

CONTEMPORARY REFERENCES 1950-1959

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

During this decade, Ketelbey made very few public appearances. His music continued to be performed live, particularly at weddings and in amateur soirées. Special Ketelbey concerts and broadcasts ceased, and only a handful of recordings were made. Coverage in the newspapers also declined, partly due to less papers and music critics. Even his death in 1959 triggered no obituaries in the provincial press. - TMcC

Derry Journal, Friday 11th May 1951

... the wedding at the Church of the Holy Child, Whitehall, Dublin of Mr. Jim McGonagle... and Miss Elizabeth Purdue... The organist was Mr. P. Doyle, and the soloist Mr. Gerald McGonagle, who sang "Kyrie" (Ketelby), "Ave Maria" (Schubert), "Panis Angelicus" (Cesar Franck) and "Just For To-day" (Seaver)...

[Obviously *In a Monastery Garden*, a favourite piece at weddings]

Portsmouth Evening News, Friday 13th July 1951

RADIO. LIGHT.

... 10.20. Albert Ketelbey's Music. 11.0

[Still getting dedicated radio programmes]

Portsmouth Evening News, Monday 10th December 1951

NOTABLE SOLOISTS AT GLEE CLUB CONCERT

... The orchestra's rendering of Alec Rowley's "Christmas Suite for Strings" was a little ragged, but they were very much happier in the attractive "Yuletide Fantasy" by Ketelby, in which the required exactness of each section of the chorus and orchestra was attained...

[In the report of the same Glee Club's concert in 1954, the piece is correctly named *A Dream of Christmas*]

Morpeth Herald, Friday 1st February 1952

MISS PROUDLOCK MADE GRAMOPHONE RECORD

Following the recent Ashington Central Hall celebrity concert when tributes were paid to the late Gladys Produlock [sic], there have been numerous enquiries as to whether the popular pianist made gramophone records.

Mr. Normanton Barron, concert organiser, states that he and Miss Proudlock made one record privately of a piano-organ duet with Bach's "Jesu Joy of Man's Desiring" on one side and Ketelby's "Sanctuary of the Heart" on the other. This recording was made by Mr. Joe Gray, of Ashington, and it is suggested that if sufficient applications are received, copies of the record could be produced for home playing at 7/6 each. People who would like this recording of Miss Proudlock's piano music, should get in touch with Mr. Barron, c/o Arrowsmith, Ashington.

Kirkintilloch Herald, Wednesday 9th April 1952

ST. MARY'S CHOIR CONCERT.

... Mr. Wm. Fountain and Mr. Wm McMillan played piano and organ duets with both variety and colour contrast in A.W. Ketelby's "Bells across the Meadow" and "Sanctuary of the Heart." They were ably assisted by a young ladies sextette which added a vocal "obligato" in these two pieces...

Luton News and Bedfordshire Chronicle, Thursday 4th June 1953

TRUMPETS SOUNDED.

About 200 people, nearly half of them children, were gathered around the Town Hall when Luton Coronation festivities were heralded in a fanfare of trumpets soon after 9.45 a.m. on Tuesday.

The bunting was lashed by a biting wind, but rain, which began to fall just before the 13 trumpeters and drummer of Luton Band, together with their conductor, Mr. Albert Coupe, mounted the special saluting base, ceased before the fanfare commenced, and the sun shone momentarily through the clouds. The fanfare was Ketelbey's "Fanfare for a Ceremonial Occasion."...

[There are several other references to "Fanfare", but this is the only one found which specifies which one]

The Times, 26th June 1953, page 8

LUNCHEON - PERFORMING RIGHT SOCIETY

Lady Violet Bonham-Carter was the guest of honour at the thirty-ninth anniversary luncheon of the Performing Right Society at the Connaught Rooms yesterday. Mr Leslie Boosey, the president, was in the chair, and the company included:

... Mr Albert Ketelbey...

Yorkshire Evening Post, Thursday 6th August 1953

GOSSIP OF THE DAY.

Following his TV appearance last night, composer Albert Ketelbey was in a confidential mood. Today he told a London colleague that he got the inspiration for his most famous piece, "In a Monastery Garden," in Yorkshire.

It was 41 years ago, and the composer was visiting his friend Enrico Scoma, then conductor of Bridlington's orchestra. The two went for a motor-car ride – a big event in itself those days. On their way they stopped at a monastery. The name I cannot remember," says 73-year-old Ketelbey, "but I recall we went into the garden. The birds were singing and we heard the monks chanting in the chapel. Enrico asked me to set the charming picture to music." The piece was written as an orchestral intermezzo and played exclusively for three years by Enrico.

It was always received several encores, and it was then decided to put it on the market. Before the publisher would accept it he insisted on words being set to the music, and after much demur, Ketelbey agreed. More than one and a half million copies have since been sold.

[Ketelbey was actually 78 when this article appeared. Other conflicting accounts can be found on the [In a Monastery Garden discography web-page.](#)]

Sunday Times, Sunday 9th August 1953

TELEVISION AND RADIO, by Maurice Wiggin. INDIAN SUMMERS

"Most people think you are dead," said Mr. Eric Robinson, introducing Mr. Albert Ketelbey to viewers on Wednesday evening. "Are you still composing?"

"I'm certainly not decomposing," replied the Ethel M. Dell of music, with infectious relish.

Relish, gusto, confidence, character: how well the old men show up on television! Mr. Bransby Williams, Sir Compton Mackenzie, Professor Bodkin, Lord Russell – time and again veterans who in an earlier epoch might have been languishing in obscurity have surprised viewers by their vitality ...

[Ethel M. Dell wrote novels set in exotic places]

The Stage, 27th May 1954

DECEMBER IN MAY

Conditions the reverse of "May in December" applied to London parks last week when the band concerts began, but a chilly mid-day period at the Victoria Gardens, Embankment, enclosure found the orchestra of the Welsh Guards, under Captain Statham, cheerfully dispensing the strains of Ketelbey to city workers, who kept on the move around the bandstand...

Portsmouth Evening News, Tuesday 9th November 1954

DIFFERENT APPROACH TO OPERA?

[This is part of a correspondence]

H.C.M.J. (E.N. Nov. 5) repeats his statement that opera is essentially singing, and asks, "Who will quarrel with this?" I did and do...

... Regarding Puccini, I am sorry H.C.M.J., but the "true" musicians (of whom I am not one!) have a poor opinion of his music. Some years ago I challenged an eminent lecturer at Oxford on this point...

My point was that Puccini was essentially a composer of music drama... His music is of the theatre and is excellent theatre. But take away its true venue and it might be Ketelby... Make no mistake, Puccini was essentially a writer of music drama. Musically, he was merely had a facile ability to write lovely tunes in waltz time, and Ketelby could do that...
Claude Somerset.

Sunday Times, Sunday 2nd August 1959, p.5

PORTAIT GALLERY. ALBERT KETÈLBEY

Although the long-playing record is entitled "The Immortal Works of Ketelbey," the search for any mention of the octogenarian Birmingham Master in standard works of musical reference seems to be unavailing. Diligence is at last rewarded by the discovery of one short item. It divulges an item of information on which he himself maintains an unbroken silence: his exact age. He will be eighty-four on Tuesday.

"Many happy returns, Mr. Albert W. Ketèlbey!" Grove's Dictionary may have overlooked you, but your name has been a household word among us for several generations. How many parlour pianos have displayed at one time or another copies, tattered from years of affectionate use, of "In a Monastery Garden," "Sanctuary of the Heart" or "In a Persian Market," that intermezzo beloved of cinema musicians in the "silent" days, although suburban susceptibilities perhaps boggled at your "Bacchanale de Montmartre" ("For Cabaret, Orgy and Riotous Continental Scenes").

Ketelbey won a scholarship to study music in London at the age of thirteen; at sixteen he was organist at a Wimbledon church, and at twenty-two musical director of a West End theatre. Elgar praised an early piano sonata, and a quintet for wind and piano won the Sir Michael Costa prize; but these and a string quartet were only stepping-stones to the "Immortal Works" which have made his fame and fortune.

In the retirement in the Isle of Wight which they support, the Master may look back on a life crowded with pleasant if not very profound musical activity: conducting pantomime orchestras on tour, or Charlot shows with Gertie Millar at the Vaudeville, and even directing music for a gramophone company.

Success in his chosen field has never transformed Ketèlbey's retiring disposition into flamboyance, nor caused him to forget his old colleagues in the profession. Like that of so many others in the field of light music who have found the heart-beat of the greater British public, Ketèlbey's own heart is in its proper place.

The Times, 1st December 1959, page 11

TO-DAY'S ARRANGEMENTS - FUNERALS

Mr. A.W. Ketèlbey, Golders Green Crematorium, noon.