

CONTEMPORARY REFERENCES 1940-1949

SELECTED FROM THE DATABASES
BRITISH NEWSPAPER ARCHIVE 1940-1949 AND TIMES DIGITAL ARCHIVE
AND OTHER SOURCES

During the war period, Ketelbey's music remained popular, with frequent broadcasts on the Forces Network. But the few new recordings received absolutely no reviews, perhaps being no longer newsworthy or just that newspapers were smaller with less staff. There were also fewer municipal orchestras giving concerts of light music. The composer himself is mentioned giving concerts around the country and at the BBC. - TMcC

Birmingham Daily Post, Tuesday 20th February 1940

PROGRAMME FOR THE FORCES

... 12.0 noon – Music by Ketelbey (gramophone records). 12.20...

Newcastle Journal, Friday 8th March 1940

TO-DAY'S RADIO FARE ... FOR THE FORCES

... 5.20 – Albert W. Ketelbey – Gramophone records of some of his most famous pieces. 6.0...

Yorkshire Evening Post, Friday 29th March 1940

NEW GRAMOPHONE RECORDS

... The magnificent bass singer, Oscar Natzke, has returned to his native New Zealand, but before leaving made a number of records to supplement those already issued which have won wide favour... the other record consists of two vocal settings of Ketelbey's ever popular orchestral pieces "In a monastery garden" and "Sanctuary of the heart." The words provided for these numbers are appropriate and make good sense, and the performance by all concerned reaches the highest possible standard. Don't miss them if you are a Ketelbey "fan."

Liverpool Daily Post, Thursday 4th April 1940

PARLOPHONE RECORDINGS

... Oscar Natzke, who is getting a reputation as the "New Zealand bass," sings Ketelbey's luxuriant "In a Monastery Garden," religioso and with much sentiment.

Northern Whig, Saturday 26th October 1940

FOR THE FORCES

... 3.30. The Master of Melody – A.W. Ketelbey. 4.0

Hull Daily Mail, Saturday 8th March 1941

ARMY BAND'S CONTRASTS IN HULL CONCERT

String orchestra or brass band – the men of the Royal Regiment of Artillery are equally at home, as the people of Hull found last night. Visiting the city to entertain the civilian public and members of the Forces, they gave a free concert at the City Hall to an enthusiastic audience...

Sentiment was given full sway in Ketelbey's overture "Chal Romano" ...

[[The Band gave a similar concert in Nottingham on 6th July 1941](#)]

Coventry Evening Telegraph, Wednesday 4th June 1941

TO-NIGHT'S RADIO. FOR THE FORCES

4.30 – Ketelbey Concert: the composer Albert W. Ketelbey will present some records of his own works. 5.0...

The Gramophone, July 1941, p.27

BEHIND THE NEEDLE, XIII. LOOKING BACK OVER THE GRAMOPHONE, by HERBERT C. RIDOUT

My references to Thomas Jackson, the tenor who did such excellent recording work for Columbia and Regal, have brought me some interesting additional notes from an old friend, Albert W.

Ketelbey. I can hardly do better than quote what he says:

'Tommy Jackson was a Birmingham (not Lancashire) man and by a curious coincidence in his boyhood lived quite close to where I had lived as a boy. He had an unmistakable (to me) "Brummagem" accent (especially when off his guard) and it was this which caused me to enquire from him personally about his origin. It was rather a pleasant surprise to me to find he had a good voice, as it was a pure fluke that he happened to blow into the recording room at Great Eastern Street, one day at lunch time, and asked me if we wanted a tenor. I was in charge at the time and said "Yes, we did," and if he liked to make a test there and then we would consider him. He did so. I accompanied him and I believe Charlie Gregory recorded him. The test was sent up to the sales manager (Jimmie Brandt) at Oxford Street: he like it and Tommy was immediately given a date. Tommy was rather hard up and sang for a rather small fee. Some time later, when Sterling joined the Company, we met in a luncheon bar, and Jackson's name came up. Sterling asked what he was paid and (though it was really nothing to do with Sterling) he asked me to give him an extra guinea: Sterling was a very sympathetic listener to tales of distress.'

Mr. Ketelbey adds that Jackson did sing at Covent Garden, not merely as a chorister, but in parts like one of the Apprentices in "Meistersinger" under Richter, and also as one of the Knights in "Parsifal." He also appeared in one of de Courville's Hippodrome revues. And I agree with my friend that he had a most charming tenor voice, and that it was probably his girth that prevented his stage progress.

[Think Pavarotti?]

Thanet Advertiser Friday 31st October 1941

A GRAND BAND. ARMY MUSIC IN THANET

...The fortunate few who knew of the concert being given by a famous military band at the West Cliff Theatre, Ramsgate, on Tuesday afternoon, must have contrasted the old and new styles ...

The opening of the programme was dramatic. It was an eight-trumpet fanfare by Ketelbey played on trumpets used for the coronation ceremony in Westminster Abbey...

[The only published fanfare at this date was *Fanfare for a Ceremonial Occasion*, which in its simplest form is for 4 trumpets, 3 trombones and drums, rather than 8 trumpets. However, *Coronation Fanfare* is for a minimum of 6 trumpets and drums, so perhaps it was in existence in 1941 although not published till 1952]

Dumfries and Galloway Standard, Saturday 29th November 1941

MUNICIPAL ORCHESTRA

... Ketelbey's "Mystic Land of Egypt," unashamedly subjective, and none the worse for that, presented a picture rich with the traditionally imagined sounds of the East...

Birmingham Mail, Saturday 18th May 1942

FOR THE FORCES

... 7.15 – Morning Star: Ketelbey.

[*Morning Star* was the name of the programme, not a piece of music]

Gloucestershire Echo, Thursday 23rd July 1942

TO-DAY'S GOSSIP. STIRRING SONG

The visit paid to Cheltenham six years ago by the famous composer Mr. Albert W. Ketelbey is still fresh in the memory of many who saw him conduct some of his own works at one of the popular Easter concerts.

We are looking forward to his return to the town during the Holidays-at-Home week to conduct the Spa Orchestra in a programme of his own works.

Mr. Ketelbey's latest composition is a stirring patriotic song, "Fighting for Freedom," with words inspired by the Prime Minister's memorable speech: "We will fight on the beaches and in the fields." It will be sung by Mr. Watcyn Watcyns.

Gloucestershire Echo, Tuesday 4th August 1942

KETELBEY DELIGHTS BIG AUDIENCE

The visit on Monday night of the veteran composer-conductor, Albert W. Ketelbey, to Cheltenham to conduct the Spa Orchestra in a concert of his own works, given in connection with the "Holidays at Home" programme, attracted a large audience to the Princess Hall of the Ladies' College, a beautiful auditorium, well adapted for such a concert.

The works performed included several in which the clever little orchestra had vocal re-inforcement, the singers including the well-known bass-baritone, Watcyn Watcyns, and six of the member of the Male Voice Octet. The programme included the "Chal Romano" overture; the suite "In Holiday Mood;" two new songs, "Fighting for Freedom" (with male voice sextet) and "I dream of all the Worlds," sung by Watcyn Watcyns, and both accompanied by the composer; "The Phantom Melody;" meditation, "Sanctuary of the Heart," with Watcyn Watcyns and the male sextet in the vocal parts, and John Hartland at the organ; "In a Persian Market," "In a Monastery Garden" (with vocal parts), Arthur Cole at the organ; "In a Chinese Temple Garden;" and the cathedral reverie, "The Sacred Hour" (with vocal parts), John Hartland at the organ.

The finale was the appropriate "Bank Holiday," and following the big round of applause greeting it, its composer thanked all who had helped him, expressing himself delighted with the work of the orchestra, the sextet and Mr. Watcyn Watcyns.

The audience, throughout, was highly appreciative, for this Ketelbey music is live, melodic and sunny, and adds to the sum total of human happiness.

Its composer is prolific in picturesque musical ideas, which he clothes in happy musical forms. In his playful familiarity with his audience and the performers he recalls that Ariel of pianists, the late Vladimir de Pachmann.

Gloucestershire Echo, Wednesday 12th August 1942

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR...

AT EVERY CONCERT

Sir, - May I be permitted now to say how much I have thoroughly enjoyed the performances of the very skilfully trained combination of musicians under the able directorship of Lieut. A. Lemoine? ... On Friday afternoon we were favoured with a march entitled "Marching to Freedom," sent by Ketelbey, which he had sent to them, and the bandmaster put it on without any practice, and there was not a wrong note...

WILLIAM SWIMMINGS (Canadian Bandsman)

[Presumably this march was *Fighting for Freedom*]

Lancaster Guardian, Friday 18th September 1942

LANSIL SAVING GROUP'S MAGNIFICENT EXAMPLE

... Once again the Band of the King's Own Royal Regiment demonstrated its versatility and musicianly qualities to the complete satisfaction of all concerned... As a contrast, they showed a hearty rollicking spirit in their rather unorthodox but, nevertheless, distinctly laughable interpretation of Ketelby's "In a Persian Market," in the course of which they took several liberties in the descriptive running commentary with which the members of the Band illustrated the musical theme...

Thanet Advertiser, Tuesday 27th October 1942

SERVICES ENTERTAIN

Among the lads from the three fighting services who gave such a topping programme on the stage of the Odeon Cinema, Ramsgate, on Friday was one of Carrol Levis' "discoveries."

He was Smm. Ronald Charles, whose home is in Ebb-Vale [sic], South Wales, and his speciality was bird mimicry. Ron presented several perfect imitations of the notes of British birds, and his clever background to Ketelbey's "In a Monastery Garden," played on the piano by Mr. A.T. Burley, provided a beautiful effect...

[As far as I can discover, this Ronald Charles was a different person from the Ronald Charles Waldron who as a famous whistler called himself "Ronnie Ronalde"]

Bedfordshire Times and Independent, Friday 6th November 1942

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Sir, - The British schools of music have produced a brilliant band of composers who can turn out, *ad libitum*, music of the raucous and tuneless type. But what we do need, urgently, for the sake of the rising generation, is the output of a new breed of composers like Finck, Lincke, Joyce, Lehar and Delibes. One really wonders whether the production of smooth harmony is now feasible in this chaotic modern world?

Still, we do have Ketelby: why not more like him? I, for one, would contribute £1 towards a £5,000 benefit for an English musician who could produce anything to equal Delibes's ballet "Sylvia," or Suppé's "Poet and Peasant," or Luigini's "Ballet Egyptien."

German, Elgar, and Walford Davies are but recently dead: we now need new men capable of producing work much as theirs.

ST. JOHN CHARLESON

Lancaster Guardian, Friday 7th May 1943

CONCERT TRIBUTE TO ALLIED NATIONS

Having held many meetings and festivals for our individual Allies, the Anglo-Russian and Allied Friendship Movement (Lancaster) on Thursday night in the Ashton Hall organised an International Night as a tribute to the United Nations...

A fanfare by Ketelbey opened the proceedings...

Ketelbey's descriptive piece, "In a Chinese Temple Garden," is a clever, if facile, bit of pastiche. It was, under the circumstances, the best we could offer to the Orient, and as such was an acceptable vehicle for our tribute...

Gloucestershire Echo, Monday 16th August 1943

REFUGEE ARTISTS GIVE FINE CONCERT

... Miss Lizzi A. Fleischmann fascinated the audience with a dancing version of Ketelbey's "In a Persian Market" ...

Hastings and St Leonard's Observer, Saturday 3rd February 1944

ALBERT KETELBEY'S VISIT. CONCERT FOR LIFE-BOAT FUNDS

Nearly £19 was collected at a successful concert held in aid of the Royal National Life-Boat Institution at the White Rock Pavilion on Monday, when the popular composer Albert Ketelbey conducted some of his best-known works.

The concert was arranged by Mr. Harry Cove, and during the evening, Commander W. Highfield, local hon. secretary, R.N.L.I., described the fine work of the life-boat service in wartime, and referred to the recent hazardous experiences of the Hastings crew.

Mr. Ketelbey made a very kindly gesture in coming to Hastings for the concert without fee and declining any out-of-pocket expenses.

The following notice of the concert is contributed by our music critic [Allan Biggs]:

Albert Ketelbey's flair for inventing haunting tunes was never more in evidence than in his "Monastery Garden," "Persian Market" and "Chal Romano." He had at his disposal the orchestra trained by Mr. Ernest Harman, and so effectively and gratefully are Mr. Ketelbey's tunes orchestrated, and so magnetic is his own personality, that he and his music inspired the best performance I have ever heard from this valiant little band of players, who have developed in numbers from quite small beginnings.

Mr. Ketelbey also played the piano accompaniments to some of his own songs. These, too, were in popular vein, and were made especially acceptable by the natural and charming treatment given to them by Miss Elsa Bolton, who, with a voice of peculiarly taking quality, is conspicuously free from the airs and graces with which so many sopranos distort their songs. She thoroughly deserved the vigorous applause of the audience.

The concert (which was too long by a good hour) ended with the composer's patriotic Ode, "Men of England" for chorus and orchestra. Here Mr. Ketelbey has struck out quite a new line – one which I like less than his customary one. His muse does not take kindly to the "heroic," and much of this work has a sense of being forced and is, therefore, unconvincing. It was quite well sung by the combined Civil Defence and Police Choirs ...

[Apart from the Ketelbey pieces, there were several part-songs from the choirs, Berlioz's *Hungarian March*, *Poet & Peasant Overture*, and *Ballet Egyptien*. The Berlioz and Luigini "being beyond the capability of some of the strings, who had to scramble in trying to keep up with their better equipped companions"]

Shipley Times and Express, Thursday 23rd February 1944

POST-WAR BRITISH FILMS

... I very definitely advocate for future British films, stories centred round a musical theme and by this I do not mean more dance bands, variety or revue films ... Let us have a Philharmonic or Halle Orchestra, maybe with a chorus to present the music of such composers as Tchaikovsky, Ketelby, Brahms, Strauss, etc. The nearest approaches to such films have been "100 Men and A Girl," "Fantasia," "Dangerous Moonlight" and others...

A.C. Webb.

Londonderry Sentinel, Tuesday 15th May 1945

STRAND PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Large congregations attended the thanksgiving service in Strand Presbyterian Church, Londonderry, on Sunday, when the offerings were in aid of Christian Reconstruction in Europe

...At the evening service the soloist was Mr. Victor Harris, whose rendering of "The Great Day" (Ketelby) was much appreciated.

[The "Great Day" of the song title was VE Day, the previous Tuesday]

Sunderland Daily Echo and Shipping Gazette, 3rd June 1946

CELEBRITIES FOR SEABURN HALL

Sunderland Licensing Magistrates to-day granted a music, singing, and dancing licence for 12 months for Seaburn Concert Hall ... It was intended to hold dances, celebrity concerts, and, on Sundays, concerts of a high-class nature to cater for tastes which had not been fully provided for in Sunderland.

When Mr W.N. Jackson, Corporation entertainments manager, told the Major the Sunday concerts would be "of a refined nature." The Chairman (Sir Myers Wayman) asked what he meant by that. Mr Jackson said the music would not be lighter than that of, say, Ketelby and Coates, and there would be soloists. It was not intended to desecrate Sunday in any way.

The Stage, Thursday 1st August 1946

SONG NOTES

Albert W. Ketelbey's latest song, specially written for a high soprano – "King Cupid," is well above the average with its lovely melody and words to match...

The Times, 22nd February 1947, page 1

DEATHS

KETELBEY. On Feb. 20, 1947, after a short illness, LOTTIE, darling wife ALBERT W. KETELBEY (Composer). No flowers or letters, please. All friends' sympathies hereby acknowledged with sincere thanks.

Dundee Evening Telegraph, Wednesday 19th March 1947

FAMOUS NAMES IN THE BOBBY'S BOOK

William Mackman used to be a London policeman. Taking names has been his hobby for 20 years. The ones he wanted have gone into his autograph album, not his bobby's notebook ... Famous composers have inscribed a line or two of their compositions in the album ... Albert Ketelby added a few bars of "In a Monastery Garden" ...

The Times, 20th February 1948, page 1

DEATHS - IN MEMORIAM

KETELBEY. LOTTIE, Feb. 20. - On this day 1947, my everlasting sweetheart passed away after only two days' illness. The light of my life went out and my whole world became for ever darkened.
ALBERT W. KETELBEY.

Blackpool Evening Gazette, Thursday 2nd September 1949

KETELBEY PLAYED AT ST. ANNES

A little white-haired man with a merry twinkle behind his rimless glasses hummed and sang as he conducted some of his bright and beautiful melodies on St. Annes Pier last night. Albert Ketelbey, for all his 60 years or so, his serious illness, from which he has now recovered, following the death of his wife during the past 12 months, is a lively personality. After he conducted the Pier orchestra last night he said, "It has been worth coming all the way from London for. They played beautifully."

Ketelbey, composer of many famous melodies chose his "Bells across the Meadow" and "In a Monastery Garden" among others in his 60-minute programme. Despite now having – as he told the audience – neuritis in his hands, he played at the piano the "Dance of the Merry Mascots." Dorothy Adams Gill, a holiday-maker from Leeds, was soloist in his poignant melody, "Sanctuary of the Heart."

The Floral Hall was packed, and many had to be turned away. Ketelbey received a rousing ovation. Lionel Johns, the resident conductor who took the first part of the programme, introduced the composer.

Torbay Express and South Devon Echo, Thursday 16th September 1948

TORQUAY PAVILION...

Thursday, September 16th at 2.45 – ORCHESTRAL CONCERT

ALBERT W. KETELBEY, the famous Composer and Conductor in a programme of his own compositions. Soloist: MARGARET EAVES (Soprano)...

Gloucestershire Echo, Monday 4th October 1948

RECORD ATTENDANCE AT SPA CONCERT

Some 1,100 people – the largest audience yet to attend one of the Cheltenham Spa Palm Court Orchestra's concerts – enjoyed an hour with Mr. Albert W. Ketelbey, composer of such well-known pieces as "In a Monastery Garden" and "In a Persian Market," at the Cheltenham Town Hall on Sunday evening.

Happily, despite his illness, Mr. Ketelbey has retained his customary vitality, and he was soon on intimate terms with his audience, who thoroughly enjoyed his amusingly descriptive remarks and appreciated the endearing quality and inspired orchestration of his ever-popular tunes. As well as his two best-known compositions, the composer conducted the orchestra in such numbers as "Sanctuary of the Heart" and "Remembrance." The orchestra (led by George Dixon) was conducted by Arthur Cole when the composer went to the piano to play "Dance of the Merry Mascots" and "The Clock and the Dresden Figures."

[Were both *Sanctuary of the Heart* and *Remembrance* really played? The latter incorporates the main melody of the former]

Torbay Express and South Devon Echo, Monday 11th October 1948

KETELBEY AT THE PAVILION.

Albert W. Ketelbey, the well-known composer, conducted Torquay Municipal Orchestra before a big audience at Torquay Pavilion last night, in a programme of his own works. They included "Bells across the Meadow," "Sanctuary of the Heart," "In a Persian Market," "In a Monastery Garden" and the "Cockney Suite."

Ruth Davey (contralto) and Samuel Pitman (baritone) also sang songs by Ketelbey, accompanied by the composer.

Western Gazette, Friday 15th October 1948

WINTER GARDENS. BOURNEMOUTH MUNICIPAL ORCHESTRA

... Sunday, October 17th. At 8p.m. Conductors: ALBERT W. KETELBEY, RUDOLF SCHWARZ. WALTER WIDDOP (Tenor)...

The Times, Thursday 23rd April 1949

Sir, - I read in your issue of today that a bird appeared on the bandstand at Folkestone and sang bird calls in Mr. Ketelbey's "In a Monastery Garden." Bird calls, as your report states, are usually performed by a percussion or other player on instrumental whistles. Important questions concerning copyright and conditions of employment are raised by this intrusion of one whom all right-thinking people will regard as an amateur performing an extemporised obbligato. The whole matter should be reported to the Musicians' Union."

Nottingham Journal, Wednesday 16th November 1949

DOLLAR TUNES

British songwriters are now hitting the dollar market...Billy Whitlock, the 75-year-old expert on the hand-bells, who used to earn £100 a week on the music halls, has just sold his second song in ten weeks to U.S.A. It is "Two of Irish," written in 1906. It was a drinking song originally, but what the Americans will make of it remains to be seen ...

Albert Ketelbey, the famous Birmingham-born composer, sent this telegram to Whitlock yesterday: "Congratulations on your second time on the musical earth."