



## 'D.W' IS FOR DICK WALTER INTERVIEW FOR VINYL VULTURE

### 'Once More from the Top'

*As one of the UK's busiest and most gifted arrangers and composers, Dick Walter has to his credit many television, library music and advertisement scores, whilst specialising in writing for big band. Oliver Lomax speaks to the man behind the music*

Dick Walter falls into that category of composer/arranger who has had almost their entire canon of work issued in the catalogues of production music companies, unavailable to the record-buying public. In Dick's case, they include Amphonic, KPM and Conroy and, for the past thirty-five years, he has been supplying library music publishers with finely crafted compositions that bear the hallmarks of an exceptionally gifted and original composer, unafraid to experiment and move forward. In the heyday of British library music during the late 1960s and '70s, Dick, alongside such names as Keith Mansfield, Syd Dale, Johnny Pearson and Alan Hawkshaw, was one of the composers who took jazz and big band music and remodelled it in his own image.

Evidence of this is heard on various Amphonic vinyl albums, which were among the first releases to feature Dick's work as a composer. LPs such as ***A Tune for Everyone*** (Amphonic, 1973) include Dick's 'Hacienda Happenings', an exhilarating big band piece based around a modern, driving rhythm section that has more in common with rock or pop music than the swinging big band style. ***Super Sounds Unlimited*** (Amphonic, 1974) features several colourful big band workouts that makes use of some very funky rhythmic patterns. Dick, of course, also writes superbly for more traditional big band settings, as in '***Not so Cute***' from ***Mortimer's People*** (Amphonic, 1972), his delightful and swinging paraphrase of Neal Hefti's and Stanley Styne's '***Cute***'.

The worlds of television and advertising have benefited from Dick Walter's musical expertise. The 1970s and early '80s are now fondly remembered as the golden era of the television variety show, a time when classic series such as ***Morecambe & Wise***, ***The Two Ronnies*** and ***Sunday Night at The London Palladium*** commanded huge audiences. Dick has contributed arrangements to all these series, as well as other BBC light entertainment shows such as ***The Generation Game***. ITV's popular thriller series of the '80s, '***Bulman***', starring Don Henderson, features Dick's title theme and incidental scores, and he has encountered considerable success scoring the music for an array of television advertising campaigns, including ***British Airways***, ***Hovis***, ***Dulux*** and ***Yellow Pages***. Prestigious orchestras and bands ranging from Holland's Metropole Orchestra to the National Youth Jazz Orchestra, the Eric Winstone big band and the BBC Radio big band have performed his arrangements and compositions.

The fact that the majority of Dick's work has appeared on library music discs has, to some extent, obscured his name from the public's view, but on the few occasions he has recorded commercially under his own name, the results have been outstanding. ***Capricorn Rising***, his 1996 big band album for the Montpellier label, was released to critical acclaim as well as being recommended in The Observer's 'CDs of the year' listings. His most recent commercially available album, ***Secret Moves***, was recorded for the ASC label with the JazzCraft Ensemble, which consists of a star-studded line-up of British jazz talent including Henry Lowther, Alan Barnes, Derek Watkins, Stan Sulzmann and Norma Winstone. As ever, Dick's writing on this

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album is superb and gained him many richly deserved plaudits from critics in the music press and jazz lovers alike.

These recordings, coupled with his nomination in 2001 for Jazz Arranger of the Year, serve as timely reminders that Dick remains one of Britain's most innovative, talented and important composers and arrangers in the jazz idiom. Other professional accolades include his appointment as Director of Music and Applied Music at the Royal Academy of Music in 1998, and becoming an honorary associate of the same institution in 2000.

Writing library music continues to be a substantial part of Dick's output, and he kindly interrupted this activity to answer my telephone call in order to discuss his career...

**O.L:** *What initially sparked your interest in music?*

**D.W:** The household I grew up in was musical. My Mother, who's ninety-seven as we speak, still plays piano and my father was a violinist, so there was quite a lot of musical activity happening around me. They played in a small local orchestra and I had piano lessons when I was very young, and then I had clarinet lessons when I was about eleven or twelve. I then fell in love with the saxophone and the music that really affected me was what, at the time, was called "modern jazz" - Miles Davis, Cannonball Adderley and John Coltrane. I suppose the term "modern jazz" doesn't really exist any more, does it?

I was fortunate enough to go to Nottingham University, which had an extremely good jazz tradition, and I was there to do a history degree, but in fact, I spent most of my time writing for its big band and running their jazz quintet. I started to compose when I was at school; I went to quite a liberal-minded South London Grammar School and was actually encouraged by the music master to run a small, jazzy dance band. By the time I went as an undergraduate to Nottingham, I'd already started to write for a couple of South London-based rehearsal bands.

**O.L:** *How did your get your break into the music business?*

**D.W:** University for me was an apprenticeship at writing because its big band met every Sunday morning and needed material, so I just wrote for it. I transcribed from LPs: arrangements by people like Benny Golson, Quincy Jones and Tubby Hayes, and I started writing my own arrangements of tunes as well as occasionally writing original pieces. I came back to London in the late '60s and went to the Barrie summer school, which was possibly the first of the jazz summer schools, where I met the trombonist and composer Mike Gibbs - a lovely guy and a fantastic and very significant writer. Mike introduced me to a wonderful musician called Robert Cornford, who sadly died very young. Bob was a remarkable musician, equally at home in the world of so-called "straight music" as well as being a very fine conductor and jazz pianist. I started as his copyist and then did little bits of orchestration for him. It was through him that I met a young American who was living in the UK, Jeff Wayne. Jeff was just starting to score music for television and cinema commercials and once again I initially did his copying, and then moved on to do many of the arrangements and orchestrations. That was really where I cut my teeth as a studio writer.

Around this time in the late '60s, somebody introduced me to the BBC - I think it was Ted White, a very busy copyist and arranger, and father of the saxophonist and clarinettist, Dave White - and I started to write for the BBC Radio Big Band, and through that I started to write for BBC Television. These connections introduced me to Syd Dale of Amphonic Music. I met a man called Gordon Reed, who has since passed away, who first worked for Boosey & Hawkes's music library, and then started working for Amphonic when Syd set the company up in the early '70s. I met Gordon, if I remember correctly, at one of the BBC Radio big band sessions and he introduced me to Syd, and Syd asked me to write some material for the Amphonic recording sessions in Germany.

**O.L:** *You're primarily known for your work as an arranger and composer. Have you ever done any work as a session musician?*



**D.W:** Not really, but I was a member of the National Youth Jazz Orchestra where I played lead alto-sax for a couple of years in the late '60s. I always had a bit of a quandary as to whether I wanted to be a player or a writer, but really I knew from quite an early age that I wanted to write music. The playing has only ever been a secondary interest.

**O.L:** *There were guys around during the '60s and '70s who were either writers or players; there are players who compose, of course, but Laurie Johnson and Keith Mansfield are good examples of musicians who chose to make careers as composers and arrangers exclusively.*

**D.W:** Those guys are a generation before me, really. There was an awful lot of musical activity at that time, especially for trumpeters and saxophonists. There were a lot of people playing in bands because there were a lot of bands around, and consequently a lot of work was around. Frequently, with the generation before me I suppose, a lot of those guys were in bands and started to write for the bands they were in. They became in-house arrangers and in many cases would've got busier and busier with this aspect of their careers, and the playing side of things would've taken a back seat.

**O.L:** *Returning to Amphonic Music, you composed a lot of music for this company during the '70s and '80s.*

**D.W:** I did quite a lot but I also met a guy who became my music producer as a freelancer, a guy called Peter Waygood. I met him because he was working for Syd at Amphonic and had been working, I think, for Gordon Reed at Boosey & Hawkes. Peter was starting to produce music for commercials so we teamed up, and from around 1972, we worked for roughly fifteen years together as composer and producer respectively on a huge number of commercials. I did all the early **Hovis** commercials and I did almost all the music for director Alan Parker's commercials. It was through Peter that I started to work for KPM's music library in the late '70s. The first work I did for KPM was, I think, featured on one side of a vinyl album called **A Fear of the Dark**. Then I did an album called **Town and Country** and many, many things after that.

**O.L:** *As far as I'm aware, the majority of Amphonic's albums from the early to mid '70s were recorded in Trixi studios in Munich, due to the Musician's Union's ban on the recording of library music in the UK that was then in place. How did this work in practical terms - for example, if an album was to feature four or five composer's work, would you have all been flown over for the recording sessions?*

**D.W:** No, nobody went at all. Syd was an extremely good musical director and producer and he took the scores with him and would've directed the sessions. I always thought the music sounded very good when Syd was in charge. One of the joys of library music is that although you do have to target fairly clearly what you're doing and know what you're trying to achieve, on the other hand there is also a wonderful sense of freedom. Certainly, with what I was doing for Syd, and what I'm doing nowadays for KPM, you say, "OK, the track's got to be three minutes long", but it doesn't have to be three minutes and seven-and-a-half seconds exactly; it's not like working in movies where the timings have to be exact. With library material, you might write a twenty-nine second cut-down version of a piece for commercials, but the length of the track is dictated primarily by the musical requirements.

The album I'm doing at the moment has an enormously varied line-up on it, so there is a huge amount of creative freedom. I think another reason writing library music is so enjoyable is because it is so productive - you can be working on a project and then suddenly have an idea and ring the producer and say, "How about me doing this?" This idea might be slightly off the wall compared with the original brief, but the producer might say, "That's a great idea, follow that through", thereby encouraging a composer's creativity in the best way.

**O.L:** *Prior to working for KPM, between the years 1971 and 1975, your name as a composer seems only to appear on Amphonic's albums. Were you composing exclusively for the company during this period?*

**D.W:** In my experience, there is never any exclusivity. There might be a gentlemen's agreement between publisher and writer, but I've never had an exclusive deal with anybody. In 1975 I did some music for the Conroy library; there was a guy there called Ron Denton who was an in-house producer and he was about to retire. In fact, I think I probably still have the vinyl albums of the music I did for Conroy. The recording sessions took place in Germany and my memory of those things is it's the sort of material where I would've liked to be present on the sessions to give some direction as to how I would've wanted them to go. There was one album I did for Amphonic that I was the musical director on, called **Metropolis Now**, which I really enjoyed doing and the band that played on it were superb. I think I still have the un-edited version of the album somewhere! I can't remember what my original titles for the pieces were, but when the album was issued Syd re-titled them all.

**O.L:** *I've heard from other composers who've written library music that it was the libraries, rather than themselves, who came up with the titles for their compositions.*

**D.W:** You have to remember that library music is a very specialised market and I think I realised that working for Amphonic, and then I realised it big-time when I started working for KPM. With the albums I do now for KPM, Peter Cox (who runs the company) and I will spend quite a long time devising titles for the music. The point is that people don't go into the offices of a library music company in order just to listen to music; they don't say, "Oh, here's a new Joe Bloggs album, I must listen to that". What they say is, "I want a piece of music which does the following".

For example, I've written a piece called **'The Lounge Pianist'** and it is exactly that – it's supposed to be the music you'd hear if you went to a nice sophisticated hotel, and in the corner of the cocktail bar there's a pianist playing. A client's not going to listen to a piece such as that if they're looking for music to accompany a pastoral scene, or alternatively, some catwalk fashion show-type music. So libraries, KPM especially, increasingly understand that you need to save people time, you need to tell them what the music is about. It's an attempt to try and make sure that even if people listen to it and it's not exactly what they want, they won't be disappointed in the sense they won't say, "Well, that breaks the trades description act!"

**O.L:** *I've noticed that various library music albums of the '70s sometimes have rather bizarre track descriptions, often using clumsy wording and phrases that aren't particularly helpful to the casual listener, let alone a prospective client!*

**D.W:** I think things have changed. You're talking about a generation ago – when I started doing library music, even then it had been going a long time. It used to be called "mood music" and there was a whole generation before I started that included fantastic composers such as Trevor Duncan. In some ways, library music was seen as something of a poor relation in the music business, which is of course nonsense because as a composer you always have to be on the money; it's as demanding as anything else. You can't turn up and do crap for a library session like you can't turn up and do crap for commercials, although we might all think sometimes we hear crap in different places! With library music, you have to be targeted and clear as to what the point of it is, especially nowadays as the competition is very intense.

**O.L:** *Many of the compositions you were writing for Amphonic during the '70s, such as 'The Fat Man' and 'Cross Talk', have as their basis muscular, funky rhythms and feature intriguing sounds, such as the filtered bass line heard on 'The Fat Man'. What music, if any, were you influenced by when you wrote these kinds of pieces?*

**D.W:** The only thing I can remember from the time as far as the sort of albums I was listening to goes, were those funky Herbie Hancock LPs he made with The Headhunters group, and his other albums like **Fat Albert Rotunda**. There was no way you could do anything as specialised as that for a library session, and there are time restrictions when you're doing library music – we would often record twenty minutes of music in a session. I'm not suggesting on all of them, but on a lot of those classic jazz-funk albums, people were spending hours on one track; so

although the production values in library music are high, there are economic restrictions on how much time you've got to do things. It's a tribute to people's professionalism that many library records sound as good as they do.

**O.L:** *When you wrote these pieces, did you think of them as being progressive or ahead of their time, or did you see them simply as a reflection of what was currently happening in music?*

**D.W:** I suppose they did reflect what was happening musically, but I don't think at the time people were necessarily trying to write progressive library music. I don't know what the other libraries, such as KPM, were doing during that period, but Syd was always very encouraging about doing things which were maybe a little bit more contemporary than the library's clients of the time were expecting.

**O.L:** *The wonderful thing, I think, about that type of '70s library music is that it still sounds contemporary and ahead of its time, thirty years on.*

**D.W:** It's very nice to hear that! Around the time I recorded those tracks I was playing bass guitar a bit and that probably had some sort of influence on my writing. A good friend of mine, a wonderful bass guitarist called Paul Westwood, played pretty much on all of the commercials I was scoring. The rhythm section I was using included the drummer Pete Baron, who worked very well with Paul, and in a lot of instances, the electric piano player was the jazz pianist John Taylor who also played on the Metropolis Now album.

**O.L:** *Music aside, the actual quality of the recorded sound on Amphonic's vinyl albums of the '70s is phenomenal. Can you remember which sound engineer Amphonic were using during this period - would it have been someone like Adrian Kerridge?*

**D.W:** I really can't remember off the top of my head. Adrian certainly did some of them; I'm not sure exactly how many he did though. Adrian and Syd worked a lot together, and by the time they were working in the UK, I'd go to the recording sessions that were often held at the Lansdowne studios. Syd later setup his own recording studio, although I never worked there - this was after I had stopped working for Amphonic. The last things I did for Syd were in the early '80s and appeared on the Sound Stage series of albums.

**O.L:** *Looking back on the '70s, there was so much creative, colourful and interesting music being made that it is now rightly seen as a golden musical era.*

**D.W:** I think it was. You also have to remember that with the studio players of the time, a lot of those guys were at the top of their game. The '70s were, I suppose, the last of the real boom years of recording, and the studio musicians were fantastically proficient and inventive players, and as a result were kept very busy.

**O.L:** *Which musicians did you use on your Amphonic recordings of the '70s?*

**D.W:** On *Metropolis Now*, I used guys including the jazz trumpeter Henry Lowther, the drummer Pete Baron and Stan Sulzmann was on saxophone. One of the busiest players who did an awful lot for Amphonic as a keyboard player was Steve Gray. Steve's a wonderful writer and a very fine musician all round; he would've been on a lot of those Amphonic sessions. The drummer was often Johnny Dean, the bass guitarist was possibly Herbie Flowers, and the guitar players would have been Vic Flick and Judd Proctor. The other pianist would've been the late, great Ronnie Price and the brass and reeds players were the top line guys who were very busy at the time, such as Derek Watkins and Tony Fisher on trumpet and Ray Swinfield on alto-sax and reeds, to mention only a few. On trombones, it would've been players such as Johnny Edwards, Cliff Hardie and Don Lusher.

**O.L:** *One of my favourite British drummers of the '70s is Alf Bigden - an incredible player. Did you ever work with him?*

**D.W:** I knew Alf and still do, but I don't see him very much any more. I worked with Alf at Lime Grove on BBC Television sessions. He was one of the busiest session musicians of the time and was basically the house drummer for Ronnie Hazlehurst. Alf did a huge amount of work for television, which is where I knew him. He was known in the studio scene more as a percussion player - he was a very good Latin American percussionist. Dave Richmond, the bass guitarist, was on a lot of the sessions that Alf did. Dave was part of a group called WASP that was very busy at KPM, which consisted of Steve Gray (keyboards), Brian Bennett (drums), Duncan Lamont (sax and reeds) and Clive Hicks (guitars). I think Clive was probably involved on some of the Amphonic sessions as well; later on, Syd started to use two keyboard players, and for these sessions it would've been Steve Gray and, I think, sometimes Gerry Butler and Ronnie Price. Those are the three names that come to mind.

**O.L:** *Have you any stories to relate about Syd from your time working at Amphonic?*

**D.W:** I can't think of anything in particular, I just always found Syd incredibly encouraging; he was very supportive towards me. I was very young when I met him, I think I was about twenty-three, and frequently he'd ring up and say, "I'm doing a project next month, I'd like you to write one or two titles for it". He'd often give me tunes that somebody had done, maybe written by somebody who wasn't a particularly good arranger, and I'd arrange them. I did do arrangements of some tracks, which in terms of composer credits are credited to somebody else, but the arrangements were mine. I also remember having an extremely nice Italian meal in a restaurant just round the corner from the Lansdowne studios after the recording sessions for **Metropolis Now!** The other thing about Syd, of course, is that he wrote very good tunes.

**O.L:** *Syd Dale was indeed a wonderful composer. I know he was very active on the British big band scene of the '50s and '60s, and I think in some respects it's a shame his name isn't better known to the public at large.*

**D.W:** I think that, like a lot of library writers, he was quite happy to work as a backroom person - he wasn't particularly interested in the limelight. I think you'll find that in the main, studio players and studio writers aren't attracted to the limelight, they like the anonymity of it. They like being in a highly professional, specialised business where the only opinions you really respect are those of your peer group. It's the response of your colleagues that really matters; if you work for a client, the client's reaction is central, but in terms of status, a lot of the studio guys are not bothered by publicity, they're concerned with the music and how their fellow professionals view them.

**O.L:** *The hallmarks of your own compositions and arrangements are their colour, invention, logical harmonic development and sheer tunefulness. Who would you say are your biggest influences as a composer?*

**D.W:** Well, that's all very nice to hear - I hadn't thought about them in those terms at all! My original heroes in terms of writing are all the classic jazz writers, or jazz influenced writers. In fact, maybe not the obvious big names, but certainly the well-known ones like Neal Hefti, Bill Holman, Quincy Jones, Don Sebesky, Gerry Mulligan, Bob Brookmeyer and Thad Jones. With Bob and Thad, the influence there is not the commercial influence; it's something more subtle, to do with harmonic use. Among commercial writers, the people I've admired most of all have been people like Dave Grusin, Pat Williams, Henry Mancini and Nelson Riddle.

There are some lesser-known English writers from the '50s, '60s and '70s that I really admire, such as Frank Cordell, who was a very fine string writer and a great big band writer. I've got some stuff which I think is fantastic that John Williams of **'Star Wars'** fame did before he hit it big as a movie writer. I've always admired Robert Farnon's writing, I love the classic things he did like **'Peanut Polka'** and **'Jumping Bean'**. I've got a marvellous Farnon album of all that early stuff, which I think is wonderful.

In terms of slightly more commercial writing, I was lucky because when I was working for the BBC - this was around the same time as my Amphonic days - I was involved with the Radio big band when Malcolm Lockyer was its musical director. He was incredibly encouraging to me and his own writing was of a very high quality. The two guys from the world of television who were standout names were Peter Knight and Ronnie Hazlehurst. Although I didn't know Peter well, he influenced everybody; well, anybody who had any sense! Ronnie was, I think, a greatly unsung musician - Ron used to say he learnt everything he knew from Peter Knight because they used to work together in radio.

Ron's a very, very musical writer. I did a lot of work for him on various TV shows such as ***The Marti Caine Show, Little and Large's Seaside Special*** and ***The Generation Game***. The bands we used on those shows were fantastic; we always used the cream of Britain's studio musicians and Ron wrote beautifully for them - he was also a very good string writer. At the time when I was finding my feet as a studio writer in my mid-twenties, I was lucky enough to be able to go to the studio and hear an awful lot of music written by these fantastically experienced people.

Although I didn't work a lot with him, I did do some work on sessions where Alyn Ainsworth was the musical director, and his writing went back to the Northern Dance Orchestra days. There was a whole bunch of guys around at that time who were writing a lot; they were very prolific and wrote very high quality material - that sort of thing rubs off on you.

**O.L:** *I notice that with your writing you have a distinctive method of blending woodwind and brass instruments to create these lovely, rich tonal colours. This is particularly apparent on much of your Amphonic material.*

**D.W:** I think a lot of my influences as far as things like tonal colours are concerned, come from people like Gil Evans, but Gil probably influenced everybody. Then it was people like Pat Williams and Don Sebesky who, at the time, were recording albums that were quite influential, such as the albums Don was doing for Creed Taylor's CTI label. The way I wrote for strings, and still do, is more influenced by a sense of jazz harmony rather than light orchestral music, although I have done things which are much "straighter", if you like. A lot of my voicings and harmonic sense comes from a jazz background.

**O.L:** *Have you ever composed or conducted any works within the classical realm, or has jazz and commercial music always been your mainstay?*

**D.W:** Very little, really - I've written a few things for a group like a saxophone quartet, or a little chamber group, for example. I wrote a short series of pieces for string trio and flute, but that was just for friends in the business. I've not written what one might call concert hall music. The equivalent of that for me would be my jazz writing - there are two albums I've done that are specifically non-commercial jazz albums, and they would be ***Secret Moves*** and ***Capricorn Rising***. Coming from a jazz background, they would be my concert hall music; if I want to do something non-commercial, then generally I tend to work in a jazz idiom. Recently I was commissioned to do three pieces for the Harp Showcase Concert at the Royal Academy of Music, but I was asked specifically to do them as jazz pieces - quite a challenge as there are technical reasons why the harp is not a premiere jazz instrument. It was very enjoyable though, and they were well received. I'm hoping we might be able to get them accepted as part of the broader, more contemporary repertoire for the harp.

**O.L:** *As a commercial arranger, you supplied some of the arrangements and an original composition, 'Hacienda Happenings', to bandleader Eric Winstone's 1972 Supersonic Sounds album. How did you get involved in this project?*

**D.W:** Before I met Eric, I was still working for the BBC Radio big band where I met Frank Weir, and I ended doing quite a lot of big band arrangements for him. Frank wanted to get a big band together and wanted a repertoire of standard, well-known big band pieces

arranged with a slightly different twist to them, so I did those for him. Frank and Eric were mates, so Frank introduced me to Eric and Eric asked me to do some of the arrangements for Supersonic Sounds. I think I wrote '**Hacienda Happenings**' for Amphonic first, and Eric and Syd knew each other anyway, so Eric said that he wanted to record it on his album. I don't think I did many more arrangements for Eric after that; there are probably a few invoices to Eric in my old receipt books for arrangements, but I don't think were any more that he recorded.

**O.L:** *Have you arranged for any other artists apart from Eric? I've heard that Tubby Hayes recorded some of your arrangements.*

**D.W:** In about '68 or '69, Tubbs decided to reform his big band but make it slightly smaller, with around thirteen instead of sixteen players - maybe four saxophones instead of five; maybe three trumpets instead of four; maybe three trombones instead of four. He wanted some of his pad re-arranged or re-orchestrated for the smaller line-up and I did some of those things for him. In 1970, he did a big band album called **The Orchestra** for the Fontana label, which was probably the most commercial album he ever made, where he covered pop tunes like 'Hey Jude' and 'These Boots are made for Walking'. I did quite a substantial amount of the writing on that album.

Tubby was a childhood hero of mine and I basically worked as his musical assistant. Tubbs was a lovely guy and a remarkable musician, and I remember him saying things like, "What do you think about this idea?", then he'd say, "OK, you can do it!". He was very open to any suggestions; when I did the arrangement of 'This Guy's in Love with You' for The Orchestra album I said to him, "Oh, is that the one that goes like this?" and began to play some ideas on his piano, and he said, "That sounds nice, do that!"

**O.L:** *How did your work in the '70s as an arranger and composer for the National Youth Jazz Orchestra come about?*

**D.W:** I got involved with NYJO because I went to the Barrie summer school in the summer of 1967 and some of the guys I met there, such as Bob Sydor, Dave White, Mick Page and Alan Wakeman who were already members of NYJO, said that I should join, so I started playing for them. I started writing for them around the same time; in fact, one piece I wrote for NYJO that was used quite a lot during that time was '**The Little People**', which was actually written for Tubbs's band. It was specifically written for the band that recorded **The Orchestra** album, but I don't think Tubby ever played it. He was checking out some new material when I was over at his place one day, and I said, "I've written this and I think it might be suitable", and he looked at it and said, "Oh, that looks more like my cup of tea", but it never actually got played!

**O.L:** *During the '70s, you scored some of the arrangements featured on television shows such as Morecambe & Wise and The Two Ronnies. How did this aspect of your career take off - was it through knowing Ronnie Hazlehurst?*

**D.W:** I remember doing an arrangement of the Michel Legrand song, '**What Are You Doing the Rest of Your Life?**', for the singer Elaine Delmar, and she wanted to use it on a TV show. I turned up to the recording and Ron was there and he liked what I'd done, so he asked me to do some more things, and it all developed from there. I didn't do any original material for the **Morecambe & Wise** and **The Two Ronnies** shows, but I did contribute arrangements to them. I also remember that I did a lot on the **Tommy Trinder** series for London Weekend Television - Ronnie Aldrich was the musical director on that series. I also wrote a lot of arrangements, on a weekly basis, for shows such as **The Generation Game**, at the time when Larry Grayson was the star.

Although I did a lot of those light entertainment shows, I also scored some drama series. There was a very nice BBC series called '**Missing from Home**' that I scored. I didn't do a great deal for the BBC, and I don't do anything currently, but I did quite a lot for Granada Television



and a few things for Scottish Television. For Granada, I did two long series of one of those cops and robbers shows called '**Bulman**', and I wrote some of the scores for a TV series called '**Chessgame**', but Chris Gunning was the main composer on that show. I was writing for the libraries, and getting busier in commercials while I was writing for television; you just try to slot the things in when you can. Obviously, the TV work and commercials take priority because there are always very serious deadlines to meet.

**O.L:** *What do your current musical activities involve?*

**D.W:** Over the years I've done a fairly consistent number of albums for KPM which has been very enjoyable, and about three years ago I did a double album of songs for them, which was not a completely new departure because I have written some songs before. This was an incredibly enjoyable experience because I got to write the words, music and arrangements. The brief was to write songs in the style of the great American songbook, and it was targeted very much along the lines of, "We need a song about Christmas, we need a song about money, we need a song about New York", and so on. It was a clear but fairly loose brief, and it gave rise to the project I'm working on now, which is another vocal album for KPM, this time with a much broader concept and featuring vocal groups.

This is an example of why writing library music is, for me, such a satisfying outlet - it combines the need for discipline, but there's also some degree of creative freedom. You can come up with an idea that is tangential to the original concept, which means the project can sometimes go in a slightly different direction from the one that was originally conceived. That first KPM song album I did was in some ways the most enjoyable professional project I've ever worked on, because it was writing in an idiom that I love and grew up with, it was recorded with the very best musicians around, in a world-class studio - Angel Studios in Islington - and the engineer was Steve Price, who's actually the late Ronnie Price's son. It was just immensely enjoyable and I thought to myself, "Is this really happening? Can I actually be doing this?"

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