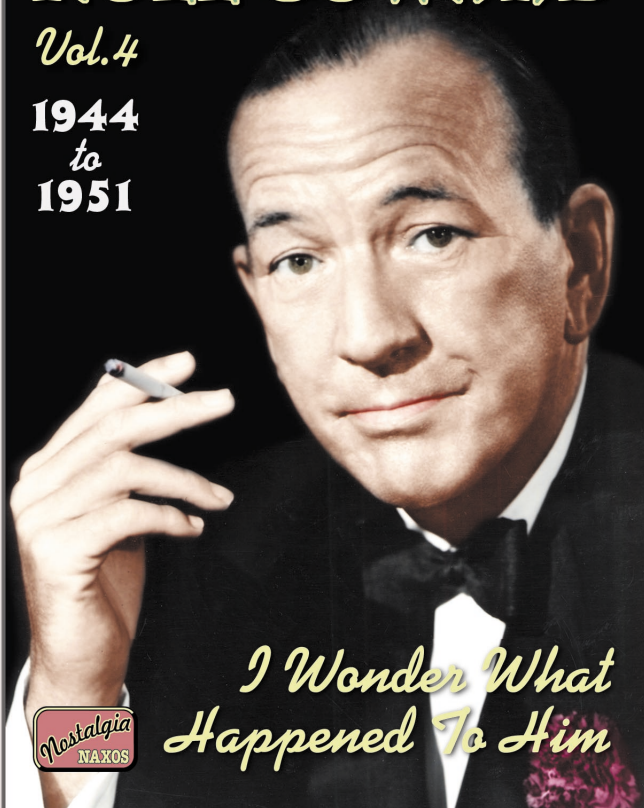


NOËL COWARD

Vol. 4

**1944
to
1951**



*I Wonder What
Happened To Him*



NOËL COWARD *Vol. 4*

I Wonder What Happened To Him

Original 1944-1951 Recordings

His triumph has been to unite two things
ever dissociated in the English mind:
hard work and wit – *Kenneth Tynan*

Noël Coward's polymathic activities as a performer – embracing straight theatre, cabaret revue and cinema – were matched only by his contributions as playwright and critic and as songsmith rivalled only by Cole Porter. A kind of 20th century 'Renaissance Man' he was also a highly skilled and successful theatrical entrepreneur. Born Noël Peirce Coward in Teddington into a comfortable, middle-class family, he grew up in suburban Surbiton in Surrey, receiving no formal musical training, albeit several of his antecedents were practising musicians. From the first his inclination veered unerringly towards the theatre and, at Daly's and the Gaiety, he was fed on a diet of Edwardian musical comedy and the lighter drama classics until he made his own first stage appearance in *The Goldfish*, at the London Little Theatre, in 1911.

By that time the self-taught Coward was also writing music (his earliest surviving song dates from 1915) and, under the tutelage of Charles Hawtrey, he made a few other juvenile appearances as an actor prior to a brief stint in the British Army during WW1, during 1918, the year he also made his first film appearance, in

D. W. Griffith's *Hearts Of The World* (a British-made silent starring Dorothy and Lillian Gish). In 1920 he starred in his first play *I'll Leave It To You* (which failed) and, less than a year later and again unsuccessfully, he made his New York stage début. In London, in February 1923, he made less of an impression in his next play *The Young Idea* than in the André Charlot revue *London Calling*, in which he danced with his co-star Gertrude Lawrence (1898-1952) and collaborated with writer Ronald Jeans on twelve numbers, of which the wistful "Parisian Pierrot" is best remembered.

Coward's parallel career as a playwright blossomed simultaneously and his straight plays *The Vortex* (1923), *Fallen Angels* and *Hay Fever* (both 1925) won him early recognition. However, it was in his contributions to revues, first for Charlot then, more significantly, for C. B. Cochran (1872-1951), that his greater talent for musical comedy first manifested itself. In 1925 the first of these, *On With The Dance* (a star-studded show for which Coward wrote all twelve numbers, including the catchy "Poor Little Rich Girl", introduced by the French-born Alice Delysia) made him his name in the genre and led to the bigger success, again for Cochran, of *This Year Of Grace* (1928). For this show (a virtual triumph with a 316-performance London

run complemented by 157 in a concurrent Broadway production which netted him £1000 per week in royalties and established his American reputation), Coward wrote all lyrics and songs, including the jazz-influenced "Dance, Little Lady" and "A Room With A View".

In 1929, inspired – he claimed – by Johann Strauss's *Die Fledermaus*, Coward decided to try his hand at the Viennese 'operette' with *Bitter-Sweet*. His stars of the original London production (697 performances), the American soprano Peggy Wood and Rumanian high-baritone Georges Metaxa, regaled audiences with "Dear Little Café" and "I'll See You Again". The show also ran for 159 performances on Broadway and was the first Coward musical to be filmed (in England, in 1933). In 1930, in London, in the 'comedy with music' *Private Lives*, Coward next reaffirmed his stage partnership with Gertrude Lawrence (its Broadway production the following year was also a significant hit) and in another successful London revue, *Cavalcade*, for Cochrane. This monumental paean to Edwardian life, two years later, would land its author a \$1 million contract for an Oscar-winning Fox films production.

Meanwhile, in London in 1932, *Words And Music* ran at the Adelphi for 164 performances. Produced for Cochrane and featuring Ivy St. Helier, Effie Atherton and a very young John Mills, this contained eighteen Coward numbers, most notably "Mad Dogs And Englishmen" and "Mad About The Boy". After the further successes of the non-musical *Design For Living* (1933) and the 1934 musical *Conversation*

Piece, in 1936 Coward combined his talent for satire and musical comedy in *Tonight At 8.30*, a series of nine one-acters of which three contained musical interludes. First presented at the London Phoenix and co-starring Coward and Lawrence, these also ran on Broadway.

In 1938, at His Majesty's Theatre, *Operette* proved a comparative failure for its author, despite some very plaintive tunes in the best Coward tradition, notably "Dearest Love", "Where Are The Songs We Sung?" and the monumentally droll "Stately Homes Of England". It was to be his last British pre-war musical, but the outbreak of the Second World War found Coward busy working for ENSA and the war-effort. In 1942, in the propaganda film *In Which We Serve* (his first screen appearance for nine years) he played a Mountbatten-like admiral and wartime inspired some of the finest Coward 'occasional', including "Don't Let's Be Beastly To The Germans" (wrongly interpreted as pro-Nazi, this was for a time banned by the BBC) and "Could You Please Oblige Us With A Bren Gun?" (a sort of Cowardian sequel to "The Washing On The Siegfried Line") and defiant morale-boosters, like **There Have Been Songs In England** and the more enduring "London Pride".

In the immediate postwar era Coward made a welcome return to the musical theatre with the revue *Sigh No More* (Piccadilly Theatre, London, 1945) and whereas his satire may have lost some of its former edge, this show, which ran for 213 performances and featured Cyril Ritchard, Graham Payn and Joyce Grenfell,

included some fine numbers: “Du Maurier”, **Sigh No More, I Wonder What Happened To Him, Nina** (a masterly Cole Porter-esque skit on the vagaries of South America and dancing-girls), **Matelot, Never Again, Wait A Bit, Joe** and a new arrangement of the traditional Scots song **Loch Lomond**. His first full-scale postwar musical, *Pacific 1860* (Drury Lane, 1946), which ran for only nine-months (129 performances) was a disaster. Starring Mary Martin (who ‘never really felt comfortable as Mme. Salvador’) and Graham Payn, and co-starring Daphne Anderson, Sylvia Cecil, Maria Perilli and Pat McGrath with backing from the Mantovani Orchestra, its spectacle was misplaced in a world of postwar austerity (a Changing World, indeed!) Drury Lane Theatre was cold and forbidding and several parts were miscast, although several of its wistful numbers are still remembered (in particular, “I Never Knew”, **Bright Was The Day, Uncle Harry and His Excellency Regrets**).

Producer’s Note

As with the previous volume of Noel Coward’s complete recordings from the 1920s to the 50s, this instalment contains some rare material not commercially issued. On 10 July 1944, Coward and pianist Norman Hackforth recorded six sides in a studio in Calcutta, India. Among the sides were the first recordings of songs Noel would re-do under more favourable conditions over the next couple of years, two of them with

In July 1950, *Ace Of Clubs* opened at the Cambridge to another meagre run of just 211 performances. Its cast included Sylvia Cecil, Raymond Young, Myles Eason, Jean Carson, Pat Kirkwood, Graham Payn, Peter Tuddenham and Norman Warwick and of its ten numbers “Three Juvenile Delinquents” (a re-writing of “Stately Homes Of England” for Teddy Boys in embryo), “I Like America”, **Josephine** (a fine cabaret-style number about Napoleon’s consort) and **Sail Away** are still rated by Coward devotees among his best. *The Lyric Revue*, which opened at the Lyric, Hammersmith, in May 1951 (featuring Graham Payn, Gerard Bryant, George Benson, Dora Bryan, Irlin Hall and Joan Heal) enjoyed an altogether healthier total run of 454 performances, and was to prove his most successful postwar venture, despite only two numbers: “The Youth Of The Heart” and **Don’t Make Fun Of The Fair**.

Peter Dempsey, 2003

full orchestra. These rarities came from Norman Hackforth’s private collection; thanks to Alan Farley for the recordings. In addition, the accompanists on a number of tracks on this CD have now been correctly identified, thanks to Dominic Vlasto.

David Lennick

1. **Nina** 3:41
With Norman Hackforth, piano
Private pressing, mx OMC 19470-2
Recorded 10 July 1944, Calcutta
2. **Loch Lomond** 2:14
(Traditional, arr. Norman Hackforth)
With Norman Hackforth, piano
Private pressing, mx OMC 19469-1
Recorded 10 July 1944, Calcutta
3. **There Have Been Songs In England** 3:35
With Norman Hackforth, piano
Private pressing, mx OMC 19471-3
Recorded 10 July 1944, Calcutta
4. **Uncle Harry** 3:22
With Norman Hackforth, piano
Private pressing, mx OMC 19472-3
Recorded 10 July 1944, Calcutta
5. **Music Hath Charms** 2:28
(Norman Hackworth)
With Norman Hackforth, piano
Private pressing, mx OMC 19473-1
Recorded 10 July 1944, Calcutta
6. **I Wonder What Happened To Him** 3:35
With Norman Hackforth, piano
Private pressing, mx OMC 19474-1
Recorded 10 July 1944, Calcutta
7. **Sigh No More** 3:03
With Mantovani conducting the Piccadilly Theatre Orchestra
HMV B 9433, mx OEA 10548-1
Recorded 14 September 1945, London
8. **I Wonder What Happened To Him** 3:40
With Robb Stewart, piano
HMV B 9433, mx OEA 10549-1
Recorded 14 September 1945, London
9. **Matelot** 3:25
With Mantovani conducting the Piccadilly Theatre Orchestra
HMV B 9434, mx OEA 10550-1
Recorded 14 September 1945, London
10. **Nina** 3:16
With Mantovani conducting the Piccadilly Theatre Orchestra
HMV B 9434, mx OEA 10553-2
Recorded 14 September 1945, London
11. **Never Again** 3:06
With Mantovani conducting the Piccadilly Theatre Orchestra
HMV B 9435, mx OEA 10554-1
Recorded 14 September 1945, London
12. **Wait A Bit, Joe** 2:52
With Robb Stewart, piano
HMV B 9435, mx OEA 10555-1
Recorded 14 September 1945, London
(Tracks 7-12 from *Sigh No More*)
13. **Uncle Harry** 3:11
With orchestra
HMV B 9352, mx OEA 11557-1
Recorded 9 January 1947, London
14. **This Is A Changing World** 3:12
With orchestra
HMV B 9352, mx OEA 11554-1
Recorded 9 January 1947, London

15. **Bright Was The Day** 3:40

With orchestra

HMV B 9353, mx OEA 11553-1

Recorded 9 January 1947, London

16. **His Excellency Regrets** 3:11

With orchestra

HMV B 9353, mx OEA 11555-1

Recorded 9 January 1947, London

(Tracks 13-16 from *Pacific 1860*)

17. **Josephine** 2:44

(From *Ace Of Clubs*)

With Mantovani conducting the Cambridge
Theatre Orchestra

HMV B 9946, mx OEA 14867-1

Recorded 3 July 1950, London

18. **Don't Make Fun Of The Fair** 3:08

With Norman Hackforth, piano

HMV B 10119, mx OEA 15774-3

Recorded 12 July 1951, London

19. **Sail Away** 3:32

(From *Ace Of Clubs*)

With the Café de Paris Orchestra and
Norman Hackforth, piano

HMV B 10119, mx OEA 15775-3

Recorded 12 July 1951, London

All songs except tracks 2 & 5 by Noël Coward

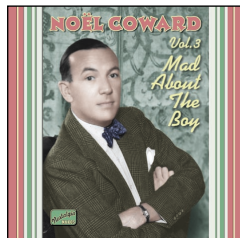
Transfers & Production: David Lennick

Digital Noise Reduction: K&A Productions Ltd.

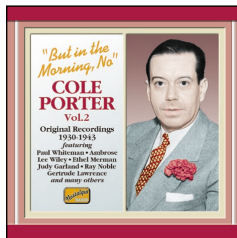
Original recordings from the collections of
David Lennick & Alan Farley

Original monochrome photo of Noël Coward from a Private Collection/Lebrecht Collection

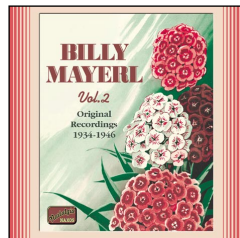
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NOËL COWARD

The Complete Recordings

Vol.4 1944-1951

*"I Wonder What
Happened To Him"*

1. Nina * 3:41
2. Loch Lomond * 2:14
3. There Have Been Songs In England * 3:35
4. Uncle Harry * 3:22
5. Music Hath Charms * 2:28
6. I Wonder What Happened To Him * 3:35
7. Sigh No More 3:03
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15. Bright Was The Day 3:40
16. His Excellency Regrets 3:11
17. Josephine 2:44
18. Don't Make Fun Of The Fair 3:08
19. Sail Away 3:32

Total Time: 60:57

* Previously unreleased recordings

Transfers and Production: David Lennick
Digital Noise Reduction: K&A Productions Ltd.

NOTES AND FULL RECORDING DETAILS INCLUDED

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