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Albert Ketelbey, glorious failure

Express Staff Reporter

ALBERT KETELBEY, who tried to write great music and will instead be remembered only for handful of little tunes that have been tinkled out on parlour pianos of several generations, died yesterday. He was 84.

With tunes like *In a Monastery Garden*, *Bells Across the Meadow*, and *In a Persian Market*, Ketelbey won the immortality that his symphonies and chamber music never brought him.

Ketelbey won a scholarship to study music in London at 13, at 16 he was a church organist, and at 22 musical director of a West End theatre.

PRAISED

His concert music was praised by the critics--including the English master Sir Edward Elgar. It was as quickly forgotten--by everyone except the shrewd little man from Birmingham.

He used themes from his unsuccessful symphonies to write, popular, money-spinners. Ketelbey cashed in on the Englishman's romantic idea of what tunes from Persia, Egypt, China and Japan should sound like. They were far from the reality. But they paid off. And made his fortune.

Albert Ketelbey, who died at his Isle of Wight home, was the favourite composer of King George V. He will be remembered by millions.