings.

By synthesizing the original song's queasy, atonal vocal, *Grunge Lite* remolds something as militantly anti-melodic as Nirvana's "Negative Creep" into a melody fit for a 7-Eleven soundtrack. "Smells Like Teen Spirit" fluctuates from a jazz beat to a Hot Butter-style talking synthesizer to a somber prepared piano inter-

lude, with the demented cheerleader chorus highlighted by skin-tingling chimes.

The cross-pollination between easy-listening and grunge is obliquely celebrated in a particular Nirvana video, which depicts the group performing on a black-and-white TV variety show. There are two Nirvanas: one consisting of the musicians in their usual anarchist garb; the other a clean-cut, gleeful, corporately tailored rock act, circa 1964. As the video switches back and forth between the two incarnations, we are invited to ask ourselves: "Which Nirvana is more subversive?"

Some Rock Favorites Set to Muzak

Donovan

Catch the Wind

Colours

Happiness Runs

Lalena

Mellow Yellow

Season of the Witch

Wear Your Love Like Heaven

The Doors

The Crystal Ship

Love Her Madly

Love Me Two Times

People Are Strange

Riders on the Storm

Soul Kitchen

Bob Dylan

Blowin' in the Wind

Buckets of Rain

Forever Young

I Want You

If Not for You

I'll Be Your Baby Tonight

Just Like a Woman

Knockin' on Heaven's Door

Lay Lady Lay

Like a Rolling Stone

My Back Pages

She Belongs to Me

Simple Twist of Fate

Tangled up in Blue

Tonight I'll Be Staying Here
with You

You Ain't Goin' Nowhere

The Mamas and the Papas

California Dreamin'
Dedicated to the One I Love
Go Where You Wanna Go
Monday Monday
Twelve Thirty

Van Morrison

Brown Eyed Girl
Celtic Excavation
Cleaning Windows
Domino
Have I Told You Lately That I
 Love You?
Hungry for Your Love
Into the Mystic
Moondance
Natalia
Someone Like You
Stoned Me
These Dreams Are for You
Tupelo Honey
Wavelength
Wild Night

The Rolling Stones

Almost Hear You Sigh
Angie
As Tears Go By
Beast of Burden
Harlem Shuffle
Lady Jane
You Can't Always Get What
 You Want
(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction
Time Waits for No One
Tumbling Dice
Waiting on a Friend



15 / Who's Hearing Things?

I am the President of The Songwriters' Hall of Fame, and the V.P. of ASCAP! I am proud of the Credentials. One of my favorite "cahn-tributions" to my duties at ASCAP was to bring about a reception to honor the 50th Anniversary of Muzak! All the so-called humor about Muzak has always been I think flattering—no one makes humor unless the subject is worthy of humor, and Muzak has earned all the humor for what it has done and keeps doing. I wish I could tell you how many times I have been in an elevator with a great big smile, all the passengers who wondered who the idiot with a smile was couldn't have guessed I was the writer of the song being played. (I actually was earning money during that elevator ride thanks to ASCAP!) Suffice it to say I love Muzak!!!

—Sammy Cahn

In March of 1992, composer John Sbarra filed a copyright infringement suit in the Federal District Court in Newark, New Jersey, against John Addison, renowned writer of film and television scores. It seems that Addison's theme song for the hit series *Murder, She Wrote* sounded too much like "Basketful of Wishes" (a tune Sbarra had co-written with his friend Joseph DiBuono in the early 1950s) to be just coincidental.

What makes this case so intriguing is that Muzak is cited as the unwitting plagiarism catalyst. According to Sbarra, Addison could only have heard "Basketful of Wishes" as a background tune, since the song's exclusive licensing rights were sold to Muzak in 1981.

Responding to the suit, Addison retorted that he never listens to Muzak if he can help it.

But could Mr. Addison have recomposed the song unconsciously after absorbing it through the ceiling speakers in an airport, an office lobby, or a public restroom? Can the same tune that accompanies Angela Lansbury rattling at her typewriter in *Murder, She Wrote's* opening credits be a "substantially similar copy" of one that inspires thousands of clerk typists on their 9-to-5 shifts?

If background music is as intrinsic to our environment as air-conditioning, can anyone be held responsible for assimilating it, humming it at home, hearing it in dreams or (in the case of the more inventive) transcribing it at the piano? Is the *Sbarra vs. Addison* case one of plagiarism or of creative acclimation? Sbarra's case may ignite an explosion of similar legal battles as background music's influence tangles the notion that songs are aesthetically distinct units with names, owners, and homes.

In recent years, the term "background music" has begun to come across as either a misnomer or a redundancy, since *all* music is taking a background role. If you walk into the lobby of Muzak's Seattle headquarters, you will find gold and platinum records from people like Paula Abdul, Bobby Brown, Kenny G, and Steve Winwood adorning the walls, with thanks to Muzak for exposing their tunes to thousands of subscribers. Paul Simon once said that, when he hears his song in an elevator, he knows it is a hit.

A great deal of the music being passed as original artist fare has canned trappings. Who can tell whether Madonna lip-syncs at her concerts? How much does it matter whether the New Kids on the Block sing at all? Gloria Estefan and the Miami Sound Machine like Muzak covers of their songs so much that they reportedly pipe them out before their "live" shows.

For partisans of the "contemporary instrumental camp," elevator music may seem a terrible blight, but it is really a backdoor inspiration. Labels like "new age," "adult alternative," and "light classical" get switched around—abandoned one moment, re-adopted the next—usually out of desperation to achieve an identity and to avoid being engulfed by the easy-listening amoeba.

Even Muzak has from time to time published statements of denial, absolving itself of all responsibility for elevator music and instead directing the blame onto competing background music providers. If anything, Muzak and other mood-song purveyors should be embracing elevator music more than ever.

Given its universal disrepute and the fact that most musicians (who cannot agree on much) at least seem to concur in opposing it, elevator music is probably the only category that grows stronger as its definition gets more nebulous. It is a melodic tar baby that embraces many a contemptuous cuff from reluctant recording artists.

Through the 1970s, thanks to jazz-rock "fusion" and disco's merging of elements of soul, rock, easy-listening, and swing, instrumental categories increasingly overlapped—prompting a level of confusion heightened by synthesizers and producer-centered artistry by which technology usurped the star. "Fuzak" is a term often pejoratively applied to fusion that has lost its supposed "passion." By the late 1980s, *Billboard* listed fusion separately from jazz. Out of the blue, soft jazz sax appeared in Muzak formats around the world to replace strings, and the results have sometimes been less than innovative since many of these selections sound more like plain jazz than elevator music.

Another intriguing twist on the elevator theme comes from Planetary Publications, an independent label from Boulder Creek, California, which produced an album of mixed-tempo tracks called *Heart Zones* by a soundscape artist who identifies himself as Doc Lew Childre. Childre, whose father is one of the Grand Ol' Opry's founders, describes himself as a human development researcher and founder of HeartMath, a nonprofit institute that finds ways to relieve stress and enhance concentration by exploring the possibilities of linking musical sounds with DNA patterns.

Engineered with scientific instrumentation and closely studied tonal patterns, *Heart Zones* is tailored as "a tonic for your mental and emotional health" and contains rhythms and chords arranged especially for the brain. Childre prefers to call it "Designer Music." The CD consists of four tracks, each arranged in an ascending tempo and volume. Childre's music is already being used by psy-

chiatrists, business professionals, and classroom teachers. Whatever the music's health benefits, the CD had an impressive stay of at least half a year on *Billboard's* "Adult Alternative" chart. The sound is such a bizarre, eclectic mix that a critic from the *Raleigh News and Observer* called it "Andreas Vollenweider meets Pink Floyd meets Kenny G meets Moody Blues."

Muzak appreciation requires a creative barter with conditioned reflexes. Take a favorite piece of music, try to find an easy-listening version of it and, by contrasting the two, wander into that enticing and sometimes frightening gray area where a violin, a slackened tempo, or an altered vocal inflection can liberate your tastes from the lonely foreground.

Recently, Muzak, AEI, and other mood-song companies have started using the term *business music* instead of *background music*. This change reflects the growing belief that *all* kinds of music can have comparable beneficial effects in business establishments seeking to convey a mood and appeal to a specific clientele. The enthusiasm for "foregrounding" in the early 1980s confirmed that, with the service and leisure industries becoming indistinguishable, any kind of music could be put to Muzak purposes with similar results. Music with lyrics, once a Muzak taboo, is now acceptable, since foreground vocals are no longer perceived to be as distracting as they once were. In a move that demonstrates the extent to which foreground and background music are amalgamating, ASCAP currently holds original artist songs and their easy-listening covers to identical licensing standards when played in such places as theme parks. According to Barry Knittel, an ASCAP licensing overseer: "Parks can use either the original Bob Dylan version of "Lay Lady Lay," one by Johnny Cash, or an instrumental version, and it does not influence cost."

Today, people are self-trained to be able to read a book and watch television simultaneously. MTV turns every new rock song into background, as viewers attempt to follow a video narrative and a singer's message simultaneously. Music and image are so intertwined that we can listen while concentrating on limitless tasks and visual distractions, receptive to many suggestions that usually serve divergent purposes. For instance, a television ad for

the *Time-Life* "Great Masters" series shows people aerobicizing to Tchaikovsky's "Romeo and Juliet" and jogging to Mozart's "Marriage of Figaro."

Demographics in the future will be defined less and less by sex, age, politics, or even income, and more and more by one's taste for exotic locales or nostalgic situations absorbed from childhood television exposure—a social direction which gives background music an awe-inspiring role. Not long ago, Muzak kicked off "The Main Event"—a new programming series for "Special Occasions, Events and Promotions." The Main Event marks the first time Muzak has gone beyond programming optimal instrumental music to cataloging various formats that reinforce the self-images of listeners in demographically designated environments.

As a result, music can be tied even more closely to the décor and psycho-geography of business, restaurants, and public areas. Among Muzak's new specialized programs are *Hot FM*, a selection of Adult Contemporary original artists vocals "ideal for lively restaurants, retail stores, manufacturing and assembly facilities—any place that energetic adults are living life to the fullest." The "breezy elegance" of *Light Classical* combines Baroque, classic, and Early Romantic interludes for "a gentle and stylish atmosphere that appeals primarily to sophisticated, well educated employees and clients 21 years and older."

AEI goes much further with its "Music Strategies," acting as a dream merchant who invites clients to slip into ready-made themes and historical scenarios. *Metro Sophisticates* combines pop and jazz for affluent and active young professionals who like to dine out with "relaxing interludes in their busy schedules." *Fast Food, Different Diners* caters to the mixture of young and old diners with "medium-energy" pop that accelerates in tempo at peak hours when college kids show up. *Different Diners, Same Mood*, on the other hand, consists of "timeless pop" and 1970s favorites "guaranteed to invigorate any casual restaurant." *Euro Bistro* is a mixture of "alternative music" from France, Italy, England, and the United States—the sensual sounds of light jazz, piano sonatas, and classical guitar to evoke "the image of a hip European café." The more futuristic assortment of *Millennium*

Music is a fusion of jazz and classical that “weaves through the background” of any environment, appealing to “the cerebral and sensual.” There are also soundscapes for *Energetic Retirees*, *The Urban Beat-Male*, *The Urban Beat-Female*, *The Traditional Male*, *Mature Baby Boomer-Female*, and *Suburban Students*.

Foregrounding, on the other hand, may prove to be a ham-handed attempt to cater to a broader audience unattuned to elevator music appreciation. Muzak and other mood-song purveyors might do themselves a better service in the long run not by divorcing themselves from elevator music’s bad image but by subduing that image—acknowledging and promoting the idea that this music has become (perhaps by accident) a musical category as valid and ultimately as salable as any other.

The nineties surge in “ambient-techno” shows elevator music principles spontaneously generating. By the late eighties, the tribal rhythms of soul, rock, disco, and techno were taking their toll as hedonists of the “rave” dance scene sought to drift out of 4/4 time, into a new floating chill-out music cultivated by MIDI-era cyberculture.

Ambient-techno’s names (subject to change at any moment) reveal a tenuous relationship to music and copyright law. The Orb, Aphex Twin, Seefeel, and others offer audio-hallucinatory collages of trance music, street noise, samples, and excerpts from media. The evolution from new age and space music is obvious, but ambient-techno’s pursuits are utilitarian. These are, in the elevator music tradition, sonic sanctuaries that alter the manner and context by which people commingle and consume.

Thomas Pynchon, in his novel *The Crying of Lot 49*, presented a character who can sit in a restaurant, listen to the Muzak and glean not only the exact number of violins, but the individual instrument, its frequency cycles, and the musculature and personality of the musician playing it. Background music has slowly but surely encouraged (some may say conditioned) us to adopt a similarly bifurcated ear. Listening to and analyzing the music intended as background permits us to perceive the world as a *terra firma* illusion of stability held up by a man-made soundstage full of props and scenery that change as often as our cued responses, attitudes, and moods.



16 / Global Theming

“Disneyland tells us that technology can give us more reality than nature can.”

—Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*

In many respects, Aldous Huxley’s *Brave New World* was a utopian novel in disguise. Most of the “nightmare” auguries his book proscribes as dehumanizing and unnatural—bottled babies, ethnic amusement resorts, pharmacological bliss, stereoscopic multimedia “feelies,” classroom lectures set to “hypnopaedic” jingles, and of course “Synthetic music”—many of us have since taken for granted as signs of either good entertainment or better social hygiene, be they genetic engineering, Euro-Disney, Prozac, virtual reality, Sesame Street, or elevator music, respectively.

Despite encasing his ideas in the most dolorous and fantastic language, Huxley recognized that mass production was forcing

modern life “to shift the emphasis from truth and beauty to comfort and happiness.” But he refused to acknowledge that neither emphasis need automatically exclude the other. In a postapocalyptic society being re-formed by the survivors of population overkill, chaos, and the fallout of anthrax bombs, it is not difficult to imagine a traumatized people content to be seduced by the “ether-music” of a “Super-Wurlitzer” that rocks them with the “the very very latest in slow Malthusian Blues.”

In the present day, amusement and theme parks across North America and Europe have offered diversions from (if not antidotes to) the scourges of overpopulation, escalating street crime, and collective anomie. Disneyland has been the leader, using background music to mask the din of calliopes, barkers, screaming patrons, and other cacophony clusters that once prompted Walt Disney himself to dismiss most midways as “dirty, phoney places run by tough-looking people.” We can understand how the fleshed-out fantasias of “It’s a Small World” and “Tomorrowland” helped set the acoustic standard for all theme parks. From the moment Disneyland opened in 1955, its “Illusioneers” appreciated background music’s crucial role in maintaining the three-dimensional dreamwork.

Besides providing a contoured soundscape, park music makes queue-lines less tedious, souvenir shops more enticing, and patrons less prone to stimulus overload. What’s more, each park has a unique theme—a personality of sorts—that calls for more individualized selections.

For some park lovers, the concept of background music evokes scary images of corporate Svengalis manipulating them to buy more and think less. But while these establishments may have been influenced by applied mass psychology or background music marketing studies, their personnel deny being motivated by anything more than the semi-Svengalian notion that music just makes people feel better about spending their money.

Universal Studios Florida in Orlando is as much a three-dimensional movie history set as it is a theme park. When it needs a background track, Universal has only to reach into its own arsenal of studio movie scores. Its motion-based Hanna-Barbera

simulator plays appropriate television themes as it takes us from the Flintstones' Bedrock to Scoobie-Doo's Haunted Castle to the futuristic city of the Jetsons. Bernard Herrmann's jolting *Psycho* score is just one of several cuts heard inside and around "Alfred Hitchcock: The Art of Making Movies," where the director's key scenes are reenacted through sleight-of-hand optical effects. The "E.T. Adventure" has a background soundtrack specially scored by John Williams, who also composed music for the original movie. The "Back to the Future" ride uses music by Huey Lewis and other artists who appeared in the *Future* film trilogy.

According to Julie Pointer, Universal Florida's associate representative of publicity: "Mood music is essential here because it helps visitors suspend their disbelief. They find themselves walking down a simulated Hollywood Boulevard while stomping their feet to the *My Three Sons* theme."

Like Universal Studios Florida, Disneyland follows the logic of the cinema. As you walk through "Fantasyland" and come upon the "Sleeping Beauty Castle," you can bask in orchestral and vocal versions of "When You Wish upon a Star." The central courtyard has four key attractions based on specific Disney movies: "Snow White's Scary Adventures," "Pinocchio's Daring Journey," "Peter Pan's Flight" and "Mr. Toad's Wild Ride." Each features appropriate movie themes, special sound effects, and snippets of film dialogue.

Jeff Kurtti, a communications representative for Walt Disney Imagineers, clarifies Disney's appreciation for music's communicative power:

At its heart, the Disney park experience is that of storytelling. As an audience member, you are participating as opposed to sitting in a chair watching it. For that, you also need a universal language. For park design, we use instrumentals partly because of the international base of our population. This is more true for Euro-Disney, since English lyrics may heighten a sense of confusion in an otherwise harmonious setting.

Disney officials refer to their midway melodies as “street-mosphere.” Disney–MGM Studios in Disney World is the most stunning example of documentary colliding with dream. The movie-makers at work in the studio and the spectators at play become the same cast in a larger spectacle embellished by a perpetual high-tech serenade. Next time you enter the world of Disney (or of any other theme park), remember that the tunes you hear are not piped in just for filler. These are people’s themes, engineered to counterpoint our every thought, movement, and impulse.

While Muzak has proved the efficacy of monaural transmission, some sound engineers—such as Mystic Moods Orchestra producer Brad Miller—are exploring four-channel “surround” systems for theme parks, shopping centers, malls, and other public showcases. In his opinion, hearers, when picking up sound that is limited to monaural or binaural stereo, are likely to resist the illusion subconsciously, nullifying much of the time, energy, and money invested in the effort to elicit suspension of disbelief.

Miller, a pioneer in the quadraphonic field and still a member of the NQRC (National Quadraphonic Radio Committee), laments that four-channel sound has failed commercially and been abandoned through the years. But with Miller’s four-channel processor, which he calls “Colossus,” the audience’s ears become as omnipresent as the camera lens. Miller’s system works best with IMAX motion simulators and other special-venue theaters, the closest the theme park industry has gotten to *Brave New World’s* stereoscopic “feelies.”

Background music’s ever-growing demand and its inherent theme park applications are indirectly explained in Alvin Toffler’s recent book *Powershift*, a post-Orwellian look at how our society’s electronic infrastructure of hypersonic jets, intricately linked databases, and telecommunications accelerates life at a superhuman pace. As our world gets faster and more crowded, our music must get slower and more spacious in order to make peace with the biological clock. The most seemingly peripheral elevator rendition can thus be a Zen blessing in disguise. Toffler also discusses one Japanese corporation that wants to save time and space by building

“value-added airports”—self-sufficient islands of international commerce with their own conference centers, shops, clinics, and vast selection of aural backgrounds.

Already, malls across America have become the newest platform from which some recording artists can launch their careers. According to one ASCAP licensing official, “shopping malls and centers have created an entertainment niche in the retail business.” Jim Zielinski, vice president and director of retail market ventures for JMB Properties, calls this the “Disneyland effect,” in homage to the theme park’s tradition of using overhead and underground music selections to lure its patrons to products for sale.

The art of merchandising, so celebrated in Disney’s amalgam of advertisement and entertainment, is practiced with more and more sophistication in other retail haunts. In-store shoppers have become a prime media target. This is why, as foreground music and background music become as interchangeable as microchips, Muzak and its epigones play a grandfatherly role in our information age by simulating the theme park atmosphere in all of our surroundings.

More than ever, the store has become the proving ground for media impact on global consumption. The greatest audience participation show of all is the daily stroll to the supermarket or mall, where our predilections are stimulated by an array of gorgeous products arranged with the precision of a Busby Berkeley spectacle. The scenario brings to mind the finale of the film *The Stepford Wives*, where robotized females amble placidly through supermarket lanes to elevator orchestrals that are more seductive than sinister.

In October of 1987, Muzak signed a joint operating agreement with POP (Point of Purchase) Radio, another Seattle-based company that combines music services with in-store advertising. Together, they made a special agreement to put the Direct Broadcast Satellite receivers and dishes into outlets of Winn-Dixie, America’s fifth-largest grocery chain. An estimated 9 million shoppers are destined to receive the information and music daily. The Muzak & POP Radio merger (according to a Muzak news release) “provides national packaged goods manufacturers a cost effective

means of reaching their target audience at the point-of-purchase, where 65 percent of all shopping decisions are made.”

Influencing “in-store” decisions has always been a Muzak pre-occupation. Only in recent years, however, when many consumers have the illusion of unprecedented buying power, have the activities of shoppers grown more variegated and thus more of a challenge to merchants. This development poses obvious obstacles to the task of commanding shoppers’ attention.

Pop Radio’s promotional literature lays claim to the supermarket citizen’s soul: “In-store radio advertising cuts through the visual clutter. It reinforces product awareness and sells more products. . . . It’s profitable for the stores, and it gives you something else you can’t easily get these days—the opportunity to determine your own destiny in the store and take back control of the shopping environment and the shoppers’ decisions.”

New York City’s Manhattan, a fractured fairy-escape that is the antithesis of Disneyland, poses a great challenge to anyone interested in engineering the perfect sound environment. The spirits of Muzak past still haunt Manhattan (once the home of its corporate headquarters). Just across the street from the Howard Johnson’s (mentioned in this book’s introduction), the Marriott Marquis provides background music which blends nicely with gray marble floors and glass surroundings.

Architect John Portman designed this Marriott to promote the same impressions as his other atria: escape from the outdoors and an invitation to explore inner space. The background music is most audible in the hotel’s central elevator concourse (elevated from the street bedlam), whose design suggests a chrome incubator encircled by red elevator pods with space-age cars that charge up the skyscraper heights.

New York City has changed considerably since the mid-1970s. The 1980s produced a real-estate boom, which, in turn, bred an upsurge of mini-malls. No matter how unstable the economy, dens of iniquity such as Times Square will eventually erect cities-within-cities, many of which will be built underground. In fact, two Manhattans are already cropping up; and the enclosed one is proving

to be much more fascinating (and consumer-friendly) than its older counterpart, neglected and decaying in the open air.

Any traveler weary of New York City's intimidations can find elevator music solace in the main terminal at La Guardia Airport, in Kennedy Airport at the British Airways and American Airlines gates, or in the Port Authority Bus Terminal—also in such hotels as the Drake, the St. Moritz, and the Vista on Wall Street.

Port Authority administrators recently switched from Muzak's Environmental elevator music to its Classical channel. They based their decision in part on the hope that the snootier music would drive out the vagabonds and illicit drug merchants frequenting its halls.

In the fall of 1991, the New York City Transit Authority attempted to pipe music into the city's subway stations through its central public address system. On the recommendation of Transit Authority president Alan F. Kiepper, the NYCTA conducted several tests that ran from around Christmas of 1990 until April of 1991. Music selections included easy-listening, classical, jazz, and a sprinkling of Christmas carols. Anyone familiar with the New York subway's static-filled public address system knows that it is virtually impossible to discern a human voice over it, let alone music. After a spate of negative phone calls from passengers, the NYCTA stopped the tests. It is, however, considering a reinstallation once the system's outdated cables and electronic equipment are upgraded.

A few years back, the Winter Garden at the World Financial Center sponsored Brian Eno's traveling "Tropical Rainforest Sound Installation." One hundred and two speakers oozed with Colombian rainforest noises and Eno's macabre accompaniment. The atrium's simulated life and Eno's mixture of "bliss with an underlying uncertainty" are entirely compatible. *Music for Airports* was piped into La Guardia's Marine Terminal for a trial run in 1980.

On February 26, 1993—the day of the terrorist bombing—Muzak representative Hayden Detje was about to close a music installation deal for the World Trade Center concourse. Though not

yet present, Muzak was at least there in spirit with several tunes that seem to narrate the disaster. Within the half-hour timeframe when the bomb went off, the East Coast version of Muzak's Environmental channel played the following selections:

| | |
|-------|--------------------------|
| 12:00 | Everchanging Times |
| 12:04 | Deep River Woman |
| 12:07 | Everybody Needs Love |
| 12:10 | Stumbling In |
| 12:13 | Every Breath You Take |
| 12:18 | Listen to the Radio |
| 12:21 | The Hunter Gets Captured |
| 12:27 | Being with You |

Some designers, vexed by the opposition to elevator music, have sought tonier ways to alleviate Manhattan's noise pollution. Max Neuhaus, a "sound environmentalist," had applied noise control devices all over metropolitan New York at one time or another. The Museum of Modern Art's garden formerly used some of his low- and high-frequency vibration machines. The subway station at Brooklyn's Jay Street/Borough Hall once had Neuhaus's *Walkthrough* sound sculpture, which emitted nonstop bleeps regulated by altering weather conditions. In Manhattan, on the small pedestrian island between 45th and 46th streets that divides Seventh Avenue from Broadway, Neuhaus installed a loudspeaker beneath a steel grating, offering a continuous hum for pedestrians sensitive enough to lend an ear against the competition of car horns, portable stereos, and incoherent ranting.

A 1962 incident demonstrated the art world's hostile and often hysterical reaction to "melodic surveillance." Sculptor Richard Lippold refused to exhibit his golden cobweb in Manhattan's Pan Am Building until the Muzak was removed. John Cage attempted to come to the rescue with a sound and image sculpture that somehow combined the Muzak sounds with the electronic surveillance cameras. Ultimately, however, Pan Am Building authorities settled for getting rid of the background music.

Ten years after the Lippold incident, critic Alan Rich complained in an October 30, 1972, *New York* magazine article about

hearing “raunchy” canned music at a restaurant in Lincoln Center: “This is an abomination; I would expect the management of a concert hall in the smallest hick town to have better sense than to install Muzak—live or canned—in its corridors, and now we have it in the most prestigious culture-center in the nation.”

Muzak is so pervasive that people hear it even when it isn’t playing. A publisher in Great Britain came out with a book called *Muzak-Free London: A Guide to Eating, Drinking and Shopping in Peace*. The catch is that there is currently no Muzak in London; the misattribution to Muzak of competitors’ mood-song product angered people in the Muzak marketing department enough to prompt them to send the book’s publisher a letter of complaint.

In the mid-1970s, journalist Edmund Morris wrote a travel article for the *New York Times* protesting canned music’s worldwide presence. He was especially appalled (though not surprised) that background music appeared at the Sistine Chapel, the inns of Austria, wineries in California, at the top of Pike’s Peak, and even in huts along Polynesian beaches. During one trip on an Air France 707, he said, the music played so loud that the stewardess was inaudible.

Morris’s prescription was a list of dwindling quiet spots around the world, such as France’s Fontaine de Vaucluse and England’s Netherton Church. Years later, the choicest tourist spots are precisely the places where background music is guaranteed. *Silence* is just a euphemism for all the clatter that dominates our hearing when the background music is turned off. We only really experience silence when listening over modern fiber-optic phone lines that are so dead-quiet that we should welcome Muzak—if just as a reminder that we haven’t been disconnected.

The use of melody to maintain social order and contentment is nowhere practiced more successfully than in Muzak’s home base of Seattle. Here AEI has attempted to minimize disorientation for out-of-towners who leave their cars in a multi-story parking ramp: each ramp floor is named after a famous American city, and a hit song such as “Chicago,” “New York, New York,” or “I Left My Heart in San Francisco” plays all day at each level to guide the lost.

An early 1980s science-fiction novel called *The Mall* features a cadre of drug runners and terrorists holding the patrons of a high-security mall hostage. As the PA system plays the tunes, the head kidnapper interrupts “Moon River” to remind them: “That music, by the way, folks, is a good sign. The people who run The Mall wanted you to have it so I figure that if they’re that concerned about you, then they’ll probably be concerned enough to want to keep you alive. But, if not, I’ll have to remind them that we can kill any one of you just as suddenly as we just killed the music!”*

In a strange reversal, Muzak’s crowd management has also been used as a repellent. The *Los Angeles Times* earned nationwide chuckles in 1992 when it reported that the Southland Corporation had installed Muzak in the 7-Eleven chains in Southern California’s Thousand Oaks district to drive away loitering teenagers. The plan worked so well that Southland had planned to repeat the “Muzak Attack” in other parts of Los Angeles County. This story is all the more fascinating because the music played was not the elevator music “Environmental” program but Muzak’s Classical channel. The youths were fleeing not Geoff Love’s rendition of “By the Time I Get to Phoenix” but perhaps one of Bach’s “Brandenburg Concertos.”

Music psychotherapist Warren Brodsky provided a personal testimony to the role of music as a mood settler in Israel during the 1991 Persian Gulf War. He wrote in the *Music Therapy* journal that, due to the “controlled and directed manipulation of the electronic media,” music surfaced “to assist the entire population in developing more adaptive coping methods, which included instilling feelings of national unity and establishing support systems.” Brodsky stressed how mood music was especially relevant, since “Desert Storm was a psychological war involving expressions of temperament and emotion from almost every nation on earth.” As he remembered: “Soothing music of a nostalgic nature was being administered via the radio by the authorities to assist the population of Israel to get through this crisis.” The Gulf War set a precedent, since the Israeli government had never before pro-

*Steve Kahn, *The Mall* (New York: Pocket Books, 1983), pp. 213–14.

claimed or even sanctioned banning foreign language songs from all broadcasts of radio and television. Knowing that Saddam Hussein's SCUD missiles would soon be crashing into Tel Aviv, the Israel Broadcasting Authority (IBA) replaced their usual programming with songs "expressing emotions and overtones of strength and national unity."

Today there are a few new trendsetters in elevator music. Howard Martin (a former E. F. Hutton stockbroker) is a researcher for Doc Lew Childre's HeartMath Institute and is helping to produce its newest line of "Designer Music." He is among a new generation of thinkers interested in advancing the background music philosophy further: "People will start to look at music the way they used to look at dope. They will see music for its specific psychological effects. Music has the power to change moods and attitudes. Using music with these applications makes more sense now with the time crunch everyone's in. A lot of popular music is just a reaction to the social environment. The more important music will *change* that environment."

Toyo BGM Corporation, one of Japan's leading suppliers of background music, has recently changed its concept from business music to "Sense Business"—working to study and alter all environmental factors. Toyo representative Haruo Abe touts the term *new office*, currently popular among Japanese executives who seek to "create the good human environment of sound, vision, and aroma." Since the 1970s, Japan was in the forefront of experimentation not just with music but with the effects of different scents on users of hotels, offices, and public thoroughfares. Abe concludes that "for background music to really serve its purpose, good music is no longer good enough."

Industrial psychologist Dr. James Keenan, who served on Muzak's Scientific Board of Advisors in the late 1960s, exemplifies the kinds of theories a big corporation can muster when private gain has become intertwined with visions of social ecology:

While at Muzak, I liked to quote some Russian studies that showed the remarkable nature of some sounds. I was in Moscow, and they showed that high-intensity-

pitched sounds really can do an interesting amount of stuff. High-pitched sounds can influence . . . your affect cells. I found that Muzak became the perception of how sounds affect metabolism. There are many sounds in the environment—mechanical energy, electromechanical, and electrochemical—that change the body. . . . There is a certain rightness about some things; maybe its cultural or in the eye of the beholder. In the area of vision, a certain rectangle (35-mm slide) is judged to be more pleasing than squares. The movie theater is generally a little more pleasing than the TV screen. With music, there is also some kind of rightness. I think this is true across cultures. That's why thoughts about Muzak always lead to mysticism.

Years after surviving the golden age of “individualism,” we no longer have Huxley’s luxury of bleating about the excesses of capitalist greed and centralized power. They are a fact of life: a fact we are learning not only to accept but to enjoy. Looking objectively at our society’s haphazard social manipulations designed to give people the illusion of diversity and choice, we might envy the society created by *Brave New World’s* human engineers with their “Sound-Track Writers and Synthetic Composers.” Like many libertarian moralists, Huxley trots out the noble savage to attack a “dehumanizing” technology. Yet despite the fact that he is obviously on the savage’s side, Huxley manages to put more sense into the words of one of the novel’s emotional engineers, who claims:

“You’ve got to choose between happiness and what people used to call high art. We have the feelies and the scent organ instead. . . . Actual happiness always looks pretty squalid in comparison with the overcompensations for misery. And, of course, stability isn’t nearly so spectacular as instability. And being contented has none of the glamour of a good fight against misfortune, none of the picturesqueness of a struggle with temptation, or a fatal overthrow by passion or doubt. Happiness is never grand.”

Elevator music (besides just being good music) is essentially a distillation of the happiness that modern technology has promised. A world without elevator music would be much grimmer than its detractors (and those who take it for granted) could ever realize. This is because most of us, in our hearts, want a world tailored by Walt Disney's "imagineers," an ergonomical "Main Street U.S.A.," where the buildings never make you feel too small, where the act of paying admission is tantamount to a screen-test—and where the music never stops.

Selected Discography

(Listed with LP catalog number when possible; others listed by year when available)

Angelo Badalamenti

Nashville Beergarden (Ranwood Records)

On Warner Brothers:

Twin Peaks (soundtrack) 9 26316-2

Twin Peaks: Fire Walk with Me (music from the motion picture soundtrack) 9 45019-2

Les Baxter

Music Out of the Moon: Music Unusual Featuring the Theremin (Capitol Criterion (3) 10" 78 RMP Records (CC-47)

The Passions (10" box set)

Perfume Set to Music (RCA) LPM 35

On Capitol:

Ritual of the Savage, Le Sacre du Sauvage H-288

Tambool! T 655

Caribbean Moonlight T 733

Skins! Bongo Party with Les Baxter T 774

'Round the World with Les Baxter T 780

Midnight on the Cliffs T 843

Ports of Pleasure (S)T 868

Space Escapade (S)T 968

Selections from "South Pacific" (S)T 1012

Confetti (S)T 1029

Love Is a Fabulous Thing T 1088

South Pacific T 1012

The Sacred Idol (S)T 1293

Voices in Rhythm (Reprise) R(S) 6036

The Primitive and the Passionate R(S) 6048

La Femme T 10015

Jewels of the Sea T 1537

Harold Budd

On Warner Brothers (Opal):

The Serpent (in Quicksilver)/Abandoned Cities 9-26025-2

The White Arcades 9-25766-2

On Editions EG:

The Pearl (with Brian Eno) EEGCD37

Frank Chacksfield

Evening in Paris (Decca) LK4081

Evening in Rome LK 4095

If I Had a Talking Picture of You LK 4135

Close Your Eyes LK 4138

Velvet (London) LL 1443

Ebb Tide (Pickwick) SPC 3231

The Ray Charles Singers

On Command:

Songs for Latin Lovers RS 886 SD

At the Movies with the Ray Charles Singers RS 923 SD

Slices of Life 942 S

On Decca:

Love and Marriage DL 78787

Sunrise Serenade DL 78838

On Somerset:

Let's Relax with the Ray Charles Singers SF 25500

Quiet Moments for Young Lovers SF 21400

Young Lovers in Far Away Places SF 21500

Ray Conniff

On Columbia:

S'Wonderful CL 925

Dance The Bop CL 1004

S'Marvelous CL 1074/CS 8037

S'Awful Nice CS 8001

Concert in Rhythm CS 8022

Broadway in Rhythm CS 8064

Hollywood in Rhythm CS 8117

It's the Talk of the Town CS 8143 (First use of singers as foreground)

Christmas with Conniff CS 8185

Concert in Rhythm Vol. II CS 8212

- Young at Heart* CS 8281
Say It with Music CS 8282
Memories Are Made of This CS 8374
Somebody Loves Me CS 8442
So Much in Love CS 8520
S'Continental CS 8576
Rhapsody in Rhythm CS 8678
We Wish You a Merry Christmas CS 8692
The Happy Beat CS 8749
Speak to Me of Love CS 8950
Friendly Persuasion CS 9010
Invisible Tears CS 9064
Love Affair CS 9152
Happiness Is CS 9261
World of Hits CS 9300
Somewhere My Love CS 9319
This Is My Song CS 9476
Hawaiian Album CS 9547
I Love How You Love Me CS 9777
Love Story CS 30498 (Contains Gregorian Cocktail version of "If You
 Could Read My Mind")
Great Contemporary Instrumental Hits C 30755
I'd Like to Teach the World to Sing KC 31220
Ray Conniff Plays the Carpenters SOPM 129 (Released only in Europe
 and Japan)
Ray Conniff Plays the Beatles SOP 119 (Released only in Japan)
Ray Conniff Plays the Bee Gees JC 35659
I Will Survive JC 36255
Supersonico DIL 10363 (Latin)
Ray Conniff Plays Broadway CBS 467241
S'Alwavs Conniff (Recorded live in Japan, December 11, 1991)

Connie Cook

White Light

Come Out to Play (available through Cook 'n Mark Productions, Box
 405, Canton, IL 61520)

The Alan Copeland Singers

Cool Country ABC 583

If Love Comes with It (A&M) SP 4173

Floyd Cramer

On RCA:

Hits from the Country Hall of Fame LSP 2318
Floyd Cramer Plays the Monkees LSP 3811
Floyd Cramer Plays Country Classics LSP 3935
Class of '68 LSP 4025
Floyd Cramer Plays MacArthur Park LSP 4070
Sounds of Sunday LSP 4500
Detours LSP 4676

Julee Cruise

Floating into the Night 9 25859-2
The Voice of Love 9 45390-2

Mychael Danna

On Hearts of Space:

Sirens HS-11026-2
Skys HS-11032-2

Lenny Dee

On Decca:

Dee-Lightful DL-8114
Dee-Lirious DL-8165
Dee-Licious DL-8275
Hi-Dee-Fi DL-8406
Dee-Most DL-8308
Dee-Day DL-8628

On MCA:

City Lights MCA-476
Organ Celebration MCA-2370
Misty Blue MCA-2236
Organ Magic MCA-2301
In the Mood MCA-172
I'll Play for You (Plus 9 Other Songs) MCA-2162

Constance Demby

On Hearts of Space:

Sacred Space Music HS-11010-2

Novus Magnificat (Through the Stargate) HS-11003-2
Set Free HS-11016-2

Martin Denny

On Liberty:

- Exotica* LST 7034
- Exotica Vol. II* LST 7006
- Forbidden Island* LST 7001
- Primitiva* LST 7023
- Hypnotique* LST 7102
- Afro-Desia* LST 7111
- Exotica Vol. III* LST 7116
- Quiet Village* LST 7122
- The Enchanted Sea* LST 7141
- Exotic Sounds of the Silver Screen* LST 7158
- Exotic Sounds Visits Broadway* LST 7163
- Exotic Percussion* LST 7168
- Romantica* LST 7207
- A Taste of Honey* LST 7237
- The Versatile Martin Denny* LST 7307
- Latin Village* LST 7378
- Hawaii Tattoo* LST 7394
- Hawaii Goes a Go Go!* LST 7445
- Exotica Today* LST 7465
- Hawaii* LST 7488
- A Taste of India* LST 7550
- Exotic Moog* LST 7621
- Exotica '90* (Japanese CD) TOCP 6160

Brian Eno

On Editions EG:

- The Pearl* (With Harold Budd) EEGCD 37
- Apollo* (Atmospheres & Soundtracks) EGCD 53
- Ambient 4: On Land* EEGCD 20
- Discreet Music* EEGCD 23
- Music for Films* EEGCD 5
- Ambient 1: Music for Airports* EEGCD 17
- Thursday Afternoon* EGCD 64

Percy Faith

On Columbia:

- American Waltzes* (Columbia) CL 6178
Exotic Strings CL 1902/CS 8702
Music Until Midnight CL 551 (Mitch Miller on oboe)
Passport CL 880
The Columbia Album of George Gershwin
South Pacific CL 1105
Malaguena CL 8081
Hollywood's Great Themes P 13278 (Special Products)
For Those in Love (His Orchestra and Chorus) CS 2810
Bouquet (The Percy Faith Strings in Stereo) CA 8124
Angel of the Morning (Hit Themes for Young Lovers) CS 9706
Today's Themes for Young Lovers CS 9504
Themes for Young Lovers CL2023/CS8823
More Themes for Young Lovers CL2167/CS8967
Day by Day KC 31627
Jealousy CL1501/CS1301
The Love Goddesses and Other Themes by Percy Faith CL2209/
 CS9009
Themes for the "In" Crowd CL2441/CS9241

Robert Farnon

On Decca:

- Two Cigarettes in the Dark* (1955) LL 1052
Flirtation Walk (1954) LL 1053
Sunny Side Up (1957) LL 1435
Pictures in the Fire LL 1667
Cocktails for Two (Decca budget Richmond Label, 1954)
By a Waterfall (1954)
Something to Remember You By (1955)
From the Enchanted Isle (1959)
Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra (Citadel 1959)
The Sensuous Strings of Robert Farnon (Philips 1962)
In a Dream World (Rediffusion 1974)
At the Movies with Robert Farnon (Horatio Nelson 1986)

Ferrante & Teicher

Prepared Piano Works:

- Blast Off!* ABCS 285

Hi-Fi Fireworks CL 573
Soundproof (Westminister) WL/WST 15011
Heavenly Sounds in Hi-Fi ABCC 221

On United Artists:

(With their orchestra conducted by Nick Perito):
The Keys to Her Apartment UAS 6247
Snowbound UAS 6233
Love Themes WWS 8514
The Many Moods of Ferrante & Teicher UAS 6211
Pianos in Paradise UAS 6230
Holiday for Pianos UAS 6298
Tonight UAS 6171
Golden Themes from Motion Pictures UAS 6210
Listen to the Movies with Ferrante & Teicher UAS 6701
You Asked for It! UAS 3526
Getting Together UAS 5501
It's Too Late UAS 5531
Live for Life and Other Great Themes UAS 6632

Jackie Gleason

On Capitol:

Music for Lovers Only (S)W 352
Music, Martinis and Memories (S)W 509
Lonesome Echo (S)W 627
Velvet Brass (S)W 859
Oooo! (S)W 905
The Torch with the Blue Flame (S)W 961
Rebound (S)W 1075
That Moment (S)W 1147
Aphrodisia (S)W 1250
Opiate d'Amour (S)W 1315
Lazy Lively Love (S)W 1439
The Gentle Touch (S)W 1519
Lover's Portfolio (S)WBO 1619
Love Embers and Flame (S)W 1689
Music to Make You Misty
Night Winds
Soft and Silky Brass

Morton Gould

On Columbia:

- Rhapsody for Piano and Orchestra* ML 4657
Curtain Time ML 4451
Movie Time ML 4595
Windjammer (Original Musical Score) CS 8651

On RCA:

- Latin, Lush and Lovely* LSC-2752
Morton Gould Makes the Scene LSP 3771
Jungle Drums
More Jungle Drums
Blues in the Night LM 2104

Earl Grant

On Decca:

- The Magic of Earl Grant* DL 74044
Ebb Tide DL 74165
Earl After Dark DL 74188
Beyond the Reef (And Other Instrumental Favorites) DL 74321
Midnight Sun DL 74338
Trade Winds DL 74623

The Hollyridge Strings

On Capitol:

- The Beatles Song Book* (S)T2116
The Beach Boys Song Book (S)T2156
The Hollyridge Strings Play Instrumental Versions of Hits Made Famous by the Four Seasons (S)T2199
The Beatles Song Book Vol. 2 (S)T2202
The Hollyridge Strings Play Instrumental Versions of Hits Made Famous by Elvis Presley (S)T2221
The Nat King Cole Song Book (S)T2310
Feels Like Lovin' (Stu Phillips, His Orchestra and Chorus) (S)T 2356
The New Beatles Song Book (S)T2429
Oldies But Goodies (S)T2564
The Hollyridge Strings Play Magical Mystery Tour (S)T2876

Horst Jankowski

On Mercury:

- The Genius of Jankowski* SR60993
- More Genius of Jankowski* SR61054
- Still More Genius of Jankowski* SR61076
- So, What's New?* SR 61093
- Baby, But Grand!* SR 21106
- And We Got Love* (Featuring Zabadak) SR61160
- Piano Affairs* SR 61195
- Jankowski Plays Jankowski* SR 61219

Gordon Jenkins

- Manhattan Tower* (with narration) DL8011
- Seven Dreams* (with narration) DL9011
- Let's Duet* (Warner Bros.) SW 1464
- My Heart Sings* (Decca) DL74714
- Stolen Hours* T884
- Blue Prelude* (Sunset) SUS5149
- France* (Bainbridge) BT1024

Bert Kaempfert

On Decca:

- Wonderland by Night* DL 74101
- Afrikaan Beat* DL 74273
- That Happy Feeling* DL 74305
- Living It Up* DL 74374
- That Latin Feeling* DL 74490
- Blue Midnight* DL 74569
- Music by Bert Kaempfert from the Universal Picture "A Man Could Get Killed"* DL 74750
- ... Love That* DL 74986
- Orange Colored Sky* DL75256
- The Magic Music of Faraway Places* DL 74616

The Anita Kerr Singers

- The Hit Sound* (RCA) LSP2480
- Sounds* (Warner 7 Arts) WS1750
- Velvet Voices & Bold Brass* (Decca) DLP 2595
- Touch Love* 25970

Till the End of Time DL 75159

(With the Mexicali Singers):

The Mexicali Singer (Warner Bros.) W1641

The Further Adventures of the Mexicali Singers W1651

André Kostelanetz

On Columbia:

"Aida" CL 755

Lure of the Tropics CL780

Stardust CL781

Clair de Lune CL 798

Calendar Girl CL811

The Very Thought of You CL 843

Cafe Concerto CL863

The Lure of Spain CL 943

Gypsy Passion CL 1431

Kostelanetz in Wonderland—Golden Encores CS8878

Last Tango in Paris C32187

Francis Lai

The Best of Francis Lai (From the Original Motion Picture Soundtracks of "A Man and a Woman" and "Live for Life") (United Artists) UAS6656

More Love Themes (Kapp) KS3646

The Very Best of Francis Lai ("Bilitis" and Other Love Stories) (Skyline) SLCD 817 (From Sweden)

Michel Legrand

The Windmills of Your Mind (Original Motion Picture Theme from "The Thomas Crown Affair" and Others) (United Artists) UAS6715

Le Grand World of French Song (Philips) PHS 600-143

Rendezvous in Paris PHS 600-045

Music from the Films (Columbia) WL107

I Love Movies CL1178

The Best of Michel Legrand (Kory) KK3006

I Love Paris

Bonjour Paris CL 947

Scarlet Ribbons CS 8146
Holiday in Rome
Vienna Holiday
Castles in Spain
Legrand Jazz

Enoch Light & The Light Brigade

On Command:

Persuasive Percussion (Command) RS 800SD
Reeds & Percussion RS 820SD
Great Themes from Hit Films RS 835SD
The Million Dollar Sound of the World's Most Precious Violins RS
 802SD
Rome 35/MM RS 863SD
Command Performances RS 868SD

On Project 3:

Dancing in the Dark (Disco Greats) (PROJECT 3) PR 5098SD
Charge! PR 5073SD
Whoever You Are, I Love You (with The Enoch Light Singers) PR
 5030 SD

The Living Strings

On Camden:

Living Strings Play Music for Romance CAS 637 (Conducted by Hill
 Bowen)
On a Sentimental Journey CAS 803
Living Strings Plus Harp: The Melody Lingers On CAS 847
Living Strings Plus Two Pianos: The World We Knew CAS 2190 (Ar-
 ranged & Conducted by Geraldo)
Living Strings Play Music in the Night CAS 638 (Arranged & Con-
 ducted by Bob Sharples)
Living Strings Play Music of the Sea CAS 639 (Arranged & Conducted
 by Johnny Douglas)
*Living Guitars Play a Charlie Rich Songbook (with the Country
 Strings)* ACL1-0696 (Arranged & Conducted by Anita Kerr)
Living Marimbas Plus Strings: MacArthur Park and Other Favorites
 CAS 2283

The Living Voices

On Camden:

Come to the Fair CAS 812

- Moonglow and Other Great Standards* CAS 804
Living Voices on the Campus CAS 715
Living Voices Sing Songs of Moonlight and Romance CAS 683
Living Voices Sing Ramblin' Rose and Other Hits CAS 748
Living Voices Sing "Indian Love Call" and Other Great Duets CAS
 697
Living Voices Sing Songs of the West CAS 674
Living Voices: Positively 4th Street and Other Message Folk Songs CAS
 947
Living Strings and Living Voices in Music of George Gershwin CAS 675

The London Studio Orchestra & Singers

On Point Productions:

- For Lovers Only* (3 CD box) CD 2699942
Memory (20 Romantic Themes) CD 2641422
Feelings (16 Love Themes) CD 2641402
All Night Long (20 Themes for Lovers) CD 2641412
Your Song (20 Golden Romantic Songs) CD 2641462

Claudine Longet

On A&M:

- Claudine* SP 4121
The Look of Love SP 4129
Love is Blue SP 4142
Run Wild, Run Free SP 4232
Colours SP 4263

The Norman Luboff Choir

On RCA:

- You're My Girl* LPM 2368
Grand Tour LSP 2521

On Columbia:

- Moments to Remember* CS 8220
Just a Song . . . CL 890
Songs of the Sea CS 8775

Arthur Lyman

On Hi-Fi:

- Taboo* R806

Hawaiian Sunset R807
Bwana A R808
Legend of Pele R813
Yellow Bird R1004
Colorful Percussion R1005
Many Moods R1007
Love for Sale R1009
Enchantment R1023
Midnight Sun R1024

The Johnny Mann Singers

On Liberty:

If I Loved You LST 7411
The Ballad Sound of the Johnny Mann Singers LST 7391
Invisible Tears LST 7387
Alma Mater LST 7134
Golden Folk Song Hits LST 7353
Don't Look Back LST 7535
We Can Fly! LST 7476
This Is My Country LST 7505
Daydream LST 7447
A Perfect Blend (With the Si Zentner Orchestra) LST 7483

Mantovani

On Decca/London:

Music from the Films PS 112
Strauss Waltzes PS 118
Waltz Encores PS 119
Film Encores PS 124
Song Hits from Theatreland PS 125
Continental Encores PS 147 (LL 3095)
The American Scene PS 182
Songs to Remember PS 193
Italia Mia PS 232
Songs of Praise PS 245
Moon River and Other Great Film Themes PS 249
The World's Great Love Songs PS 280
Latin Rendezvous PS 295

- Folk Songs from Around the World* PS 360
Mantovani in Concert PS 578
Some Enchanted Evening LL 766
American Encores PS 915
*Mantovani and His Orchestra Play Selections from "Stop the World—
 I Want to Get Off" and "Oliver"* PS 270
Mantovani Magic PS 448
Mantovani/Hollywood PS 516
Mantovani . . . Memories PS 542
The Mantovani Scene PS 548
Strictly Mantovani PS 917

Paul Mauriat

On Philips:

- Blooming Hits: Paul Mauriat and His Orchestra* PHS 600-248
More Mauriat PHA 600-226
Of Vodka and Caviar PHS 600-215
Listen Too! PHS 600-197
Mauriat Magic PHS 600-270

Robert Maxwell

On MGM:

- Zing! Went the Strings of My Harp* E/SE 3486
The Very Best of Robert Maxwell E/SE 4246

On Decca:

- Bewitched* DL 4421
A Song for All Seasons DL 4609
Peg o' My Heart DL 4563

On Command:

- Harpistry in Rhythm* 932-S

George Melachrino

On RCA:

- Music for Dining* LSP 1000
Music for Relaxation LSP 1001
Music for Reading LSP 1002
Music for Courage and Inspiration LSP 1005
Music to Help You Sleep LSP 1006
Music for Two People Alone LSP 1027

Music for Daydreaming LSP 1028
Music to Work or Study By LSP 1029
More Music for Relaxation LSP 2278
You and the Night and the Music LSP 2866
Under Western Skies LSP 1676
Lisbon at Twilight LSP 1762
Music for Faith and Inner Calm

The Mystic Moods Orchestra

On Philips/Bainbridge:

One Stormy Night
Nighttide
More Than Music
Mexico! (Also titled: *Mexican Trip*)
Moods for a Stormy Night (Originally titled: *Mystic Moods of Love*)
Emotions
Extensions
Love Token
Stormy Weekend
English Muffins
Country Lovin' Folk
Love the One You're With
Highway One
Erogenous
Awakening (Also titled: *Cosmic Force*)
Clearlight
Being with You (With Mystic Moods and Friends)
Stormy Memories

Peter Nero

On RCA:

Hail the Conquering Nero LSP2638
Up Close LSP 3550
New Piano in Town LSP2387
Nero-ing in on the Hits LSP3871
Reflections LSP 2853
Love Trip LSP 4205
Just for You (Premier) PM 2011
Summer of '42 (Columbia) C 31105

Tender is the Night (Premier) PRM 241
Disco Dances and Love Themes of the 70s (Arista) AL 4034

101 Strings

On Somerset/Alshire:

The Soul of Spain SF 6600
The Soul of the Gypsies S 5024
Gypsy Camp Fires SF 8100
Fire and Romance of South America S 5040
Mood Vienna S 5023
East of Suez S 5027
Italia con Amore (From Italy with Love) S 5030
The Soul of Mexico S 5032
Hawaiian Paradise S 5028
Fly Me to the Moon S 5033
Caribbean Nights SP 5900
Songs of the Seasons in Japan S 5019
*Jet Set (The Musical Pulse and Excitement of The Scene Today Where
 It's Happening)* S 5043
African Safari S 5171
Songs of England S 5192
The Soul of Israel (A/S) 10
I Love Paris SF 13000
Latin Holiday (A/S) 18
International Tangos S 5302
Americana S 5317
The Soul of Scotland S 5172
Back Beat Symphony P 11500
A Romantic Mood for Dining and Dreaming S 5034
The Sounds of Love (A/S) 199
The "Exotic" Sounds of Love (A/S) 201
Astro Sounds S5119

Norrie Paramor

On Capitol:

Jet Flight ((S)T-10190)
Autumn ((S)T-10212)
Amor, Amor! ((S)T-10238)
The Zodiac Suite ((S)T-10073)

Franck Pourcel

On Imperial:

A Man and a Woman LP 12343

Beautiful Obsession LP 9322

Somewhere My Love LP 9326

Our Man in Paris LP 9304

On EMI:

Pourcelissimo! T 100466 (Odeon/EMI)

Franck Pourcel Plays Abba (10 CO64-016.550)

Music Parade (2C 184-15566/7-Y)

Franck Pourcel Meets the Beatles (2C 062-11041-U)

Henri René

On RCA:

Music for the Weaker Sex LPM 1583

Compulsion to Swing LPM/LSP 1947

Riot in Rhythm LPM/LSP 2002

Dynamic Dimensions LSA 2396

White Heat (Imperial) LP 9074

The Swinging 59 (Imperial) LP 9096

They're Playing Our Song (Decca) DL 74574

Nelson Riddle

On Capitol:

Sea of Dreams T-915

Love Tide (S)T-1571

The Joy of Living (S)T-1148

On Liberty:

The Riddle of Today LST-7532

The Bright and the Beautiful LST-7508

David Rose

On MGM:

Music From Motion Pictures E 3398

Spectacular Strings E 3895

Secret Songs for Young Lovers (With André Previn) E 3716

The Very Best of David Rose E 4155

The Sandpipers

On A&M:

- Guantanamera* SP 4117
- Sandpipers* SP 4125
- Misty Roses* SP 4135
- Softly* SP 4147
- Spanish Album* SP 4159
- The Wonder of You* SP 4180
- Come Saturday Morning* SP 4262
- A Gift of Song* SP 4328
- The Sandpipers Four-Sider* SP 6014

John Sbarra

On Fairfield CD:

- All My Best . . . Love Will Always Matter* JS-001
- Movie Themes of Tomorrow* JS-003

The Singers Unlimited

On Pausa:

- Friends* 7039
- Just in Time* 7048
- A Special Blend* 7062
- Feeling Free* 7068
- Sentimental Journey* 7090
- Easy to Love* 7109
- Even Tide* (With Farnon Orchestra) 7118
- Four of Us* 7121

The Swingle Singers

On Philips:

- Jazz Sebastian Bach* 1964
- Going Baroque* 1964
- Anyone for Mozart?* 1965
- Place Vendôme* (with The Modern Jazz Quartet) 1965

On CBS:

- Love Songs for Madrigals and Madriguys*

Ruth Welcome

On Capitol:

- Sentimental Zither* (S)T 2064

Hi-Fi Zither (S)T 942
Romantic Zither (S)T 1527
Zither in ¾ Time (S)T 1318
Welcome to Zitherland (S)T 1471
At a Sidewalk Cafe (S)T 1209
Zither Goes Hollywood (S)T 1986
Zither Magic! (S)T 1279

Lawrence Welk

On Dot:

Moon River DLP-3412/25412
Calcutta! DLP-3359
Yellow Bird DLP-3389
Songs of the Islands DLP-3251
Young World DLP-3428/25428
Voices and Strings of Lawrence Welk DLP-3200
Sweet and Lovely DLP-3296
I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles DLP-3248
Mr. Music Maker DLP-3164/25364
Bubbles in the Wine DLP-3489/25489
Champagne on Broadway DLP-3688
Wonderful! Wonderful! DLP-3552
The Happy Wanderer DLP-3653
Waltz Time DLP-3499
Apples & Bananas DLP-3629

Paul Weston

On Capitol:

Music for Dreaming H-222
Music for Memories H-225
Music for Easy Listening H-195
Music for Romancing H-153
Music for Reflection H-287
Music for the Fireside H-245

On Columbia:

Music for a Rainy Night CL 6266
Melodies for Moonlight CL 574

Whispers in the Dark CL 6232
Melodies for a Sentimental Mood CL 6204
Music for my Love

Roger Williams

On Kapp and MCA:

Roger Williams (1956)
Almost Paradise (1957)
Songs of the Fabulous Forties (1957)
Till (1958)
Near You (1959)
With These Hands (1959)
Temptation (1960)
Maria (1962)
For You (1963)
The Solid Gold Steinway (1964)
Academy Award Winners (1964)
Summer Wind (1965)
Roger Williams Plays the Hits (1965)
Somewhere, My Love (1966)
Born Free (1966)
Academy Award Winners Vol. 2 (1966)
The Impossible Dream (1967)
Only for Lovers (1969)
Happy Heart (1969)
Themes from Great Movies (1970)
Summer of '42 (1971)
The Way We Were (1974)
I Honestly Love You (1975)
Evergreen (1977)

Hugo Winterhalter

On RCA:

The Eyes of Love . . . LPM 1338
Hugo Winterhalter Goes . . . Latin LSP 1677
Wish You Were Here LSP-1904
Hugo Winterhalter Goes . . . Gypsy LSP-2167

Hugo Winterhalter Goes . . . South of the Border LSP-2271

Hugo Winterhalter Goes . . . Hawaiian LSP-2417

Hugo Winterhalter Goes . . . Continental LSP-2482

I Only Have Eyes for You LSP-2645

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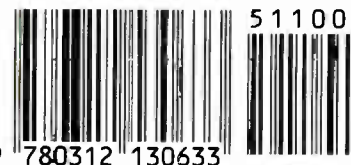
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