

Library Music Interviews

(1980)

Edited by Philip Tagg
(April 2000, August 2002)

Extracts from

Film Music, Mood Music and Popular Music Research¹

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This temporary second edition (Aug. 2002), published exclusively on the web, contains the interviews I conducted in 1980 with staff at three Library Music companies in London and one in Paris.

Typographical conventions

The editor's spoken words, mostly questions, are in this typeface. The interviewee's words are in this type face. Narrative outside the actual conversations is in this typeface.

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1. Originally published in September 1980 as pages 1-44 in P Tagg (ed.) *Film Music, Mood Music and Popular Music Research. Interviews, conversations, entretiens sur la musique de film, de sonorisation et sur la recherche dans la musique des mass-média*. Stencilled Papers from the Gothenburg University Musicology Department, no. 2 (90 pages, ISSN 0349-3407).

The Mood Music Libraries

1. KPM (London)

This conversation with Ron Singer of KPM Recorded Music Library took place on Monday 10 March 1980 on the first floor of KPM's Denmark Street headquarters.

How, when and why did mood music libraries actually start?

I think it was in the earlier part of the Hollywood era. I remember handling a tape from the States which was full of that awful stuff from Hollywood. They were actual backing tracks from feature films which they then formed into libraries. After the films had died out they tried to interest people in using the background music, first in radio and later on, of course, in television.

What about the origins of this particular company? They're 75 years old as a music publishing company.

Well, Keith Prowse, the KP in KPM, was an enterprising person who started the music publishing company and Peter Maurice (the PM in KPM) had his company here in Denmark Street too. The street was full of publishers and it was London's Tin Pan Alley. Both Prowse and Maurice were bought out by EMI, so the KPM part of it is Keith Prowse plus Peter Maurice, both of whom started as ordinary music publishers. The recorded music library came into being because people would come into us wanting to use a piece of standard music in a film. They might want to use *Pennies from Heaven* in a commercial and then they would be given the rights to use it for a price. From this sort of demand they developed the idea of recording specially for music in films.

You know what the old kind of background music was like - a bit corny and too 'typical': for example the sort of mentality that says when you see a train the music must go 'chug, chug, chug' and so on. In America they still use this sort of thing. They must have a terrible imagination! They even have music of that type behind commentaries on television. I think we are past that stage here although we still have to produce a few corny Muzak type of things every now and again just to satisfy this market ...

Is that any particular market asking for this corny stuff?

No, not really. Perhaps I should first say that nobody ever accused a film producer or director of having a good sense of music. Most of them just don't have a clue.

What about Eisenstein and Prokofiev?

Of course there are exceptions. I'm mostly thinking of those making documentaries, newsreels and so on. Even the advertising people can be totally clueless. What they seem to operate on is their own particular musical favourites. You perhaps have someone making a film on hot air balloons. He sends his editor out to select the music. The editor in his turn says that the director wants *D'Ye Ken John Peel?* played by the Coldstream Guards as music for this hot air balloon film. Firstly we have to inform this music editor that we don't have anything by the Coldstream Guards and secondly we advise him that even if we did, it just wouldn't fit the situation. Then perhaps he'll say: 'how about *Raindrops keep Falling On Your Head?*'. You see, it's difficult to educate some of our clients out of plumping for personal favour-

ites. Some of the music we produce now is frankly quite good enough to go out on commercial discs. Some of it is, I think, very way out, very exciting and some of it is very big. I mean, we use the London Philharmonic Orchestra for recordings sometimes...

About 100 musicians?

No, about 64 of them at a time, mainly the string section. A session like that would cost us over £16,000 to record which is on a par with commercial productions, although I'm not talking about the sort of production where they spend months in the studio recording and mixing. We do it in two or three days flat [record an LP]. Sorry, what was your question again?

Who started this library when and why?

Who started it? We've already dealt with that. When? I'm not sure of dates, but the reason was to satisfy film people without them having to pay large amounts in order to use music owned by standard composers.

So it wasn't started as a direct consequence of the talkies in the thirties but a later phenomenon?

Yes. Still, another important thing is the question of money, of company budgets. You see, up to a few years ago most advertising agents and even those just producing documentaries would be able to afford to get an orchestra into the studio and record the backing track. It wasn't very expensive at all. But with the advent of strict union rules and rates, the rise of studio costs and costs in general, the film or advertising budgets can afford to record less and less of their own backing tracks. This is why background libraries have become more and more useful — because of costs. Using library music costs very little compared to having music scored, played and recorded for a film or commercial. It can often even work better as well.

How large is your collection at present?

There are 300 or so LPs in the main library.

Do you sell the records in the collection or does your income come from royalties.

From royalties.

Who are your main customers?

Previously it was mainly people doing educational films, low-budget commercials and so on, That changed and it became more and more a television thing. At this stage it's changing again. Although we still supply people with music for their educational films, their documentaries, trade films and for television. The big thing now is audiovisual presentations.

You mean slide shows, not videocassettes?

That's right. Videocassettes are the newest problem. When the copyright laws were brought in they didn't conceive of videotape and certainly not home video; this meant that apart from existing copyright law there are no laws to putting music on videotape. No, what I mean by 'audiovisual' is mainly presentations at exhibitions, for training staff, for demonstrating new products: in other words the sort of presentation that travels round to various places. There's an enormous market for this because it doesn't take as much to set up as an audiovisual producer as it does to go into film. All you need are a couple of recorders and slide projector and you're in business.

As far as our income here is concerned in connection with audiovisual, what

happens here in Britain is as follows. A production company might want our library. We would then write a contract with that company for a period of five years. We'd supply him with an initial 100 records for £30 a year over a period of five years. As we bring out new records — about 20 every year — he will receive those and of course he has the catalogue. We leave it up to the company to choose the first 100 records he wants. If their representative prefers, we can suggest the most suitable records for his particular business. If, however, he sees in our catalogue other records outside the 100 he's already chosen, he gets those too. It's just that the library is so vast that it would be too complicated to have 300 records to find your way around in rather than having the initial 100 on which you can build a collection to suit your needs. Another reason for this procedure is to avoid wasting his (and probably our) time: he won't have to come in here and listen through all our collection trying to find something. Instead he can listen and choose in the comfort of his own studio or office. If he has any problems he can still phone up and say, for example, 'I'm doing a film on horse racing: can you suggest anything?' Then we'll say 'have a listen to KPM 1004, 1165 and 1021; you might find something there'. He might then come back to us and ask for one track on tape or on magnetic film.² He might even dub off his own disc if he's not too fussy. The discs all have high quality pressing à la Deutsche Grammophon-Gesellschaft; and we pay 10p extra to have them classically pressed. This means that if he's careful with his records he can dub straight off them on to his tape or film.

So, the majority of your sale of records is to audiovisual producers?

Yes, or to universities with TV or radio courses, to advertising agencies and to anyone producing something that needs music. This means also to people who produce background music for hospitals, hotels etc. A lot of hospital radios have our collection.

Would a corporation like Muzak or 3M, or anyone producing 'functional' background music buy material from you?

Yes, definitely.

I had no idea of that. Do they look for any particular mood?

Very recently they've changed their policy so that now they're looking for known tunes. That limits considerably what they can get from us and leaves non-copyright music by composers who've been dead for a long time. This means light classics, folk tunes, etc. What we have in our library sets a particular mood too much for them they want easy listening material, that's all. Mind you, the noise of their tape and the quality of their loudspeakers sets enough of a mood as it is, I think!

Is this a large part of the action?

It is in the USA, but not over here.

Do you sell your library in the USA?

Yes, we have twenty agents throughout the world. We have agents in places like America, Australia, Scandinavia, South Africa, Switzerland, Germany and so on, in fact in all the main places where we might be needed. These agents set their own rates. In America, for example, they will sell you the disc for about \$8, which doesn't mean you can use the music indiscriminate-

2. The magnetic film track is put alongside the picture in the film cutting room and then goes on to the final optic soundtrack on the 16mm or 35 mm film.

ly because it won't be public domain just through buying the disc. I think it's a question of quality: you see, there are libraries which supply this really junky old movie music for which all you have to pay is a flat £500, let's say, and this gives you the right to do whatever you want with the music. However, the quality of this stuff is so bad.

I suppose you're referring to things like Background Music for Home Movies?

That's right.

Most libraries do seem to get the majority of their income from a sort of needle time rather than from the sale of discs.

Well, in America it's called 'needle time' while over here it's known as the 'mechanical rate'. The mechanical rate operates on thirty-second units. If someone wants to know how much a piece of music is going to cost them, we must first know ourselves what it's going to be used for: will it be a commercial film, an educational film, or what? Then we would need to know where it will be distributed since the rate increases accordingly. Will it be on Thames TV or on the whole ITV network? They might have to pay £75 per 30 seconds for a commercial.³

When the studio in question uses a piece of music they must fill out a cue sheet and send it to the MCPS.⁴ In this way the MCPS will be able to see that piece *a* by composer *b* lasting for *c* minutes and *d* seconds and belonging to library *e* has been used for production *f*. So they send the producer the license and the bill at the same time. The MCPS take off their administration fee and split the rest between the publisher and the composer who each get 50% each. Then there's another fee: every cinema, pub, theatre, radio and television station pays a blanket fee to the PRS⁵ according to the size of the place, the area they broadcast over, etc. If a piece of music has been used, the television company involved, for example, logs that piece and at the end of a month this log is sent to the PRS. They don't have to pay anything to the PRS for the use of that specific piece, but out of the blanket money the PRS receive the composer and publisher of the piece will each get 50% of an amount calculated on how many pieces have been broadcast by the composer in question. So two payments are made: one via the MCPS, the other via the PRS.

I don't know what it's like in England, but the Swedish PRS (STIM)⁶ can send us our money for broadcast music up to three years in arrears

It's not unusual here either. They have the most up-to-date computers and are still always three years behind.

Has most of the stuff in your catalogue been specially commissioned or has it been put together from previous productions? I mean, do you have music from old films in the library at all?

All our music is specially commissioned. Occasionally we might buy an ethnic tape from Australia, for example, simply because it's impossible to record the aborigines here.

So the didgeridoo is in your catalogue?

Not yet, but this is something we're actually working on at the moment.

3. 1980: around £75 per 30 seconds for 1 station, £200 per 30 seconds for full network.

4. MCPS: Mechanical Copyright Protection Society.

5. PRS: Performing Rights Society.

6. STIM: Svenska tonsättares internationella musikbyrå.

We'd probably pay the production costs and we would share royalty benefits with our Australian producer in this case. Another example is our American agent who produced an album of American college and football marches. This is something that has to be done in America — we can't do it here. Yes, generally speaking the music is all commissioned. Let me give you an example: one of the people about the office this afternoon is a very good synthesiser player. We might ask him to compose enough tracks for an album of synthesised music for industrial use. It could be the laboratory mood, communications or something like that. Actually he's downstairs at the moment.

Do you think he'd give me two or three minutes of his time? I'd like to ask him why he's using those notes or that registration and not others on that particular track, questions like that.....

....he probably wouldn't be able to tell you. It all comes naturally. You see, you find out that certain composers are very good in certain directions. This means that if we wanted, for example, to do a nature study album, we would know that there are certain people who have written specially well for animals, insects, etc. We'd describe the pictures we'd like them to create in music. Perhaps we'd say 'do something with flowers opening', perhaps 'do something with insects'. We know he has the feel for that sort of thing. Other people are good at industrial things or perhaps crime and detective moods, perhaps aeroplanes and so on. So each composer has his own field, really, his particular sound and feeling.

Do you delete anything from your catalogue?

I don't think we actually delete anything. It's quite amazing, but there are twenty-year-old pieces of music still in the catalogue. Incidentally, this is the best pension scheme for any composer because it goes on for ever and over. No matter how old the piece is, it's not like a hit that goes up and down, it just ticks over bringing in money for years and years.

How do you decide what needs to be added to the catalogue?

A lot of it is a question of anticipation and instinct. Take the [1980] Olympic Games for example. We know there'll be a lot of sport type music needed, possibly with a Russian feel to it, so we'd commission someone to do that.

Just to take a case in point, how would you go about producing a record in connection with the Moscow Olympics?

Well, we have in mind a particular composer who wrote the signature for BBC's 'Grandstand'.

That's Keith Mansfield, isn't it?

Yes. You see, we know that Keith is very good at writing sporty and fanfarish things. So we'd probably ask him to do the album and we have in fact done this. There's a lot of discussion, and talk in it at the planning stage. It would be in terms of the pictures you imagine will be shown, perhaps the Olga Korbut type of thing, running, the agony of it, the pride of winning, the whole business. It's very much a matter of discussion. On the other hand, with composers who you don't have such a close working relationship with you'd sit down and do a brief. Perhaps we'd say 'we'd like you to do an album of compositions covering modern travel and the space age. As an opening picture think of a shot of Concorde in the distance, with that heat haze and the plane taking off and coming up above you... We'd like a track like that from you because we're always getting people coming in asking for music for that

sort of picture'.

This is in fact another way we get ideas: people come to us asking for music to go behind certain pictures. If we don't have anything suitable we make a note that we must get someone to cover that sort of field. I suppose that composers must know that certain notes or certain chords project certain moods and it amazes me how marvellous the sounds can be when we hear the results of what they've been doing.

Here Ron Singer gives some details on a particular recording session for an album with a 'prestigious', 'futuristic', 'important' or 'industrial' character. He picks out the album *Predictions, Part One* (KPM 1233). The track Ron plays is by Francis Monkton and is called *Passajig*. On the album sleeve it is described as 'a powerful, arresting theme'. To my ears this is quite a powerful and original piece in quick 6/8 tempo with a quaver riff on synthesisers in metronomic disco style over which a church organ plays strong, loud minor-modal chords every dotted crochet or minim on full Great. The organ sound has been phased. The periodicity is irregular, consisting of nine-bar (4+5) phrases. This section is interspersed by quartal fanfare figures on brass accompanied by closely miked compressed timpani playing 4 against 6).

Actually, neither this piece nor the whole album worked. The organ was recorded in a church and the rest was done in the studio.

At this point the conversation was interrupted for a tea break.

Do you know the Italian Library called CAM?

Yes, it's funny you should mention them because we got a thing from them the other day asking us if we wanted to buy.....

[short phone interruption]

Where were we?

You were talking about CAM.

Oh, yes. CAM is interesting because it's a case where they've got a lot of existing film music.

Some of it's not bad, don't you think?

Well, we do have some of it in our other library, the Conroy library which includes both more old fashioned material and some ethnic music too. There are very few libraries that have any good collections of English traditional tunes, but we do have that in Conroy. We've got Greek, Spanish, Swiss, German and all sorts of ethnic stuff on there but funnily enough it's difficult to get hold of Scandinavian material.

Really? There's some really good traditional music over there. I'll send you some to listen to if you like.

But do you think it would say anything?...

...To someone in Ashby-de-la-Zouch? No. I don't think the average Englishman, Frenchman or US-American would know that the music was Scandinavian at all. It's a shame really, because it's very good music and it always seems to be that way with minority cultures — either they're ignored or they just provide a sort of generally exotic twang.

It's always difficult to know what a piece is going to mean to anyone else. Let me play you an example here. What sort of pictures do you get from this?

Ron puts on a track which consists of strings playing tremoli trills and fast, dissonant broken chords in multi-part clusters. The music rises and falls dramatically in glissandi, in ordinary changes of register and with crescendi and diminuendi. There are numerous *sul ponte* passages too.

I think it suggests threatening swarms of bees, locusts, or possibly the seething nervousness of someone going completely crazy.

[Ron hands me the album. The piece was *Swarm Clouds* by Tony Hymas and was described on the record sleeve as 'threatening, confused, swarming shapes', from the album *Wessex Tales and Elements* (KPM 1216).

You see, the only thing that says 'Dutch' to the average movie goer in music is *Tulips from Amsterdam*. That's different from Greek music which sounds Greek to practically everybody or Spanish music which sounds definitely Spanish.

It's true, but Swedish music sounds Swedish and Norwegian music sounds Norwegian. Music from the middle of Sweden sounds different to that from the south and so on. You've got to know the idiom to be able to understand what it represents on that level and it's a shame that people don't know these pieces of musical code much outside folk circles in Scandinavia. That doesn't mean to say that new bits of musical code can't be learnt. I don't know how it is in your library, but in the Boosey & Hawkes library, they don't have anything in the Flûte Indienne vein as far as I can gather. So, if you wanted to do a film in the 'poor South-American Indian' genre from the slums of Lima, Santiago or from repression in the high Andes, you couldn't. That's probably because their South American stuff was recorded before Los Incas and Simon & Garfunkel popularised that particular style and certainly before exile Chilean groups of the Victor Jara/Violetta Parra school came to Europe as refugees. So the Boosey pieces under the heading 'Exotic—South America' are of the happy carnival or Martinis-on-the-terrace-Bossa-Nova character.⁷ Both these pieces would of course be quite unsatisfactory behind a documentary about fascist terror in Chile. Anyhow, what I'm trying to say is that there are musical ideas that people recognise but which can be pieces of musical information learnt at a later stage. It's in this sort of connection that I'd like to ask you how you get wind of new musical styles for your library.

I think it's often the composer who might say 'I heard this marvellous thing the other day and I might try to do something like that'. A lot of library material is done 'in the style of'..., although a good composer doesn't want to work on too close a formula: he wants to be creative. Still, to be realistic, we have to say to a composer sometimes 'do something that sounds like *Tubular Bells*', because a few years ago everybody was asking for *Tubular Bells*. Nowadays we're on to Tomita, *Snowflakes are Dancing*, you know. People hear the music in terms of what they've seen in a film or of their records at home. This means we have to ask composers to do music in the style of someone else.

Surely this means that you'll always be following a trend, never creating one yourselves here at the library?

I think that trumpet thing we heard is pretty innovative.⁸

Yes, that's true, although the titles to ITV's series about the history of Christianity was in a similar vein.⁹

7. There are only two pieces under this heading in the Boosey & Hawkes catalogue, entitled *Babassu* ('romantic sultry') and *Ballyhoo in Bogotà* ('Sunny Fiesta'), see Boosey & Hawkes catalogue, late 1970s, p.70.

8. *Passajig* by Francis Monkton (see p. 9).

9. 'The Christians', British TV series, c. 1978-9, introduced by Bamber Gascoigne.

Do you use any particular criteria for classifying pieces under particular headings in your catalogue? I mean, is there anything special that makes you decide whether one particular piece should go under the 'Pastoral', 'Space' or 'drama' heading, for example?

Somebody might submit a piece that we would see as being good for a 'nature' production, for example. He might have written the piece with something else in mind — and this very often happens — whereas we who deal with the people working with the pictures visualise the music fitting other pictures much better than the ones he had in mind while writing the music. He might have given the music a title quite different to the one we eventually choose for it. As long as he gets the money, this is the main thing, I should imagine. We don't very often find composers testing our judgement...

Reception rings up to announce the arrival of someone involved in producing a promotion film about a home movie projector. The film in question has an important selling argument in that it is supposed to show that the projector not only has high picture quality but also excellent sound reproduction. Thus it was important for the visitor to the KPM library that afternoon to find music which would show off the projector's sound to the best advantage. However, calculating that one in five or ten projectors might, in the words of the visitor, be a 'maverick' (i.e. have sub-standard sound reproduction), it was important that the music chosen should not reveal any possible 'wow' (variations in rate of film feed resulting in instability of pitch). This technical consideration meant avoiding pieces with long held chords and notes.

The first sequence requiring music pictured tankers and ships from the air and the visitor used phrases like 'shimmering waves', 'lots of boats' to suggest the mood required. Ron went straight to pieces like *National Heritage 7* which included 'glistening', repetitive celesta sus4 chords of the *Tubular Bells* type with prestigious but short horn (a 4) melodic figures underneath. This piece had the advantage of being stretchable into a loop for the exact length of the sequence required on film. This was, however, not the sort of mood our visitor required. He seemed to be looking for something less quartal, less modern. A more traditional piece of grandiose music was suggested from the tape library. That turned out to be too long.

VISITOR: What about some of your old sports marches, Ron?

Do you really think that would work?

VISITOR: That's what they used for this sort of view, isn't it?

They didn't come on at the beginning like in your film: they were for the commentary. You won't find that sort of short and concise musical statement you're looking for in that sort of material, but I'll play you a sports march if you like.

VISITOR: *It doesn't matter, because we can always fade it out. Anyhow, to be honest, I don't think the chances are very big that they'll use the music at the start of the film.*

Ron plays a new tape containing a really corny 6/8 sports march of the old BBC *Sports Report* type.

VISITOR: That's the sort of thing, that tune that comes up after the intro.

Crumbs! The film will have to be in black and white.

It **is** in black and white.

The perky strings and brass from the late forties or early fifties continue. The visitor starts to sing along with the 6/8 march tune and is obviously happy that he has found the music he wanted.

VISITOR: That's the sort of feel, Ron: You know, 'the show must go on', old and corny, really good, that's the right feel!

I am at still confused since this old-style music is far from suitable for demonstrating good sound reproduction on his projector, due to the boxed-in mono sound of the tape. Moreover the music suggests black and white film which will hardly enhance the colour qualities of the projector either. Thus, while the visitor leaves for a moment to phone his office, Ron explains the situation.

Their film starts in black and white. On to the screen comes a picture of a screen in an old type of movie house.

I suppose they want to create a sense of distance in time so as to use the 'before' and 'after' type of publicity stunt, sort of like 'Look how corny films were before and compare it to how good our projector is now, both sound and vision'.

The visitor returns. Ron suggests the impressive *Passajig* piece he had played earlier as a possible accompaniment for the same opening sequence. This suggestion meets with no enthusiasm from the visitor.

VISITOR: No. What I think would be good would be the first sort of 'diddiddiddidee' thing.

You mean the twinkle?

Here they are referring to the reiterated celesta broken chords à la *Tubular Bells* played earlier (see p. 10).

VISITOR: Yes, that's it. Start with that twinkling and then go into one of those very corny old sports marches. Can you put that on a cassette for me? I think there's the right feel in that 'National Enterprise' thing too. I'll play it to the producer and see what he says.

If you think that tinkling thing is a good idea, let me play you some more stuff.

Ron plays some synthesiser pieces, one with 3 against 2 figures, another in extremely fast tempo. While these are being played I ask the visitor:

Is this still for the aerial shot of tankers?

VISITOR: Yes, what happens is that you go over a tanker, then you see a pleasure liner. It's basically just some aerial shots over the sea, that's all.

Right, here's something for those boats, that sea and the dialogue.

Ron plays something which the visitor turns down as 'too modernistic and melodramatic' and another piece à la *Tubular Bells* which is considered 'too slow and too long'. More *Tubular Bells* pieces are rejected as being 'too much "Fairies in the Glen", too magical, too mystical', etc.

Can't you give me more on exact idea of what you want?

VISITOR: OK, I'll try to think of a piece of music I know which might have the same sort of feel about it.

Do you want a sea feel to it?

VISITOR: Not necessarily. I think it's got to be rich. It depends which way we're going to play it. If that ba—ba—ba—ba—ba—ba thing¹⁰ you were playing just now develops into a fanfare, then that would be right.

It doesn't.

VISITOR: It's tricky, I'm sorry. I've given you two problems. One is to find something that has its own theme and the second that it should lead in to my alternative.¹¹

Ron suggests and demonstrates one or two more pieces but these are rejected because 'they do not have enough march rhythm'. The visitor seems to be looking for a positive shimmer which can build up into his corny march.¹²

10. Here the visitor is referring to the irregular rhythmic accompaniment figure from the recently demonstrated 'Tubular Bells' pastiches.

11. His alternative was the corny old sports march.

12. For discussion of shimmer (twinkle, tinkle, etc.) in music, see. Tagg (1979): 107-121.

After this Ron finds a synthesiser piece with stable 12/8 rhythm. It includes quartal chords, synthesised drums and fanfarish melodic figures. This time the visitor is more impressed and asks for the piece to be put on a cassette together with the other suggestions selected so far. However, no 'shimmers' or constant twinkling, tinkling figures were to be heard in this last example.

Our visitor finally ended up with the following pieces on his cassette. These were to be used for the opening sequences: [1] *National Enterprise 1*, which ends with a sustained note allowing a cut or mix from the film title into the screen-on-screen sequence in black and white; [2] *National Enterprise 3* and *National Enterprise 5*, both slightly shorter introductory fanfares than no.1 (above) and possibly the right length for the title pictures; [3] The corny 6/8 march for the 'Movietone News' feel of bad sound and vision from yesteryear; [4] The synthesiser piece in regular 12/8 time with synthesised drums and fanfarish melodic figures.

Ron and the visitor then proceed to find music for the 'opening flowers' sequence. Ron puts on a soft flute and clarinet duet in post-Debussy whole-tone style. This the visitor finds 'too mystical'. The next piece is richly reverbed and chordal, full of Fender piano arpeggios and legato flute phrases. This is turned down because of the risk of wow on projectors.

VISITOR: I don't want to take the risk. I need a piece which won't reveal any wow, even on a maverick projector. We don't want to lose any clients. Let's try and get rid of strings, flute, piano and long notes because they tend to be the worst for wow. It doesn't leave you much, I suppose, if you want pretty sounds because you can really only get that from strings, flute and piano.

There's still harpsichord and 'pretty picking' on acoustic guitar.

Ron goes off to look for music of this type...

VISITOR: You see, they're supposed to be the most fantastic 16 mm projectors ever produced and one of the things they're selling them on is that the sound is brilliant. That's true of 90 - 95% of their product, but you might get a maverick projector, you see, and I want to be on the safe side with a 90% chance of the music coming off even then.

That's difficult isn't it?

VISITOR: Yes, and I'm afraid I don't know the answer.

Your music will have to move fast if you want to avoid wow and flowers don't move fast.

Pretty shots need pretty music, so...

VISITOR: OK, Ron. If they show it on a maverick projector that's their fault for defying the Trades Description Act, so I wouldn't bother too much about it.

Well. Let's try some of that guitar.

Ron puts on an LP he has just retrieved from the library. All are recorded by John Renbourn. Ron plays about 30 seconds from each track. All include typical John Renbourn sounds, complete with lightly picked but rhythmic arpeggios over pleasant maj7, sus4 and similar chords, with the guitar tuned in certain instances to facilitate the folksy drone effect used by English musicians of the new folk wave of the sixties, prior to Fairport Convention and Steeleye Span, e.g. Jansch, John Martyn and, of course, Renbourn himself. Melodic phrases on the album were provided by either flute, recorder, female voices ('la-la' wordless) or another acoustic guitar overdub. This record is 'pretty' but presents less wow risk. Nevertheless, despite the slight risk of wow on the flute tunes on the album, the visitor asks to have one of these transferred to his demonstration cassette. Another track is rejected as being a direct crib of 'Strawberry Fair'.¹³

At this point the tape runs out. Eventually the visitor leaves reasonably satisfied with enough music for the two sequences. It is time for me to leave as well.

13. The number the visitor is referring to is actually *Scarborough Fair* (recorded by Simon and Garfunkel). The 'Strawberry', however, is highly apposite for the sort of sweet, delicate, herbal, sunny, bucolic, horticultural atmosphere being sought for in the music.

2. Bruton Music (London)

This interview with Robin Philips took place on Tuesday, 11th March, 1980 in the main office of Bruton Music in Mayfair, London.

How and why was Bruton Music started?

I think I should start talking about how music libraries were started as a whole because that's much more interesting. In the early days of film, all the music was either specially written or it come out of the music publisher's catalogue. Then came the newsreel. In England there were about six newsreel companies producing their films once, twice, even three times a week. All the music used for newsreels was of standard format. It would have to fit an occasion like the opening of parliament, a sports event, an air display, or they might have been talking about leisure and bank holidays. Like I said, it was all standard format stuff and the newsreel companies realised that they couldn't afford to have an orchestra in the studio three times a week since all of the music was basically the same. So the newsreel people went to the music publishers who at the time were producing vast amounts of light orchestral music for use on radio. There were lots of radio orchestras at the time, and records were hardly used at all. It was all orchestral stuff and consisted of happy things, ceremonial Elgar pieces and so forth. The newsreel people found that the orchestral stuff on radio was ideal for using behind a newsreel. That's when and how the light orchestral catalogue started being recorded —for the newsreel companies who paid for every time they used a piece.

When did all that take place? In the thirties or forties?

In the thirties.

You mentioned Elgar and a sort of light, happy orchestral music. Would the latter be things in the Leroy Anderson vein?

Yes, all the sort of standard light orchestra pieces with the standard line-up.

What about brass bands? Were they used for sports events?

Not at that time. There were of course sports marches but they would be played by the light orchestra — you know, strings with some woodwind, a bit of brass and percussion. That went on for about twenty years without changing until the real advent of television. You see, up to the fifties all the dramatic music for feature films was specially composed because there was no ready-made music which could have been pre-synced, edited and so on: it really went straight down. However, when the magnetic tape and television arrived with all the cheap programmes and so on, it then became possible to overdub prerecorded music. We had then a new situation where the user wasn't looking for music for *Look at Life*¹⁴ or newsreels, but was doing drama series, animated programmes for children and so on.

Another reason was that the television user didn't have the budget for an orchestra in the studio. So instead he went along to the music publishers and music libraries and said 'I don't want these sports marches; I need stuff for

14. *Look at Life* was a sort of trivial news-cum-entertainment film journal produced by the Rank Organisation. It was usually inserted between feature films in British cinemas in the fifties and early sixties, occupying the spot previously occupied by Pathé or Movietone newsreels before the spread of TV.

children's animation, I need some dramatic stuff'. So then we started making that sort of music. Now the whole thing has become much more sophisticated. In the worldwide market of television and in the cheaper sort of film industry I suppose about half, or even more, up to three quarters probably, of all the music used is either from a recorded music library which makes music only for that purpose, or is from ordinary gramophone recordings which can range from the classical repertoire through to Pink Floyd and contemporary electronic groups.

What about the advent of music for commercials on television? Didn't this also contribute to the boom of the music libraries?

No, not really, because it was the some sort of music which was used for ordinary television series or sponsored films. A large part of our industry is to make music for the sponsor. He has to pay the bill and he has to make a film about his activities, whether it's building ships, dams or plastic cups. He has to prove to the audience that he's got it right and that his product's the best in the market. It's the same situation as with an advertising agency or with a television director who maybe wants to make a documentary about the Fastnet Race and has beautiful shots of the boats. Perhaps he has a storm too. Well, he wants the music to show off the film at all costs. At the end of the day he wants his film to be seen as the best film ever made about that subject. So the music has to sell the film.

Who are your main clients?

The world of television, the advertising agencies and independent film-makers doing mostly non-features, i.e. documentaries, instructional films. Audiovisuals, you know, slides and the automated presentation system are also important these days. The great thing is that you don't need a crew, just a bloke with a camera who goes round clicking away. Then you just put the pictures together of, let's say, your factory, and make a really nice presentation with automatic slow or fast dissolves, plus the music, sound effects and dialogue. You then have virtually a movie at about one eighth of the price.

Can that be done on stereo these days?

Yes, but you have to do it on a four-track recorder like a TEAC.

Do you do any tailor-made stuff for people or do you just advise them as to what they can use out of your catalogue?

No. Of course, we do market research into the sort of material people want and into trends, whether it's a trend in music or the sort of presentation or production the music will be needed for. For example, we've been through a spate of historical drama for television and there has been a great demand for period music, so we chase people to find out what's going on and to supply music which will be suitable in a generic way.

Taking classical music as a case in point, do you have that in your catalogue at all or do you commission pastiches or pieces in a given historical style to fit the bill instead?

All the classical repertoire is public domain and is therefore available to the television industry. We try to create period music in eras, you know, aimed at the 16th century, aimed at the 17th century, aimed at the 1920s, the turn of the century, the medieval, or whatever. The music is written either straight as a suite or in atmospheres, you know, - eerie music, horseback

chases, armies on the march and so on.

How much of your material is token from outside and contracted into the catalogue and how much of it is commissioned?

It is all commissioned.

How do you go about finding a composer to do an album consisting of a certain type of music? Do you find new composers for new concept productions?

Since we are in a situation where we issue practically everything we record, we are forced to use experienced talent. We can't breed talent here because we don't have enough money to experiment with new faces. So one of our jobs is to find composers and experienced talent of the best calibre, whether it's rock, orchestral stuff, lute solos or church organ music. We chase the best talent.

So all the composers in this line of business will be freelance, not under contract to one particular library?

Most of the composers are freelance but work with a particular publisher. If you look at our library, it's only real identity is its writers, so we try and use our own composers as much as possible. OK, they're not restricted to writing for us but they choose to have a home here. As long as we can give them enough work and enough money out of this specialised area to satisfy them, they see no reason why they should go chasing round publishers to get work.

Does your income come solely from royalties, or do you sell the discs in your library at all?

Purely out of royalties, from the use of our repertoire. The records aren't for sale in the shops. We supply our foreign agents with the collection and they pay something towards the cost of the plastic, the postage and so on, but all our earnings come from the use of the music. There are no other magic sources.

I only asked you that because there are some libraries, like Valentino in New York, who do actually sell their records.

Yes, there are some in America because there wasn't much copyright control over there, probably because of the diversification of the broadcasting industry all over the place there and the lack of control over informing anybody what they were using. So the only way the old record libraries could make any money was either as outright sales or to take out on annual blanket fee. We we don't do that at all. The user has to pay for every time he uses the music at the scheduled rates. You go through the MCPS and the PRS. They'll send you a copyright license and a bill at the same time.

I'd like to ask you how you got started here. You see, I was phoning round publishers in Stockholm trying to find the Scandinavian agents for the Italian CAM library and got wind of your existence through the Ehrlingförlagen. I ordered your catalogue from them. I was impressed by your tidy classification system and thought 'hm, I must go and see them'. As I understand it, you're quite new here, so why did you start? Weren't there enough libraries in the market?

Well, I've worked on this side of the business for the last twelve years and have learnt the hard way by making lots of mistakes. True, it's an over-saturated market in the sense that you can go into the BBC gramophone library

and find that they have hundreds and hundreds of hours of atmospheric music of all sorts which is already available to them under their blanket agreement with the MCPS and PRS. Even so, I've thought for the last few years that if the job were done properly there would be room for one more, only one more major company. So when this company made a decision that, if the right composers and right people were available, they would be prepared to inject enough capital into the rapid build-up of another library, I jumped at the opportunity. It's always what I've wanted to do. You see, the problem with this sort of library is that it is quite manageable when it only contains a few records, but as it grows it becomes more and more of a needle-in-the-haystack situation. Then nobody has time to go through the hundreds of hours of music in the catalogue, most of which will be out—of—date and have too poor sound quality. Then you've lost the purpose of the library which is to provide an instant source of music. This is why people use stock music, you see, because it isn't just a budget problem, it can be a time problem too.

The way things work is that you've got a non-musical producer or director who, like I said earlier, doesn't know how to explain what he hears or sees. If he leaves it up to a composer he might well get lumbered with music he doesn't like when it's finished. At least he'll know whether he likes the music or not when it's already recorded. So what he does instead is to go to a stock music library and say, for example, 'I'm looking for music for this new current affairs programme—I don't know what I want, but I will if I hear it'. He'll listen to one piece and say 'I don't like that', to another where he says the same thing until he comes to a piece which he thinks will be just right. At our library we're just trying to make it easier for him to be able to listen to all the alternatives we have to offer for a particular use without having to plough through millions of tapes, albums, album covers and vast catalogues.

How do you intend to keep the volume down?

By not duplicating.

So you complement other libraries, then?

No, not at all. We try and complement our own library. For example, having done an album of Irish music we probably won't do another one in the foreseeable future. We try to spread our range rather than duplicate what we have done ourselves. We'd rather spread horizontally than vertically, so to speak. Having done Ireland we might go on to the West of England, the North of England, Northern France or whatever. This is all part of the standard catalogue.

What is meant by the 'standard catalogue'?

For instance, 'have you got bagpipe music?', 'have you got *Greensleeves*?' It's all the ethnic music, it's brass bands, it's steel bands. In fact it's all the specifics department. Another example would be 'have you got a riding arpeggio on a harp?', 'have you got a faster one than that?', 'have you got a taste bud?', 'I want a taste bud that just goes "ping"'. There are all sorts of standard things like that. Christmas carols are in the standard catalogue too, in fact anything apart from the guy who comes in and says 'I want something completely new that isn't in any particular known style or any established theme'.

So if I wanted the John Barry/James Bond style, that would be in the standard catalogue?

Yes.

I'm just wondering how you go about keeping your catalogue up to date. You see, I was trying to write this study of an Abba song and wanted to see if music of the El Condor Pasa type —you know, Simon and Garfunkel, La flûte indienne, etc. — appeared in library music catalogues under a heading like Ethnic. Well, it did in an Italian and a German catalogue,¹⁵ but not in Boosey's catalogue, despite the fact that this sort of music had been going round for five or six years at that time. How do you avoid this sort of thing happening to you?

Well, we had to do something like that with the West Indies. We're putting an album together right now of ska and reggae. Reggae itself is a changing music and we're doing a contemporary reggae album of what's happening now in West Indian music. On the other side of the record there'll be the old-fashioned steel band stuff, which is still wanted. Still, what we're trying to do here is to make ethnic music more of an authentic folk style rather than orchestral pastiches of the real thing.

What would you say were the advantages of your library over the others?

It is designed for the world of the audiovisual media as it is now rather than as it was twenty years ago. The problem with the other large catalogues is that they've been slowly built up over the years and a lot of their material isn't valid any more: perhaps one day it will become archive material and have that sort of value. So the other libraries have a lot of padding in them.

Then there's the problem of old recordings where the sound isn't that fantastic. You see, for nearly twenty years there's been the problem of not being able to record music for the libraries in London because the Musicians' Union were all against any prerecorded music being available at that time. Before that, all the libraries had an agreement with the Musicians' Union, but that agreement was suddenly cancelled. So the music libraries had to go overseas to record material. Lots of problems in making music are a question of environment. If you don't have the right environment, if you don't have the right musicians and the right studio facilities, what you end up with will not really be competitive. So we found ourselves winding up in weird and wonderful places like Brussels, Budapest and Stuttgart, not being able to hand-pick musicians. We were fortunate enough here (at Bruton) to renegotiate a deal with the Musicians' Union which enabled us to record the whole library here in London, apart from certain ethnic stuff which obviously has to come from overseas. So we've been able to build our library up in the right environment.

You see, here [in London] you have a large selection of musicians, whereas in Brussels, for example, although the musicians are by no means sub-standard, you only really have one brass section to choose from, and if they're working in the radio orchestra at the same time as you were trying to make your library recording, you would be in real trouble: You've got a wider choice of studios, too [in London]: wet studios, dry studios, large studios, small studios, etc.

How come your company managed to negotiate this deal with the British Musicians' Union?

I think that the Musicians' Union had realised that their embargo on sessions

15. CAM (Rome) and Selected Sounds (Hamburg).

of prerecorded music hadn't solved the problem at all. All it meant was that the stuff was imported rather than being made here. I suppose another reason was that we were in a unique situation in that we were not just adding to existing repertoire. No, we were going to record a lot of music and we are a British based company, whereas a number of libraries around London are German based or half American owned or whatever. So we offered the union a deal. We said 'we'll spend a lot of money: we can either do it here or on the continent. We'll pay a high fee, too'.

There's obviously a high degree of musicianship required at your recording sessions, isn't there? I mean, under such conditions you'll expect it to sound good after the first take, won't you?

We do twenty minutes in recording session.

That sounds like take one to me.

But they'll have about two rehearsals before that.

Earlier, you mentioned the reggae record with its flip side of steel band stuff. Do you have any other projects, any other trends you think you should be covering at present?

We're continually trying to cover the trends, however apparent they are. I mean, there's the disco thing which we did cover the last few years, but now it's gone.

But won't that mean, contrary to what you said earlier — you know, about 'padding' in other libraries —, that you'll either have to delete or archive that material now that it's out of date?

There's not much point in that, really, because once a record of disco sound from the library is out in a television station in Sweden, for example, there's not much point in our writing to you and asking you for the record back. They can throw it away or tear out the catalogue page and do what they like with it. They don't have to pay anything if they're not using it.

But still, won't you end up like the other libraries in a number of years with a certain amount of dead material?

Inevitably, but things get much less out of date these days because the recording quality is as good as it is ever likely to get. None of the standard catalogue stuff will ever date and a lot of the contemporary stuff will rapidly become archive material instead. So if you have a play set in 1973 and you want some music for it, even the old contemporary stuff will have its value.

Were you in the publishing business before you started with library music?

Yes.

I'd like to ask you about one or two points in your catalogue. You see, some headings you'll find in practically every catalogue whereas others are more specific to one library. For example, I was trying to find the sort of sentimental minor-add-9 type of themes in the pathétique vein, so looked under 'sadness' in your catalogue. But in that section you have solo instruments, not only harp and flute, but also percussion. Why is that?

Well, there aren't any hard and fast boundaries between the categories. We try and use a system where the categories will gradually go in and out of each other. For example: you have 'neutral' and 'solo instruments' which gradually go into 'leisure' and from 'children' (which I suppose is quite a light category) you go into something bright but heavier which is 'comedy' and

really happy. Then you come out of there into the 'grandiose', and so on. In other words, half of it is supposed to run into each other and 'sadness' isn't a very good category really because we don't have much call for 'sadness'. At the same time, an individual solo instrument very often describes one particular character or individual, which in itself implies solitude, and if you're into solitude you're often talking about sadness. It's awfully easy to imply sadness by one solo oboe or guitar. It's not so easy to imply sadness with a whole orchestra.

I don't know if I agree with you there. What I was thinking about was the sort of Morricone or Legrand type or large, melodic, orchestral, sentimental sadness in the minor key. Bitter-sweet, if you prefer. You know, The Summer of '42, Les parapluies de Cherbourg, bits out of 1900 and so on.

I think our end of the business is a small bridge over the canal rather than an enormously big vista over the Golden Gate. We're much more small-screen orientated and people don't tend to want the grandiose stuff so much, unless they ask for something grandiose, of course. Generally they want smaller sounds for the smaller screens. We hardly ever get into that situation.

I was thinking about the sort of situation where someone might be doing a TV commercial and want perhaps a nice, sentimentally tense love theme or something.

We'd put the 'sentimental' as a spill-over into the 'romantic', 'leisure' or 'tender' area.

If you go into the 'leisure' area of different libraries, I think there's quite a difference between what the French and Italians do, on the one hand, and what the English or German libraries include under that sort of section. As I mentioned, the Italians have a sort of mood they describe as patetico and the German or English catalogues seem to miss this totally.

It's peculiar, but the sort of music in French or Italian libraries is much more orientated towards emotional underscores which we can't really sell here. They're more emotional and sadder whereas the music here tends more to be in a major key and is there to impress and sell something rather than to depress. So the Italian and French libraries don't really sell here in the English speaking countries and I don't think any of the Northern European countries go in for that sort of thing much either: it's weird.

Yes, it's strange, but I suppose on the popular music side that that bitter-sweet sentimental style and straightforward rock and roll are my two big favourites.

Before you go, let me play you some of the more successful stuff we've done. Here's something that's been picked over and over again by all sorts of people.

At this point Robin Philips puts on a track by Alan Hawkshaw entitled *Terrestrial Journey* (see example, p. 20), described in the catalogue as 'spacious' and included on the LP *Terrestrial Journey* which comprises a series of pieces described as 'a contemporary suite depicting time and space passage'. All this is part of Bruton's 'Futuristic, Electronic' category. The piece in question is a sort of sped up, electronic, synthesised tonal piece, slightly reminiscent of the main theme from *Star Wars*, yet not so heroically prestigious and grandiose. However, it is more spacious and futuristic than John Williams' Straussian sonorities. We get as far as two main musical ideas. The first (extract 1, below) is a bright positive bitonal shimmer, quite light but with plenty of reverb. It is interspersed with short but energetic, totally diatonic, positive phrases played using a trum-

pet-like synth preset (extract 2). These phrases are then taken over by horn a 4 registrations on synthesiser. These figures (ex. 3, p. 20) are even more fanfarish than the previous ones. Then more pieces of a similar type are played.

Extracts from Alan Hawkshaw's *Terrestrial Journey* (Bruton BRI/A2, 1979)

1 Moog sequencer through phase unit (slow).
Baggs of reverb. T(w)inkling quality
Accomp. for whole piece.

$\text{♩} = 132$
p *mf* *p*
Riff ad inf.

2 Synthesiser: trumpet registration. Melodic idea 1 (approx.)

$\text{♩} = 132$
ritmo
vivace

3 Synthesiser: unison horns registration
Melodic idea 2 (approx.)

$\text{♩} = 132$ *Vivace*
ff

What kind of instructions did you give Alan Hawkshaw when commissioning this LP? Did you say you wanted so or so many tracks of this or that length with a particular character, or what?

I suppose the brief is much more involved with what the use of the music is going to be rather than with the number of tracks and so on. So we have to think about what ingredients to put in the album, why it would be used when it comes to the crunch, and work backwards from there.

So what would he hear from you as regards this piece, for example, just to take a case in point?

What we would try to imply in all the excerpts you heard would obviously be first of all energy—which means really trying to do things. Then there's a bit of prestige and putting it into a serious vein rather than a jokey one. We'd perhaps ask him to make it very contemporary, aiming at the future rather than reflecting what's happening now, you know, so that there's a feel of things to come. That's how we'd start talking. It's a question of pre-empting what people need and then trying to get round it musically.

This sort of need that people have, how do you get wind of that? Do you do any market research into that sort of thing?

Market research is obviously a part of it, but honestly the main ideas come out of actually listening to music yourself. You have to hear what's actually going on around you or see something in a film. For example, there was *Shaft* which was a breakthrough on the rhythm field and everybody jumped on to the bandwagon.

Yes, and they even jumped on that bandwagon in Sweden and used *Shaft* as signature for their TV sports magazine. As the final wah-wah chord dies out they sometimes show a frozen sunlit spray from a water-skier, which I suppose is a bit corny, but effective. Anyhow, getting back to the composer's brief: is there much discussion in musical terms when you talk to each other?

No, we don't really talk musically, purely because the composer is the musician and presumably knows much better than we do how to say whatever has to be said in musical terms. So we never suggest tunes or chord sequences, whether it should be in the major or minor and so on, although obviously we do talk in terms of line-ups. Should the composition be electronic or not? How much can we afford? How large an orchestra can we use? These are the sort of questions we will have to ask before giving a brief but from there on in we leave the composer alone. Then it's really his job.

3 - Éditions Montparnasse 2000 (Paris)

Cet entretien du 20 mars, 1980, a eu lieu dans le bureau de Mme Béladel, secrétaire aux Éditions Montparnasse 200, 27 rue Bréa à Montparnasse, Paris.

Qu'est-ce qui vous a amenée à exercer ce métier?

C'est très simple. J'ai fait des études musicales. J'ai passé un bac musical et j'ai fait un an de conservatoire. Quand tu sors du conservatoire tu te demandes quoi faire. Les débouchés ne sont pas faciles et il faut avoir beaucoup de relations en France, parce que sans relations on n'arrive à rien. Comme j'étais absolument obligée de travailler, je me suis dit 'pourquoi pas choisir une branche qui se rapprocherait de la musique?' Et je commençais pas faire de la publicité.

Donc, vous travailliez avec la musique dans les publicités?

Non, aucun rapport avec la musique: je faisais mise-en-page à la pub, ce qui était un remplacement, et quand je suis partie de là j'ai passé une petite annonce dans le journal. J'ai eu beaucoup de réponses. J'ai fait une sélection de tout ce qui se rapportait à l'édition musicale et, entre autre, comme j'habite ce quartier, et que c'était tout prez de chez moi, je suis venue ici.

Combien êtes-vous ici?

On est très peu. On a le président qui est le directeur général, on a un directeur commercial, et puis une secrétaire qui est moi-même. Voilà.

Et les autres, qu'est-ce qui les a amenés à faire ce métier?

L'un d'eux, c'était un ancien accompagnateur: il jouait de la batterie. Il ne faisait pas ça très sérieusement. Il avait sa femme, ses enfants. Il lui fallait trouver une situation un peu plus stable. Il ne pouvait plus faire des tournées en province. Par l'intermédiaire d'un musicien qui était déjà là à l'édition il est arrivé chez nous.

Quand et pourquoi a-t-on fondé cette maison d'édition?

En soixante-huit ou soixante-neuf. C'était une idée d'un certain M. Maurice Siégel qui est directeur de publicité d'une grande maison de publicité en France. Le journal VSD [= vendredi, samedi, dimanche], c'est lui qui le tient. Ce M. Siégel a donné cet idée à M. Paris, mon directeur, et il lui a dit que plutôt que d'utiliser toujours les catalogues étrangers — puis qu'il n'y avait que des catalogues anglo-saxons en musique d'illustration sonore — on devrait monter sa propre musique avec des musiciens français. Puis, il était le premier sur le marché et ça a très bien réussi. Il y a d'autres maisons qui ont par la suite des idées: ils se mettent en relation avec nous sans devenir concurrents.

Quels sont vos clients principaux ou habituels?

Sur le plan national, c'est la radio et la télévision.

Quel pourcentage des bénéfiques vient de ces sources-là dans l'édition?

Disons deux tiers TV et radio ensemble, un peu plus de TV, parce que la radio, c'est souvent gratuite. Mais toutes les émissions télévisées sont payantes et ça fait un bénéfice dans la société qui représente à peu près les deux tiers. Et le tiers qui reste, c'est fait avec les audiovisuels. Ça se passe d'une différente manière par l'intermédiaire des entreprises qui font toutes, depuis cinq ou six ans, des formations de personnel qui se font à l'aide de diapos maintenant. Il y a les industries, les différentes sociétés de l'audio-

visuel qui se sont créées à droite et à gauche pour les duplications de cassette, les simples amateurs qui font des films pendant les vacances, etc.

Est-ce qu'il existe en France une législation pour les cassettes vidéo?

C'est très récent comme problème. Ça se fait beaucoup dans les shows. Vous avez à l'Olympia des chanteurs qui font des vidéocassettes plutôt que d'employer des décors, ce qui est beaucoup plus vivant. En même temps je ne sais pas si ça a un effet psychologique sur le spectateur qui, en même temps qu'il entend la musique, voit non seulement la chanteuse, mais aussi le diapo qui est derrière.

Est-ce qu'il y a eu chez vous un changement de clientèle du début jusqu'à aujourd'hui, ou est-ce que la clientèle est restée la même?

On travaille de plus en plus avec la télévision mais ils étaient tellement habitués à employer des catalogues anglo-saxons qu'ils ont continué pendant un certain nombre d'années à... je ne sais pas... Si vous écoutez la radio aujourd'hui, les trois quarts des chansons qui passent sont anglo-saxonnes et c'est plutôt récent que les gens — à la radio, à la télévision — commencent à s'intéresser à la musique tout-à-fait sans paroles des chansons qui est souvent française. Vous devez connaître ça, mais les français, contrairement aux autres, s'intéressent davantage aux paroles des chansons. Avec la variété, ça démolit tout parce que les paroles ne voulaient plus rien dire et les jeunes s'intéressent maintenant beaucoup plus au rythme, et les paroles sont devenues secondaires alors que pendant toutes les années auparavant c'était les paroles qui comptaient le plus. La musique, ce n'était qu'un accompagnement.

Vous pensez alors que la tradition de la chanson française est en train de disparaître?

Ah oui, beaucoup, beaucoup.

C'est dommage, ça.

Oui, c'est dommage. Ils ont essayé de la relancer dernièrement sur une onde de radio et il s'est avéré que les pourcentages étaient énorme de français qui réclamaient davantage de chansons françaises avec un texte bien écrit.

Rejeter la tradition chansonnière, c'est plutôt un phénomène parmi les jeunes?

Oui, c'était les jeunes. Vous savez que la moyenne d'âge a drôlement baissé et se situe autour de treize ou quatorze ans. On commence à avoir de l'argent de poche, on achète des disques et puis on ne tient pas compte de l'éducation qu'on a reçue des parents et les parents n'ont plus rien à dire maintenant. Même les jeunes dans la variété commencent à chanter de la même manière qu'ils parlent, c'est-à-dire que ce n'est plus du tout un français littéraire, c'est plutôt presque de l'argot.

Mais Brassens a bien déjà fait ça. Il a employé pas mal d'argot dans ces chansons, n'est-ce pas?

Oui, mais ça avait un certain esprit alors que maintenant les nouveaux chanteurs comme Bel Avoine — c'est le nouveau produit sur le marché — ça marche très fort et il n'y a que le rythme qui compte. Les paroles sont vraiment secondaire, heureusement parce que ça ne veut rien dire! Remarquez, si vous essayez de traduire certaines chansons des Beatles aussi...

Vos bénéfices viennent de la vente de disque ou des redevances de la SACEM?

Aucun bénéfice sur la vente des disques, étant donné que si un client se présente ici on lui donne les disques qu'il cherche, sauf quand c'est un amateur qui arrive chez nous tous les trois ans; dans ce cas-là on lui vend la disque à prix commercial. Autrement on ne les vend pas du tout. C'est parce que le client normal est amené à faire d'autres audiovisuels et ça nous sert de promotion au même temps et ce qu'on facture ne sont pas le pressage ou l'enregistrement du disque sous la forme de vente mais l'utilisation de la musique.

Vous avez des tarifs spéciaux à vous?

Les tarifs sont fixés par la SACEM tous les ans et le droit de la propriété phonographique, c'est-à-dire le droit qui rembourse un peu le pressage et la création de la pochette, etc., plus, bien sûr, un pourcentage de bénéfice très minime. En dehors de ça vous avez aussi la SACEM à qui vous devez payer nos redevances parce que la SACEM régit les droits d'auteur et de compositeur. Grâce à ces droits, les compositeurs touchent sous forme d'honoraire tous les six mois ce que leur disque leur rapportent en fonction de produit. C'est-à-dire : si ce n'est pas employé ils ne toucheront rien.

Dans de tels cas, que faites-vous? Vous supprimez des titres moins utilisés de votre catalogue, ou vous gardez tout?

On les garde tous et on n'a aucun préjugé commercial. C'est-à-dire que le choix de disque est fait en général avec le client qui a créé le film, l'audiovisuel ou la vidéocassette et en fonction de ses idées à lui on essaie de l'orienter sur tel ou tel disque, parce qu'on les connaît bien, mais on ne traite pas de préférence qui viennent de sortir. On travaille toujours sur des disques qui sont sortis il y a dix ans aussi bien que sur des disques qui viennent de sortir.

Alors, ça ne se démode pas?

Ça ne se démode pas, sauf exception : dans le disco, par exemple, parce que ça, c'est une mode.

Quelle partie de vos bénéfices vient de l'étranger?

On est très mal distribué à l'étranger, en particulier dans les pays nordiques. Je suppose c'est parce que vous travaillez surtout avec des bandes, n'est-ce pas? C'est la même chose en Allemagne aussi, et je ne comprends pas pourquoi, parce que les bandes sont difficiles. Voyez, les pochettes de disque pour nous sont en de différentes couleurs et on se repère à la couleur. Comme ça on sait ce qu'il y a dans les disques. On n'a pas besoin de les sortir. Si c'est orange on sait que c'est du jazz. C'est l'audiovisuel, ça aussi!

Chez nous les effets sonores, ainsi que la musique de sonorisation, se trouvent aussi souvent sur disque que sur bande, et votre collection se trouve chez nous à la radio de Göteborg. Je ne sais pas si on l'emploie beaucoup ou non, et je n'ai absolument aucune idée pourquoi vous seriez mal distribués chez nous. De toute façon, j'aimerais passer à une autre question.

Comment avez-vous fait pour établir une collection de base? Je veux dire que pour établir un catalogue au début il faudrait avoir une idée de ce qu'il va contenir comme ambiances musicales, genres de musique, etc. Alors, vous avez commencé avec combien de disques, et quels ont été vos critères pour choisir si vous alliez produire, disons, des solos d'accordéon, des solos de flûte, de la musique policière, etc.? Autrement dit, est-ce que vous aviez une collection de base à laquelle vous avez ajouté peu à peu de nouvelles ambiances, de nouveaux genres?

On n'est pas spécialisé dans un genre. Ce n'est pas du tout commercial. Dans le phénomène commercial on est tout-à-fait obligé de s'adapter au goût des publiques, c'est-à-dire à ce qui est à la mode, à ce qui est en vogue, tandis que nous, c'était en fonction d'image qu'on a conçu le catalogue. Les images vous offrent une très grande étendue de choix : ça va de la nuit aux films de vacance, ou à l'Afrique où il faut des tam-tams, etc. Donc, ça nous offrait un très grand choix de musique.

On a commencé avec vingt disques — ils s'appelaient au début *jingles* bien qu'en fait à l'heure actuelle ce qu'on appelle un *jingle* ne soit pas de tout ça, c'est un morceau très court. Donc, ces disques-là offraient au client une variété de musique assez libre. Il y avait un morceau de jazz, un morceau de percussion, un plagiat d'un concert d'Albinoni. Tout ce qu'il était possible de faire on essayait de réduire en vingt disques.

Mais comment couvrir tout ce domaine en vingt disques?

Ce n'est pas possible. Il y a toujours des choses à créer. Par exemple, à l'heure actuelle on nous demande beaucoup de reggae. Ça n'existe pas dans notre collection parce que l'on a tellement été frappé par le phénomène disco qui a duré longtemps du point de vue commercial, parce qu'il en fait un bénéfice de son disque, mais nous, on n'en a pas tiré de profit du disco, parce qu'on sait très bien que si on sort un disque de disco aujourd'hui il ne sera pas utilisable demain. C'est une musique qui se démode. C'est comme le twist ou quelque chose comme ça.

Mais le disco aura peut être une valeur nostalgique dans dix ans?...

L'enregistrement de disco est très facile. Vous créez un air, puis vous y mettez toujours le même rythme, puis c'est vite démodé.

Bien sûr, mais quand-même... Je passe à autre chose... Quels compositeurs, ou plutôt quel genre de compositeur avez-vous choisi pour produire des morceaux pour votre collection? Quels sont et quels ont été vos critères pour choisir un compositeur pour créer un domaine d'ambiance spécifique?

Au début c'était facile. Il y a énormément de gens qui sortent du conservatoire et qui n'ont pas de débauché. Donc, il s'avère que ce sont des gens qui ont une culture musicale assez poussée et qui sont assez impressionnante au point de vue de création et interprétation de musique. Ils ont le talent mais ils ne savent pas où se présenter pour sortir leurs disques. Alors, ce qui se passe en général, c'est qu'ils créent une bande et qu'ils nous l'apportent, ce qui quand-même leur permet ensuite de toucher des droits SACEM. Donc l'éventail est assez grand parce qu'il y a énormément de gens qui sortent du conservatoire mais qui n'ont pas forcément une situation qui... Notre critère ne s'imposait pas sur un style bien défini, donc on a pris de différents auteurs-compositeurs qui n'étaient pas connus — qui ne sont pas connus à l'heure actuelle non plus, du reste — mais qui sont capables de créer, en fonction de ce que nous demande la clientèle, un certain genre de musique, voilà.

Quand décidez-vous, et qui est-ce chez vous qui décide quand il faut commander de nouveaux enregistrements pour la collection?

Ça, c'est un problème à l'heure actuelle parce que Montparnasse 2000 est vendue et c'est un producteur allemand qui prend la suite.¹⁶ Bon, il a un certain budget et j'avoue qu'on ne sort pas de disques maintenant parce qu'on

16. M. Wewerka

a tout ce qu'il nous faut dans le catalogue, c'est-à-dire que la musique ne va pas d'une manière si rapide qu'elle allait autrefois. Les gens sont un peu stoppés, on revient au rétro, au Charleston, des années trente, une certaine nostalgie. Nous, on a déjà tout ça dans le catalogue. Donc on ne sort rien pour le moment parce qu'il n'y a pas de création nouvelle à part le reggae.

Ces conclusions me paraissent quelque peu étranges et je propose la musique jouée au synthétiseur comme domaine de production intéressant pour une maison d'éditions illustration sonore. L'objection contre cette proposition est que la musique synthétisée n'est pas chantable, ce que démontre Mme Béladel en me demandant de chanter Oxygène, tube synthétisé français que j'avais entendu deux ou trois fois, dont la dernière fois trois ans avant cet entretien. Puis que je ne peux pas chanter Oxygène malgré sa popularité, la musique synthétisée ne paraît pas à intéresser à Mme Béladel comme nouveaux domaine de création pour la musique de sonorisation. Évidemment, il y a d'autres sortes de musique peu chantables dans un catalogue d'illustration sonore ; la musique pour des situations de menace, par exemple, et je tiens à ce que la « chantabilité » ne fonctionne pas très bien comme critère d'inclusion.

Alors, si vous n'avez plus de disques à sortir maintenant, est-ce que vous avez d'autres projets?

Des projets actuels, il y en a énormément du fait que la maison a été reprise par un producteur allemand.

Quels sont ces projets?

Ça reste entre nous?

Si vous le préférez.

[Ces deux lignes symbolisent la partie de la conversation que Mme Béladel a voulu garder « entre nous ».]

Dans quelle mesure la musique de votre collection a-t-elle été commandée directement et dans quelle mesure a-t-elle déjà été employée dans des productions audiovisuelles avant de sortir sur disque chez vous?

Je ne comprends pas votre question.

Il y a d'autres collections de musique de sonorisation dans lesquelles sont incluses des indicatifs de film, par exemple, écrits au départ pour une seule production spécifique, mais qui ont été inclus par la suite dans un certain catalogue. Alors, ça vous arrive de prendre le générique d'un film qui existe déjà et de le mettre, après la négociation des droits d'auteur, dans votre collection?

Non. On ne peut absolument pas le faire. C'est le rôle de la SACEM. À partir du moment où on dépose une oeuvre à la SACEM, il est interdit d'employer ce morceau pour en tirer profit. Ça concerne uniquement le compositeur et l'administration de la SACEM.

Mais en Italie il y a une collection qui...

En Italie c'est un problème qui se pose. C'est pour ça que la télévision italienne a énormément de difficulté à régir les droits des auteurs et des compositeurs, parce que c'est interdit oralement, mais il n'y a rien d'écrit. En Espagne c'est la même chose. C'est pour ça qu'on n'a jamais pu travailler avec la radio espagnole.

J'ai posé la question parce que je me suis rendu compte, en parcourant la collection CAM qu'une bonne partie du catalogue consistait en titres tirés de vieux films italiens. Par exemple, on y trouve pas mal de génériques de film de Morricone ...

Oui, mais c'est l'auteur-compositeur qui fait partie de l'édition. Il a souscrit

un contrat avec l'édition qui leur a donné l'autorisation de presser ces disques. Si vous n'avez pas cette autorisation vous ne pouvez pas sortir ces disques.

Mais vous ne faites pas ça en France?

Si. Là on se comprend très bien.

Est-ce que vous avez des génériques écrites pour une autre production spécifique avant qu'elles fassent partie de votre collection?

Oui, de Morricone, on en a. On a du Claude Bolling aussi, et cette musique reportée à des films spécifiques.

Bon, je comprends. Dans les catalogues britanniques par contre il me semble que la plupart des compositions sont originales. Je n'en suis pas certain, mais je n'ai pas encore entendu parler de contrats avec les compositeurs de musique de film déjà en existence.

Ah non? Nous, on le fait. Mais ici c'est possible de faire de la musique originale aussi, seulement il y a une énorme différence au point de vue du prix. C'est-à-dire que celui qui veut faire de la musique originale a besoin d'un gros budget, mais il a l'assurance d'avoir un morceau qui convient parfaitement.

Dans quelle mesure votre collection consiste-t-elle en morceaux qui sont faits pour une émission spécifique?

Il y en a très peu, ou ça reste sur bande. Il y en a quelques uns. Il y a un générique de feuilleton télévisé qui existe sur disque chez nous, mais c'est très rare. À partir du moment où il est pressé sur disque ce n'est plus de la musique originale parce que... un client va se présenter demain et me dire « je veux telle ou telle musique » et je penserai à ce morceau qui a été créé d'une manière originale, mais qui va être utilisé pour autre chose, alors qu'à l'origine c'était de la musique originale, parce qu'elle a été écrite pour un client, pour un produit déterminés.

Mais ne trouvez-vous pas que de telle musique se laisse appliquer moins bien dans votre catalogue quand elle faite exprès pour tel ou tel but spécifique?

Oui, c'est certain, c'est un risque. Non seulement ce risque de ne pas être tout-à-fait en rapport avec l'image, mais le risque d'entendre le morceau qui est passé pour telle diapositive sur une autre diapositive.

Vous avez combien de disques 33 tours dans la collection?

Il y en a cent-vingt-deux dans la collection Montparnasse. On a d'autres collections. Il y a IML... qui comporte sept numéros plus des titres sur bande dont il y en a eu au moins une trentaine. Puis il y a St Germain-des-Près qui est rendu à dix-neuf disques et en plus tous les sous-éditeurs, c'est-à-dire la musique étrangère dont nous sommes les sous-éditeurs.

Pourriez-vous me dire quels disques ou quel type d'ambiance musicale sont les plus utilisés dans votre collection à l'heure actuelle?

Le synthétiseur!

[éclats de rire : voir p. 27]

Quelles fonctions sont les plus fréquentes de votre musique? Je veux dire, par exemple à la télévision : pour quelle fonction est-ce qu'on emploie la musique de votre catalogue le plus fréquemment? Ce sont les génériques, les jingles, les publicités, ou quoi?

En ce moment c'est dans les émissions pour les jeunes parce qu'ils en créent de plus en plus. Toutes les émissions du mercredi après-midi sont entrecoupées de morceaux d'illustration sonore.¹⁷

Toutes ces bandes dessinées?

Il y en a quelques unes [à illustration sonore]. Mais en ce moment c'est surtout dans tout ce qui se rapporte à l'enfance. Dans le domaine de la télévision c'est plus friand de musique d'illustration sonore; ou alors les actualités.

De temps en temps ça peut être très menaçante. Quand j'étais à Paris il y a deux mois j'ai vu un reportage sur l'Arabie Saoudite. On a créé une atmosphère très menaçante par la musique...

... c'est très courant, oui...

... *mais à niveau très bas...*

... oui, c'est très, très bas. C'est pour ça que je vous dis que c'est très peu perceptible. Moi, si je ne travaillais pas ici je serais incapable de dire s'il y avait de la musique sur les actualités ou pas.

Tout ça est très étrange pour moi. Je ne suis pas habitué à entendre la musique qui accompagne les reportages politiques ou les actualités, et puisque la recherche neuropsychologique a pu établir que presque tout bruit, même — ou peut-être surtout — très bas entre par les oreilles et va jusqu'au cerveau pour y être enregistré...

... c'est certain qu'on doit l'enregistrer quand-même. C'est comme le fameux exemple d'une seule image de Coca Cola au cinéma. Tout le monde est sorti pour courir après des bouteilles de Coca Cola...

... *oui, mais tandis que l'image subliminale est interdite, il existe toujours les sons subliminaux, une sorte de suggestion subliminale, ça aussi...*

... oui, ça vous suggère des sentiments qui normalement vous laisseraient indifférent. Si vous regardez les actualités chaque soir, c'est généralement des choses dramatiques qu'on entend. Peut-être — c'est une supposition seulement — s'il n'y avait pas cette musique dramatique ça serait moins dramatique pour l'oeil. Du fait de lier l'oeil et l'oreille c'est certain que ça doit avoir une influence sur le comportement des gens.

Dans la mesure où vous commandez un nouveau morceau pour le catalogue, quelles sont vos instructions au compositeur?

Là il faut avouer que ce n'est pas mon domaine. Je ne me suis jamais rendu dans une séance d'enregistrement. Je suppose que c'est une coopération entre le compositeur et le directeur commercial, voire artistique.¹⁸ Normalement, beaucoup de compositeurs se présentent chez nous avec des bandes qu'on écoute seul sans le compositeur. La sélection se fait non seulement au point de vue musical, c'est-à-dire formation d'instruments, grande, petite formation etc., non seulement au point de vue du rythme, mais aussi en fonction des disques qu'on a déjà dans l'édition. Si toute la bande est faite sur le jazz, ça ne nous intéressera pas a priori parce qu'on en a déjà. Donc, tout ce qu'il y a de création nouvelle, on l'accepte volontiers. Le premier but, c'est que ça doit être complémentaire à la collection, y apporter quelque chose de nouveau. On est toujours ouvert, mais beaucoup de bandes sont

17. Tous les mercredis les écolier français sont libres. C'est pourquoi l'après-midi est chargé d'émissions télévisées pour les enfants.

18. Le directeur artistique (le D.A.) = artist and reperoire (A&R).

refusées parce qu'elles sont mal enregistrées. Beaucoup sont des plagats de morceaux connus. Si c'est un morceau intéressant, par exemple une musique d'un film qui a très bien marché, on prendra probablement ce morceau-là.

Alors, comme ça vous n'aurez pas besoin de commander grand-chose.

Si, ça nous arrive de temps en temps de commander tel ou tel genre, pour exemple pour les folklores. Il y a beaucoup de disques dans notre catalogue qui sont des reflets d'Allemagne, reflet d'Italie, alors une musique typique qu'on nous demande. C'est de la musique qui reflète une atmosphère bien définie, par exemple; Paris, c'est l'accordéon. On demandera à un tel musicien de faire un disque d'accordéon qui se rapporte à Paris. Ça peut arriver aussi, oui.

Prenons un autre exemple. S'il vous manque la musique type James Bond / Fender Stratocaster / écho de bande, etc. à la John Barry, est-ce que vous pouvez demander ça directement? C'est une atmosphère très spécifique qui n'est pas de folklore, ni de tourisme musical non plus.

Ça arrive pour la télévision, oui, parce qu'à la télévision il y a un sujet bien déterminé. Pour une grande série de feuilleton, par exemple, il faut qu'il y ait une musique qui marque ce feuilleton. Donc on commande à un musicien de faire une musique qui se rapporte bien à ce feuilleton et qui soit assez percutant pour qu'on la retienne bien.

Puis vous incluriez un tel morceau dans votre catalogue?

C'est très difficile de vous dire puisque la collection était déjà considérable quand je suis arrivée à l'édition.

Quand un compositeur vous présente une bande, est-ce qu'il ou elle est obligé(e) de réaliser l'enregistrement?

Oui.

On ne peut pas donc arriver chez vous, une partition à la main, et demander « ça vous intéresse » ?

Non. En général c'est une band de démonstration qu'ils nous présentent. La partition ne va pas parce que la concurrence est tellement grande, le choix des compositeurs est tellement grand. Il y en a beaucoup qui, pour avoir une satisfaction personnelle d'être chez un éditeur, je crois, produisent eux-mêmes leur bande en payant de leur propre poche l'enregistrement. Puis ils présentent ce produit à l'éditeur. C'est un risque qu'ils prennent.

Mais quand vous commandez du folklore...

... alors, c'est nous qui payons l'enregistrement dans ce cas.

Vous avez votre studio d'enregistrement à vous?

Non, pas du tout : on en loue. Ça marche par séance.

C'est cher à Paris, louer pour une séance d'enregistrement?

Ce n'est pas donné, non! Rien n'est donné en France, même pas la Sécurité Sociale!

4. **Boosey & Hawkes (London)**

Interview with Terry Moss, of Boosey & Hawkes Recorded Music Library, in his basement office at 295 Regent Street, on Monday 10th March, 1980.¹⁹

I'd like to ask about the history of mood music libraries. How did they first start?

It started soon after the cinema orchestras went, i.e. in the 1930s, and it was mostly used for newsreels, radio plays and so on. During the 1950s the use of music became widespread, especially with television and in all the other media. There was more in radio and in the cinema, especially cinema commercials. Since then television has been the big money-earner if you can break into it. Then there are all the audio-visuals: training films, promotional films for companies and so on.

When you start on a new production, how do you know which composers to contact?

We have a group of composers that we call on constantly. Occasionally they're added to by interesting young people coming along, but this company particularly uses well-tried composers that the past tells us are money-earners. That'll be Cyril Watters, Trevor Duncan and so on.

Am I right in understanding that, when you undertake a new production, your choice of what you include is based on what people have been asking for in the way of things you don't already have in the catalogue?

That's right. We'll make a mental note of it or do more than that when anyone asks for something obscure. We'll make a note of it and the next time we record (and if we've got the money and if it's still required), then we'll do something about it. For instance, you might record a solo bagpipe because somebody wanted it and that might be a disaster because it might never get used again, but you really must have it. So we base our recordings on (a) what's asked for and we don't seem to have and (b) a more up-to-date thing, something that's very popular, like a style. In this case what we do is to go back over the year and ask ourselves what has happened. Our promotion guy goes to studios, advertising agencies and so on, comes back and might say: 'they've asked for a jangle piano'. I don't say we'll record that straight away but we'll think about it when we're planning new productions.

Do you ever delete anything from the catalogue?

We deleted the seventy-eights. We went through them all, evaluating first the music, then the recording sound. Where the music had some sort of message today, and where the studio sound wasn't too wooden and boxed in, we transferred it to 33 and told our users we had done so without trying artificial stereophony or tricks like that. We didn't pretend it was new music.

A term that seems to come up a lot in this business in 'blanket fee'. I've got a general idea what it means, but can you explain a bit how it works for you here?

A blanket fee simply means that the MCPS have their tariff. The people using

19. About 45 minutes of this interview had passed before I noticed that the Record button had not been depressed. I therefore phoned Terry Moss in August, 1980, to check up that I had understood the main points of that part of our conversation. As can be seen from the transcript of that conversation over the phone, aims, conditions and financing of the company's recorded music library are similar to those at KPM and Bruton, as indeed are questions of composer briefing, catalogue policy (new recordings, deletion, etc.)

the music log it with the MCPS and depending on the usage of their film — either to a paying or non-paying audience, overseas, UK only or whatever — they pay the blanket tariff. You can't make negotiations about it. It's the set fee. But if a producer wanted to use, say, the Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance* march he would call us and we would arrange a fee because it's hot property and he would have to pay quite a good fee for the usage. So we only negotiate directly with the user when it comes to things like the Elgar or *Barwick Green*.²⁰ The reason we've done this is because once we discovered some advertisers playing the Elgar *Pomp and Circumstance* march we had in the catalogue. They were only paying a blanket license. We all thought this was nonsense because if an advertising agent wants to use a very well-known piece of music meanly, he'll have to pay for it — that's business. It's tough world we're living in. So we withdrew the Elgar from the catalogue, which means that if anyone wants to use it now they'll have to ring our copyright director who will negotiate a fee. Now, the same has been applied to *Barwick Green*²¹ in the last weeks. We've withdrawn it from the library because not only the yoghurt advertisement but also Heinecken Lager have both used *Barwick Green* and both basically got it for peanuts.

So it's a simple matter of supply and demand?

Exactly. To apply for a blanket fee, you have to fill in where your film or whatever is going to be shown, if it's a non-paying or paying audience, if you're asking for a worldwide release, or if it's just going to be shown within one country. All these things govern the final cost of the music. I'm sure radio and TV producers think the cost is too high, but in fact it's very cheap for what they're getting.

How do the sort of blanket fees you're talking about stand in comparison to a piece of commercial music on the one hand or to a piece of classical music on the other?

If you want to use a commercial recording of a Tchaikovsky symphony you've got to get all kinds of permission from the record company. If you want to use a commercial record by, say, Abba, then you're in trouble because both the record company and Abba themselves will want a large slice of the cake. However, if you want something that *sounds* like Abba on a library record (that is *if* it exists in a library — it doesn't exist in ours, so perhaps Abba is a bad example)... Anyhow, if you wanted a disco sound you'd be very unwise to go to the *Saturday Night Fever* people because of the cost of it. If you went to a library (and I'm sure every library has at least one disco record in it these days), then you'd pay much less and the aggro would be much less. You just apply to the necessary organisation or, in the case of the Valentino library, you deal straight with them and things are much easier. If you go into the commercial world it's extremely complicated. Very few people do it.

Do Coca Cola work like that? I mean, they have their advertising jingle competitions...

That's right. But on the other hand I happen to know that Coca Cola do a lot of original material. There's a young American who lives and works in Madrid. They commission him to do a lot of their music which he records in Ma-

20. Signature to the BBC radio series 'The Archers' ('an everyday story of country folk'), first broadcast in the 1950s, and whose title tune, *Barwick Green*, is still the same in 2000!

21. See footnote 20, p. 32.

drid for them. Then they take it around the world and just cut off the language bit and add whichever language they speak in the country where the company is.

I get the impression that practically all your material is specially commissioned. This seems to be quite different from, say, the Italian CAM library which contains lots of recordings from existing feature films, things from the late 1960s by Morricone, for example. Do you do this at all?

Not at all. I don't know about the Italian company, but as far as the British companies are concerned — and I would say this on all their behalf — 99% of music in British music background libraries is original commissioned music. Of course, there are areas that exist in other libraries that don't exist in ours. For example, we don't have a classical section because arrangements of Tchaikovsky and Beethoven earn less and I don't want to get into that area. I don't want an arrangement of a Tchaikovsky symphony in the library. It's not a personal thing, it's just that I'm restricted on money. I have a budget and I have to think 'now, how can I best spend that money?' Am I going to get Cyril Watters in to arrange the Tchaikovsky B flat minor piano concerto? No. Tchaikovsky/Watters? Can you imagine it? No! I suspect its usage must be limited...

Certainly in this company our works are 100% commissioned. I wouldn't do it in any other way. It also gives you the advantage of having 100% ownership and there's no question of having to share with anyone. Now, the Italian company you mentioned intrigues me because somewhere along the line they have to start sharing their earnings with someone, because if you took the theme from *Mondo Cane* and put it into a library, royalty earnings from it would have to be shared by us, the arrangers and the original publisher. It's too complicated... I know something about this because we're being offered an American catalogue at the moment which I'm going to turn down because it's got so many problems. Stuck in the middle of the catalogue we found a small Prokofiev piece which is public domain in the US but copyright everywhere else. Now, how can I say to our New York office 'I'm sending you our library, but don't use the third track on the first side of that record, don't promote it, because it's PD²² in your country but here it is copyright'? For example, the Elgar²³ is non-copyright in America while here it is. I wouldn't want to get into that, I want a quiet life.

Let me give you another example: there's a very fine composer in Holland called Tony Eyk, a brilliant young man. He's recorded with a Dutch background library who keep offering me their product...

...Do you remember the name of the library?...

... 'Netherlands Voice' or something.... They keep ringing and saying 'are you interested?'. Well, no, I'm not because I must have Holland as well. You see, our catalogue goes everywhere in the world and we have an agent in Holland. I can't tell him not to use the numbers we include in our catalogue just because they come from the Dutch catalogue originally. That's too much of a hassle for him and for us. You see, someone's going to use one of those pieces in Holland somewhere along the line.

Who gets the rap if that happens?

22. PD = public domain.

23. The *Pomp and Circumstance* march.

My name's on the catalogue and I'd rather not get involved in that. I always try and play the game, not because I'm sanctimonious but because I'm not clever enough *not* to play the game. If you're going to deal with skulduggery in your life you've got to be very clever otherwise things will go awfully wrong. Moreover, I am responsible to a very big company, whereas if I worked on my own it would be another thing.

Your disco record's already out. Do you have any other current projects?

Yes, the radio commercial project. We don't have that yet and it's got to be those very short stings. I might say we're having difficulty with it because we've got to get the composer to write those short bits. Then we've got to record it and — worst of all, probably — we have to edit the damn thing. We try to put good scrolls between each piece so the guy sitting in the studio can drop right down on to it. We don't want him²⁴ to have a great mass of record to plough through and he doesn't want to drop the needle right down into the middle of something and spoil a track. So our problem for this year is how to produce a radio broadcast sting record, get it written, record it, edit and press it.

You don't produce things for jingle machines, then?

No. I wish we could get into it, but as you can imagine, it's a pretty closed shop. There's a great deal of money to be earned out of jingles. We're simply not in on it yet. But still, I'm quite optimistic and there's a lot of chance in the world of music. I mean, *Barwick Green* was sheer chance; it so happened that the producer liked it, it took off and happened to suit the programme. I have a friend at Southern Television: they were doing a cookery programme and needed music. The first thing the producer saw in the catalogue (not our catalogue — so I can talk about it) was a title called *A Piece of Cake* and they took that as their signature for a cooking programme. Now that piece had nothing to do with cooking and it was just luck that particular catalogue had a title called *A Piece of Cake*.

It seems that titling the pieces can be important. Who does that part of the work here?

We all do. It's a very important thing. When you have four or five people and they're all of reasonable intelligence, you're going to have conflict. We sit down and listen to the final master tape of a number, keep playing it through and throw titles around. For example, on the disco record came out of a conversation we had one morning in this office and Angela²⁵ had the word *ferkin* in her crossword puzzle and I said 'it's a measure of drink'. Well, we went round to record that afternoon and I thought: 'well, why not break the mould?' That's because we're looked upon as rather an established Olde Worlde company. I said 'why not give them some outrageous titles?', although we didn't all agree. They were all printed and I can assure you that the board of directors looked at them and frowned; but I said 'you shouldn't know what they mean'. Well, there are a lot of young guys sitting in dubbing studios who are rather amused by these titles because it rings a bell within them and they think 'Get Boosey & Hawkes suddenly changing their attitude to life'. It's not the sort of thing we always do.

Ideally we all try and work out the titles, but the most difficult part of it all

24. According to the use of this pronoun, UK studio engineers must have been mainly men in 1980.

25. Angela Pyke, Terry Moss's (the interviewee's) secretary at the time of this interview.

is the classification. I'm never really happy with the final classification. This year we've looked at the catalogue and would like to change its shape and content.

In what way is title classification such a difficult task?

There's the shape [of the printed catalogue] to begin with. Unless it's actually lying on a producer's desk, he doesn't know what he's looking at. Our name doesn't appear down the spine. As it is now, it's got to be down on someone's desk. The idea is to have the catalogue lying permanently on the producer's or librarian's desk. If she²⁶ is phoned up because there's a spot coming on the news and they want some music, she can immediately go to her classification, which is our description of the music. Let me illustrate this problem with our demonstration cassette:

... 'The catalogue isn't deliberately misleading, of course. It's just that it can't tell the whole story. It's so much more valid, more useful to hear the actual music. And now, at Boosey & Hawkes, you can do just that in comfort and with plenty of help around. We've got a comprehensive library of recorded music, people who understand your problem, and a superb new listening room in a brand new suite of offices. We're in Regent Street, near Oxford Circus, so it won't take you long to get to us. And, let's face it, time is money. Most of us spend our lives working against the clock. That's why it's good to deal with professionals, which is what we like to think we are: Angela Pyke, Gordon Reid and Terry Moss. If you're looking for the right kind of music at this stage, or if you're just curious to hear what we can offer for the future, come and see us. We'd like to meet and entertain you'.

That promotion cassette did you some good, did it?

A lot of good. I stand listening to it and think 'God! That's terrible!', but I had a man in here last Wednesday who was a radio producer and had started a firm called 'Tip Sheet'. He sends a cassette round to all the commercial radio stations. It's a programme of all the latest hits and the record numbers and he sends it round twice a week. They're buying them from him, though he charges 30 quid a second. So if you're a record producer and you've just made a single and you'd like to get it on the air, this man Bob Adams, who's a South African, makes these programmes twice a week and all the commercial radio stations are buying them from him. I said to him 'that's a great idea, Bob', and he said 'do you know where I got the idea from?' I said 'no'. He said 'from your promotion cassette'. Well, I don't think our cassette is very good, but I know from experience that it brought us in a lot of interest.

There's a specific question I'd like to ask you here at Boosey & Hawkes and that is: why you have lumped so much under the Drama heading in your catalogue? I mean, whereas other catalogues split up what you have under your Drama into things like Thriller, Western, etc., you have all these things under one heading. Why is that?

We were talking about that in relation to the shape of the catalogue here at Boosey & Hawkes this year. The trouble is that the catalogue costs a bomb as you can well imagine. If we do what you suggest, we're going to have even more classification. You'll have a Sinister area, a Tense area and so on. I admit, it's totally unsatisfactory as one area in our catalogue and I quite honestly don't know the answer to the problem. Sometimes I ask myself

26. According to the use of this pronoun, UK music librarians must have been mainly women in 1980.

'shall we do away with classification altogether?', but then we find after a little bit of market research that the classification is the part of the catalogue which people use most. Then I have to say to users 'don't believe our classification too much, please', because if they do, we might lose a usage. Now if you go, let's say, to the Drama section of the catalogue, I know it's unsatisfactory and not precise enough because the producer might look through the list and think: 'Drama, no, that's not exactly what I want'. On the other hand he might be able to find the very thing he's looking for, which might not have been the case had we split the Drama category into smaller parts.

Let me give you an example: we were very fortunate having good relations with the company that had the franchise on the *Round the World Yacht Race* last year. The year before they'd had about sixty cameras from different companies following the race and it almost caused nasty accidents, so this year they gave the filming franchise to one company to avoid all that. This company came to us for the music and immediately you see sails round Cape Horn, blue skies and storm, don't you? So what we thought we'd have to do was to avoid sea music, and we found music for *Round the World Yacht Race* that didn't appear in our Sea section. We found it in areas like Pastoral and Drama. So in that way you can say that the classification is unsatisfactory.

But surely imaginative producers will look under the 'wrong' heading anyhow?

The thing is they don't have the time. It's my experience that 90% of all producers think of music at the very last minute. They're always late with the music unless they're big enough to have a music advisor. If it's a guy who has to think of the script, the shooting, the locations — as most of them have —, he invariably thinks of the music last of all. Steve, our promotion man, often walks into a studio and they say: 'Steve, thank goodness you're here: you can help us with this take'. And if he's not walking into the studio, someone else [from another music library] is walking in. To be honest with you, to alter the catalogue, its shape and so on, I've had a quote of £6000 and I really can't afford that. I'm going to go to the board of directors and ask them for that money, but I know I'll be thrown out. Still I'd like very much to do something about our catalogue. We've looked at every catalogue we can lay our hands on — English, French and German — and I don't think any of them have solved the problem totally satisfactorily and I don't think it ever will be.

The Selected Sounds people in Hamburg have the cross-check guide at the start of their catalogue. It's all very neat and efficient, but sometimes the moods described by those category headings don't fit the music. You look something up in the cross-index guide which purports to be pastoral, let's say, but some of the pieces referred to just don't fit the bill.

The tragic thing is that those pieces you're thinking of might fit the bill for the guy that wrote them or for the people doing the classification. It's the same thing here. We'll all three of us hear the same piece of music under the same conditions and when we compare notes we find we've all thought of different things when listening to it. So the bloke that set up the catalogue you're talking about might well have seen it in the way he describes, whereas as you come to it fresh and think of something entirely different. It's a very personal business.

Of course, I agree there are endless possibilities of personal interpretation. Still, having listened through a number of background music libraries and

having noted general musical traits together with classifications, let's say in the Pastoral sections of the various libraries, you find that there do exist standard pastoral elements in the music classified as Pastoral in all catalogues.

OK, there's something that's patently pastoral, but just occasionally... There's a flute solo and my mind starts going off on the *flûte enchantée* bit and I get all grand thinking of Poulenc, Satie, etc., and I have to tell myself to get away from that because the guy you're dealing with here isn't going to know about all that other music. So far as complicated catalogues are concerned, my experience has been, at least from television stations here, that they just aren't interested. They just don't want to explore a catalogue. The guy or the girl at the desk at the television hears the phone ring and she wants quick access to the music— she wants to get back to her boyfriend or whatever on the phone, and this is understandable. She wants to give the man on the other end of the phone three seconds of suitable music as quick as she can.

There's a big television series coming up now which starts in April: seventeen programmes about the English garden. It's ITV, they've spent a fortune on it and they have John Gielgud doing voice-over. It's going to be the history of the English garden from Capability Brown to 'my little garden at home'. They come here for the music, not for the signature tune, but for the rest of it. Now we immediately started thinking of pastoral and flowery music for close-ups of rosebuds and so on. It's not what the man wanted. I only hope his pictures and music marry. He wanted Stravinsky-like sounds, and if he speeds up the frames, he might get the right effect. He took the records from here and I just hope it works.

Do you have any sort of follow-up research on what music from the library has been used where?

No, the only sort of follow-up process we have here is when we get an inquiry or when a record goes out. We then follow that up to find out if they liked it or if it was any value to them. It's no depth study at all. We just say 'Did you find any use for that?', 'What was wrong with it?'. Perhaps they say 'we were looking for more brass' or something like that. Invariably I find a great many people who don't know what they want. I'm not trying to knock users, but it seems they want a noise without knowing which noise. We get people in here who spend hours with us...

...You mean they don't have words to specify what music they're looking for?

Yes, exactly, and there we're back to the classification problem again. The guy's got a film in his head. He's worked on it for, say, three months and the whole thing's in his mind. Now he needs some music to give it an extra lift. Where do you start? If you're doing a film about brass bands it's easy, but if it's about racing cars or rosebuds it's more difficult.

I suppose it depends on which angle you want to put on the film.

Exactly. Let's say you've got a love scene. Well, you could use some great background score from a talkie. I wouldn't lean that way myself but someone else might. The music makes different sorts of love. Let me give you another example. I saw a production of Shakespeare's *The Tempest* on television where they got the music absolutely right. You see, they didn't go all arty-crafty with Baroque instruments or super-modern either. They just used a small group of instruments and got the mood precisely.

Now, the Royal Shakespeare Company have just finished a run of a series of plays called *The Greeks*. They had a Greek do the music and they used three musicians with instruments like recorders, the odd Greek instrument, chime bells. There were no wasted notes and it was absolutely beautiful. You went in at ten o'clock in the morning and came out at midnight. It was Euripides, Aeschylus and Sophocles all in one. They've made a tape of all the music which I've bought. It's beautiful: very nostalgic and a very, very high flute on one occasion.

How did you and the other people working here end up in this line of business?

Angela came from one of the great secretarial schools and she is our backbone. She has a phenomenal memory and knows the catalogue from memory without having to look at it, because she has to type the thing. I've been in music publishing in various ways ever since I left school and while I was in the States the man doing my present job died and I was asked to take over. I knew nothing about it but said I'd love to give it a try. I jumped in at the deep end and it was sheer hell for about two years. Steve, our promotion man, was in advertising. I found that my grey hairs restricted my entry into certain areas. You see, there are a lot of young guys, and girls too, around in the music business and you have to be realistic. There are areas where I would be treated with respect and dignity and that's not always what is required, so I needed a guy who was 'with it', 'hip', or whatever today's expression is, someone who could go and meet young people on his level and go to the sort of places like clubs that young people go to today without feeling a million years old like I would. So in Steve Hansen we have someone who was in advertising, was a musician — he played the oboe — and who knew nothing about background music. I said: 'We need someone to go round and talk about our catalogue, who isn't afraid to pick up a phone when a new librarian arrives somewhere. Sometimes a librarian who retires will phone me and say: 'The new librarian who starts here next week is called Alice Bloggs'. Steve goes down and meets Alice Bloggs, and invariably they're the same age group, which is very important for contact. I see people of my own age. For example, we have an associate company of pop music. The man that runs it is my age and it simply doesn't work in my opinion because the young people's reaction to him is quite different towards a much younger man. OK, the buck stops at my desk. For instance, Steve wants to do something and I have to ask him 'well, what do you think?' 'Have you evaluated the situation?' If he has and it's OK, I'll put my initial to it. But this guy running the pop section, it's all him: he goes to the clubs, he goes to the groups and I'm afraid it just doesn't work.

Of course it shouldn't be that way, but that's the way the scene is. You have to have your beads and your shirt open down to the navel, that's just the way it is. I don't like it of course, and if people ask me if I do, I say it's not a question of what I like. I'd rather be working at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, planning their next year's season — that's my thing, that's what I'd like to be doing, but that's not what I'm doing. So what am I going to do? Fight the world?

I see what you mean. As for as I'm concerned, I'd rather be at home writing choral stuff, symphonies and so on, but they'd never get performed, so I suppose I'm being realistic in my own way too. There are a lot of useful outlets which are looked down on and which composers could use a lot more.

You can do decent rock material, decent material for television, film, radio and so on. I think a lot of composers and musicians still have the old type of artistic illusion left inside them. Instead of looking at Purcell the way he was, that is the bloke who wrote drinking rounds just as well as the great anthems and operas, they can only see him as an artist with a capital A.

Yes, but his world and the world today are different.

That's true, but all we ever get to hear from music history are the 'greats', not the music of the people, not the drinking songs, lullabies, dances, the dances and so on.

I have it in the back of my mind that I'd like to carry out an investigation into the composers that lived during the Mozart and Beethoven period that we never hear now, that we don't know. There are lots of them and they couldn't all have been bad. I guess they were just overwhelmed by the total geniuses. Let me go and get you that disco record...

Thank you. I'll switch off the recorder...