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Canadian Performers in British Music Hall and Variety, 1878-1950

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American performers in British music hall included the pantomimist Paul Martinetti (1851-1924); Fred Mason (1865-1895), "the Whistling Coster"; Charles S. Bernard (1816-1874), whose bill-matter was "The American Fire King"; Will Fox (1858-1927), "The First of the Trick Playing Piano Acts"; Eddie Gordon (1889-1956), "The American Tramp Cyclist"; Emma Carus (1879-1927), "The Human Dialect Cocktail"; black musicians Sissle and Blake [Noble Sissle (1889-1975) and Eubie Blake (1883-1983)]; The Three Keatons (fl. 1900s), comprising the young Buster Keaton (1895-1966) and his parents, Joe and Myra; Lillian Lorraine (1892-1955), "Queen of Venuses"; T. D. Rice (1808-1860), "The Daddy of Minstrelsy"; Scott and Whaley [Harry Scott (1879-1947) and Edward Peter (1886-1961)], "Kolored Kings of Komedy"; Fred Mason (1865-1895), "The Whistling Coster"; Jack Smith (1897-1950), "The Whispering Baritone"; Eugene Stratton (1861-1918), "The Dandy-Coloured Coon"; Joe Termini (1891-1964), "The Somnolent Melodist"; Sophie Tucker (1884-1966), "The Last of the Red-Hot Mommas"; May Moore Duprez (1889-1946), the "Jolly Little Dutch Girl"; "Happy" Fanny Fields (1884-1961), "The Happy Little Dutch Girl"; Betty Knox of the sand-dance act Wilson, Keppel and Betty [Jack Wilson (1894-1970) and Joe Keppel (1895-1977),], "Cleopatra's Nightmare"; Anna May Wong (1905-1961), "The World's Most Beautiful Chinese Girl"; comic double-act Bebe Daniels (1901-1971) and Ben Lyon (1901-1979); singer Adelaide Hall (1901-1993); blackface artiste Florence Mills (1901-1927); magician Jack Kodell [John Koudelka (1929-)]; pianist Turner Layton (1895-1978); xylophonist, drummer, and saxophonist Teddy Brown [Abraham Himmebrand (1900-1946)]; Tex McLeod (1890-1973), "The Cowboy Humorist" and "The Will Rogers of England", and knockabout artiste and xylophonist Will Mahoney (1896-1967). Some of these artistes, such as Buster Keaton, Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon, Jack Smith, Anna May Wong, and Sophie Tucker, had extensive careers on both sides of the Atlantic and in motion pictures as well as in music hall. Others, notably blackface or "Negro delineator" artistes Eugene Stratton and Scott and Whaley, found greater fame in Britain than in America, where Stratton began his career with the minstrel troupe Haverly's Mastodons and where Scott and Whaley started out with the Kentucky Minstrels.

Americans are not the only artists who invaded the English Halls: there were also three famous Australians: Billy Williams, 1877-1915; Albert Whelan (born 1875 and died not long ago) who is said to have invented the "signature tune," for he always came on stage whistling *Der Lüstige Brüder*; and Florrie Forde, born in 1876, who became, thanks to a famous song of World War I, a Music Hall immortal. All three hailed from Melbourne, and knowing that grim city all too well, it astonishes me that it should have had such illustrious sons and daughters. (MacInnes 61-62)

As well as Florrie Forde (1876-1940), Albert Whelen [Albert Waxman (1875-1961)], and Billy Williams, Australian performers active in British music hall included Chick Elliott [Violet Wooll (1900-?), "The Original Chocolate Coloured Coon"; comic acrobat Maurice Colleano (1908-1975); illusionist The Great Carmo [Henry Cameron (1881-1944)], "Australia's Wonder Worker" and "The Master Phantasist"; Annette Kellerman (1888-1975), "The Million Dollar Mermaid" and "The Diving Venus"; Malcolm McEachern (1883-1945), Jetsam of the musical double-act Flotsam and Jetsam; and juggler Rob Murray (1926-1988), "Juggling Under Protest".

South African artistes included Sirdani [Sidney Daniels (1899-1982)], "The Radio Magician"; the impressionist Afrique [Alexander Witkin (1907-1961)], the drummer and band leader Joe Daniels (1909-1993); the magician Robert Harbin [Edward Williams (1909-1978)]; the comedian and actor Bill Kerr (1920-); the comedy double-act Max and Harry Nesbitt [Max Nesbitt (1903-1966) and Harry Nesbitt (1905-1968)]; and Jeanne de Casalis (1892-1966), who played the scatter-brained "Mrs. Feather".

From the West Indies, Trindadian ragtime pianist Winifred Atwell (1919-1983), Jamaican singer and pianist Hutch [Leslie A. Hutchinson (1900-1969] were prominent.

From Ireland, the comedian Joe O'Gorman (1863-1937), the comedian and pantomime dame Shaun Glenville (1884-1968), the comedian Harry Daniels (1910-1989), and the comedienne and singer Kitty McShane (1897-1964), of the double-act "Old Mother Riley [Arthur Lucan (1887-1954)] and Her Daughter Kitty" were leading artistes. Many other performers migrated into British music hall and variety from continental Europe, such as the strong man Eugene Sandow (1867-1925), who was from Germany, the clown Charles Cairoli (1910-1980), from Italy, the comic tramp cyclist Joe Jackson (1878-1942), from Austria, the Moulin Rouge revue artiste Mistinguett [Jeanne Bourgeois (1875-1956)], from France, and the magician Howard de Courcy (1914-1990), who was billed as "The Magic Man", from Switzerland.

Canadian performers also played considerable roles within the international contingent of British music hall and variety. In addition to major stars such as Maud Allan, Herschel Henlere, and Beatrice Lillie, other Canadians were prominent: R. G. Knowles, Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers, Ted Andrews, Carrol Levis, Charles Forsythe, Hal Swain, Les Allen, and Musaire.

Richard George Knowles (1858-1919), whose bill-matter was "The Very Peculiar American Comedian", was actually a Canadian, born in Hamilton, Ontario, on 7 October 1858. But according to his biographer, Richard Moreton, in "Richard George Knowles: a Biographical Sketch", Knowles was a Canadian more by chance than by cultural nationality:

R. G. Knowles was robbed of his birthright by his parents. His father and mother were both born in Buffalo, U.S.A. If Dick also had been born in the States he would have been president.

But, just before his arrival on this earth was due, his grandmother, who had left Buffalo for Hamilton, Ontario, invited his mother to pay her a visit. That visit was prolonged until after the 7th of October, 1858, by which time Dick had made his first appearance. (Moreton, "Biographical Sketch" 9)

Thus, his peculiarity would appear to have to do more with his performative eccentricity as a stage comedian and with the unconventional delivery and pacing of his comedic than with his mistaken national identity, Canadian for American. But, in fact, Knowles was simply like many other Canadian performers in British music hall and variety, whom Britons found convenient to perceive as "very peculiar Americans".

Knowles began his career as an amateur in vaudeville in the mid-1870s in Colorado and made his professional debut in Chicago in 1878, at the Olympic Vaudeville Theatre, which was followed by appearances at the Parlour Opera House, Bridgeport, Connecticut, in 1886, on tour in 1887 with the Austin Sisters, a British trapeze act, in the Austin Australian Novelty Company, and in 1888 with Haverly's American United Mastodon Minstrels (fl. 1878-1890) at the Grand Opera House, Wallack's Theatre, and Niblo's Gardens, New York. He made his British music hall premiere on 13 June 1891, at the Trocadero Music Hall in Piccadilly Circus, on a bill with Charles Chaplin, Sr., George Beauchamp, Fanny Leslie, and a young banjoist and blackface artiste named Winifred E. Johnson (c. 1871-1931), who also was making her debut, and whom Knowles would eventually marry. Along with Chick Elliott and the Americans Florence Mills and May Henderson (1885-1937), "The Dusky Queen", Johnson was one of the few female blackface performers on the halls. Knowles performed at the Trocadero for sixty-eight weeks, before going on to the Empire Theatre, Leicester Square, where his show ran for seventy-three weeks, on a bill with Paul Cinquevalli [Emile Otto Braun (1858-1918)], a Polish gymnastic and aerialist artiste on the halls, and then at the Tivoli Theatre, London, for a marathon run of two years and ten months.

Knowles was a patter comedian and comic singer, whose solo performative drew on his brisk, garrulous delivery and his stentorian and sometimes accusatory voice. As such, he was a precursor both of the double-act of the fast-talking Cockney sisters Gert and Daisy [Elsie Waters (1894-1990) and Doris Waters (1904-1978)], and of the stridently provocative Brighton comedian Max Miller (1895-1963) as "The Cheeky Chappie". As Knowles observed about his performative in his autobiographical "A Modern Columbus":

I told a joke, and if the audience laughed at it, I ridiculed them for being entertained with such consummate case. If they did not laugh I jeered at their lack of appreciation and inability to observe real humour. When their mirth was not spontaneous, I feigned anger at their dilatoriness. Did they anticipate me, I was equally annoyed because they were too quick. Summing up, I pointed out that if they did not laugh, well, they were losing money, on the other hand, if they indulged too hilariously, they were getting more than they were entitled to get so I invited them to go to the box office and pay for the difference. (qtd. in Busby 93)

His performative peculiarity extended to his costume, which typically consisted of a tattered and crushed top hat, a high collar and bow-tie, a shabby black frock-coat, white duck trousers, and oversize slap-boots, giving him an old-fashioned mid-western American image. At the height of their careers, Knowles and Johnson toured Australia with The Stars of All Nations Company, performing for four weeks in Melbourne at the Princess Theatre, December 1896, and four weeks in Sydney at the Palace Theatre, January 1897. Knowles also toured as a solo artist in New Zealand, Ceylon, the United States, and Canada. He remained a popular artiste in British music hall, primarily in London, for twenty-eight years, until his death, on 1 January 1919. He was so popular, in fact, that within the British theatrical community the name *R. G. Knowles* entered the vernacular as rhyming slang for "holes". Knowles also wrote short stories, which he collected in *R. G. Knowles' Knowledge of the World and Its Ways, Being a Collection of Short Stories* (1894) and *Of Stories—Just a Few* (1904), and was composer of a song, "That Is Love" (1892), co-written with G. W. Hunter (1850-1936), a parody of "That Is Love!" by Felix McGlennon (1856-1943), from the repertoire of Marie Loftus (1857-1940), "The Sarah Bernhardt of the Halls". While in New York, as a member of Haverly's American United Mastodon Minstrels, "Forty Minstrels—Count 'Em! Forty!", founded by Christopher Haverly (1837-1901), Knowles worked with blackface performer Eugene Stratton (1861-1918), who also, after Haverly's death, migrated to England to advance his career in British music hall, and who was instrumental in helping Winifred E. Johnson to refine her own performative as a "Negro delineator".

R. G. Knowles' Knowledge of the World and Its Ways is a collection of very brief comic stories, whimsical reflections on society, comic poems, and jokes characteristic of Knowles' music hall act. Consider these deliberations on women, who were typically the butt of his jokes, "The Poor Woman", a poem, and "Uniformity", a story:

The Poor Woman

The woman was poor
And aged and grey,
And beat by the blasts
Of a winter's day,
And she wandered alone
In the cheerless street
And the poor woman's shoes
Were full of feet. (Knowles, *R. G. Knowles' Knowledge* 102)

Uniformity

Two ladies got on a 'bus at Regent's Circus.
One lady said—
"Conductor, let me out at Charing Cross."
The other lady said—
Conductor, let me out at Piccadilly Circus."
The conductor said—
"You got on together, and you'll get off together." (Knowles, *R. G. Knowles' Knowledge* 42)

The first seven lines of the poem evoke a typically pathetic image of a poor, apparently working-class and homeless, woman in late Victorian England. The final line subverts this mood of pathos for laughs, in the literal observation that her "shoes / Were full of feet", as if the poet, having run out of imagery and good rhymes, simply has to end the poem precipitately. Similarly, the comic story ends with a punch line that hinges on the conductor's literal presumption that the two women who board the bus at the same time are necessarily traveling together, and therefore that they must also have a common destination.

As a singer, Knowles had a merely tolerable voice, which was, nevertheless, peculiarly suited to comedy. His performance repertoire of comic songs, mostly other people's compositions, was extensive, consisting of fifty-three songs, which he kept in regular rotation, the most accomplished of which were "Brighton" (1894), by Richard Morton (d. 1921) and Frederick Gilbert (1848-1903), based on the traditional Neapolitan song "La Spagnola", "A Hot Time in the Old Town (Tonight)" (1896), by Joe Hayden (c. 1845-1916) and Theodore M. Metz (1848-1936), and his own composition, "That Is Love" (1892). Knowles appeared in only one film, the short silent actuality film *Dreamy Eyes* (October 1905),

Directed by Arthur Gilbert, an early experiment in "chronophone" sound, in which he mimes to a gramophone recording of the eponymous song, which was from his stage repertoire. He made six gramophone recordings, between 1899 and 1912, featuring some of his most enduring stage songs: "Adam Missed It", "Oh! Dear No", "If That's Your Game I'm Going", "Love, Marriage and Divorce", "Time Is Money", "Pins", "The Girl, the Woman and the Widow", "Every Little Bit Added to What You've Got Makes Just a Little Bit More", "£.S.D.", as well as "Dreamy Eyes".

In his article "Richard George Knowles: An Appreciation", Richard Moreton comments on Knowles' performative as a comic singer and a fast-paced comedian:

As a singer of comic songs, his methods of haste and enthusiasm are the same. He is in a hurry. He "goes for" his points with a sharp energetic dash, but he never allows speed to override point. His emphasis is quick, natural, and upon the right quips and cranks. He mercifully hurries over his explanatory matter, for his purpose is to raise a smile, and, when he gets to the phrase that he underlines, he raises it. After that he avoids a fault that is too common. He will not let his laugh fade out. He springs another point before the echoes of the last laugh have died away. (Moreton, "Appreciation" 15-16)

Whether recounting jokes and comic stories, reciting poems, or singing comic songs, Knowles exploited the identical quick delivery with apparently extemporaneous timing, and, as is most relevant to his performative as a music hall artiste, his often aggressive manipulation of the audience.

Born in Medicine Hat, Alberta, on 13 July 1893, William Campbell (1893-1952) became a band-leader, a character actor, and a media personality in England in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, performing cowboy and bluegrass or hillbilly music on the radio and on gramophone recordings, and in touring variety shows, in all these activities exploiting British Out-West stereotypes of Canada. Campbell fronted several bands: Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountain Rhythm, Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers, Big Bill Campbell and His Singing Cowboys, and Big Bill Campbell and His Hilly-Billy Band. Performing as the cowboy character Old Zeke Winters, both as band-leader and in radio sketches, Campbell was billed "As Big as the West Itself" and as "The Happy Philosopher". Other members of the band's folksy and philosophical sketches included Peggy Bailey, as "The Sweet Voice of the West", and Norman Harper, as both "The Yodelling Buckaroo" and Sergeant O'Doherty, "Singing Sergeant of the Mounties".

With reference to their comic patter, Old Zeke Winters and the supporting characters are in the music hall tradition of the American cowboy comedian Tex McLeod (1899-1973), but, more important, they are precursors of Canadian folk heroes embodying hillbilly values, such as Cousin Clem, performed by Gordie Tapp, and Charlie Farquarson, performed by Don Harron, characters they established on the CBC television show *Country Hoedown*, 1956-1965, and adapted for American culture on the program *Hee Haw*, which ran on CBS and in syndication 1969-1993. In his book *Hillbilly: A Cultural History of an American Icon* (2004), Anthony Harkins recognizes the transition from *hillbilly* to *cowboy*:

Several related factors underlay the abandonment of the "hillbilly" look and the widespread adoption of cowboy imagery in the mid-to late 1930s: ten-gallon hats, chaps, and pointed boots offered far greater romantic possibilities than did the traditional mountaineer costume; the string band and plaintive mountain ballad style sounded increasingly old fashioned and even alien to modern audiences and performers…. (95-96)

In this regard, Big Bill Campbell was an ambivalent figure historically and culturally, because in the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s he and his bands portrayed both cowboy and hillbilly archetypes and managed to convey them to British audiences without compromising the distinctly Western Canadian characteristics of their music. Given that *hillbilly* is a peculiarly American, not a Canadian, cultural archetype, Big Bob Campbell was a Canadian music hall performer much like R. G. Knowles, whose performative achievement derived partly from his mistaken identify, his happening to pass for an American, and thus satisfying British colonial preconceptions about class in America.

Campbell made his stage debut in 1935 at the Coliseum, London, after having settled in England at the completion of his military service in World War One. In his personae as Old Zeke Winters and "The Happy Philosopher", he was a popular figure on British radio between the wars and during World War Two on the BBC programmes *Radio Fun*, *Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountain Rhythm*, and *Variety Bandbox*, and on the Home Service and Forces Programmes.

Broadcasting from "the little old log cabin" or sitting at a campfire somewhere in Western Canada, Big Bill Campbell was essentially a cowboy character, which was an image he reinforced with tropes such as his homespun signature greeting "Howdy, friends and neighbours", his catchphrase of approbation "mighty fine, mighty fine", his standing invitation that Buck (Fred Douglas) "pass round the applejack", and his Big Bill Campbell fan club of "pardners". This radio image derived from Campbell's songs such as "There's a Ranch in the Rockies" (1938), composed by Ted Fio Rito, Darrell Upp, and Bud Green, and "Cabin in the Hills" (1939), which Campbell composed with Tommie Connor. Campbell worked within the international genres of country and western and cowboy music, Canadian, Australian, and British, as well as American. Other performers within these musical genres included Hank Snow, Wilf Carter, Tex Ritter, Gene Autry, Roy Acuff, Ernest Tubb, Frank Ifield, Carson Robinson and His Pioneers, Red River Dave, The Legarde Twins, Mac Maguire and the Harmony Rangers, The Singing Mountaineers, Billy Hill, Zeke Clements, Evan Kemp and the Trail Riders, The Hillbillies, Smoky Dawson, Slim Clark, Elton Britt, Tex Morton, The Zeke Manners Band, The O'Leary Sisters, Rosalie Allen, Buddy Reynolds and the Rhythm Pals, and The Sons of the Pioneers. To acknowledge this international tradition, and to compete with the many country song books published in the United States, Campbell compiled and edited his own collection of country and western, cowboy, and hillbilly songs, *The Hill-Billy "Round-Up" Song Book* (1938), which was distributed free with the English newspaper *The Wild West Weekly*, in the issue of 12 March 1938. The extent of his influence on popular music is evident in his recording of the children's song "Horsey, Horsey" (comp. Box, Cox, Butler, and Roberts), which remains a classic in Britain even today:

Horsey, Horsey
Farmer Grey's got a one horse shay
He takes to town on market day
Coming home when the lights are low
He sings this song as away they go.
chorus:
Horsey, Horsey don't you stop
Just let your feet go clipity clop
Your tail goes swish and the wheels go round
Giddy up we're homeward bound.
Horsey horsey on your way
We've done the journey many a day
Your tail goes swish and the wheels go round
Giddy up we're homeward bound.
We ain't in a hustle, we ain't in a bustle
Don't go tearing up the road
We ain't in a hurry, we ain't in a flurry
And we ain't got a very heavy load
chorus

In addition, Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers appeared in three short documentary actuality sound films: *Pathétone 399* (1937), in which they perform their signature tune "They're Mighty Tough in the West", *Pathé Pictorial NS 99* (1938), in which they perform "Springtime in the Rockies", "Coming Round the Mountain", and "Across the Great Divide (1938), and *Pictorial Review of 1943* (1943), in which they perform "They're Mighty Tough in the West". These documentary and actuality films preserve the visual as well as musical essence of their performative, and their performance of the body, in particular Campbell's as "big".

Pictorial Review of 1943 (August 1943) begins with a medium shot of Campbell, who, looking directly into the camera, greets the audience: "Howdy, folks. Here's the old hilly billy band, bringing you a breath of the great Old West, yes sir! From the mountains, the plains, the prairies, and the ranches." Director Fred Watts then cuts to a long shot of the nine Rocky Mountaineers, gathered around a campfire in a wooded area, with Big Bill Campbell, clutching his cowboy hat, sitting on a log in the centre of them, with six musicians on his right (an accordionist, a double bassist, three guitarists, and a violinist) and three on his left (a trumpeter and two clarinetists), playing an instrumental introduction to their song, "They're Mighty Tough in the West". All the Mountaineers wear plaid shirts and Campbell wears a khaki shirt and tie; all wear duck trousers; and all wear cowboy hats, the Mountaineers' hats small, Campbell's hat large. Standing, Campbell complements the musical introduction:

"Yes, folks, we're tough, mighty tough, in the West, and if you want to know just how tough we are, you just listen. Play boys!" Watts proceeds to film Campbell in a medium close-up shot as he sings "We're Mighty Tough in the West", all the while clutching his cowboy hat and pumping it above his head in a "yeehaw" gesture at the end of each line, and he pulls back to a long shot when the Rocky Mountaineers sing the chorus.

BIG BILL:
Now listen, folks…
We're tough, mighty tough, in the West,
Why, we'd steal a baby chicken off its nest.
Now this story may sound tall,
But we eat feathers, beak, and all.
Oh, we're tough, mighty tough, in the West.

Hey, yes, we're tough, mighty tough, in the West.
Good manners are the thing that we contest.
Why, we're the toughest race that's reared.
Every baby has a beard.
Oh, we're tough. *Are* we tough in the West?

ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS:
chorus:
Singing,
Oh Susanna,
Won't you marry me?
And we'll all live alone
And we'll all go free.

BIG BILL: *(spoken to the musician on his right)* Hey, Six Gun!
SIX GUN: Yes!
BIG BILL: Take it!

SIX GUN:
Oh, we're tough, mighty tough, in the West,
And at poker you can never come out best,
When you've lost all but your braces,
Then you deal yourself five aces,
Then things start to move in the West.

BIG BILL: Bang, bang, bang, bang.
SIX GUN: Oh, we're tough, mighty tough, in the
West,
BIG BILL: Say, how tough?
SIX GUN: Well, they measure sixty-four around the
chest.
BIG BILL: Oh, what a man! What a man!
SIX GUN:
Every hair upon their torso's
Like a steel spring, only more so.
Because they're tough, mighty tough in the West.

ROCKY MOUNTAINEERS:
chorus:
Singing,
Oh Susanna,
Won't you marry me?
And we'll all live alone
And we'll all go free.

BIG BILL:
Now, you talk about music, folks. Just listen here…

Oh we're hot, mighty hot, in the West.
Our band is just a little hotter than the rest
And no one's got a thing
When it comes to playing swing.
So, we're hot, mighty hot, in the West.
Show 'em boys…

(trumpet solo… violin solo… clarinet solo…)

And if you don't like it…
Well, we can take it,
Because we're hot, mighty hot, in the West.
(he hurls his cowboy hat into the air)[1]

In the final verse, in which Campbell boasts "Our band is just a little hotter than the rest / And no one's got a thing / When it comes to playing swing", he distinguishes his band from the big band swing music popularized in the 1930s and 1940s, and aligns it with the western swing style that emerged from the hillbilly music of the same period. Big Bill Campbell and the Rocky Mountaineers were crossing over big band swing, as in the orchestras of Count Basie, Woody Herman, Duke Ellington, and others, into country music, in the manner of Texas-based western swing and rural dancehall bands such as Bob Wills and the Texas Playboys, Spade Cooley and His Orchestra, The Light Crust Doughboys, Bill Boyd and the Cowboy Ramblers, The Tune Wranglers, The Southern Melody Boys, The High Flyers, Milton Brown and His Brownies, "Texas" Jim Lewis and His Lone Star Cowboys, Hank Thompson and His Brazos Valley Boys, Alex Hofner and His San Antonians, and Tex Williams and the Western Caravan.

The jazz style of Big Bill Campbell and the Rocky Mountaineers' western swing performance in *Pictorial Review of 1943* is evident, particularly in the trumpet, violin, and clarinet solos, which emphasizes the important influence that the band had on variety performance in Britain and on British popular culture, superimposing Texas swing and American jazz as well as country and western, cowboy, and hillbilly styles onto the genre of 1930s and 1940s big band music in Britain, as represented by The Jack Hart Orchestra, Henry Hall and the BBC Dance Orchestra, Geraldo and His Sweet Music, The Jack Hylton Orchestra, Harry Roy and His Dance Orchestra, Nat Gonella and His Georgians, Carroll Gibbons and the Savoy Orpheans, and others. The film is remarkable also because it places Campbell and the Rocky Mountaineers among leading British variety performers such as the radio broadcaster Tommy Handley (1894-1949), the music hall sketch comedian Robb Wilton (1881-1957), and the radio coster comedienne Suzette Tarri (1881-1955). Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers were important interdisciplinary and cross-over artistes in the 1930s, 1940s, and early 1950s, astutely combining the performatives of western swing music and British variety, and working with equal facility in musical comedy, children's music, hillbilly music, and country jazz. Even though they were largely perceived as such in Britain, they were not cowboy caricatures and stereotypes, but cowboy musician archetypes, and precursors of some contemporary North American western swing and dance hall bands of the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s like Canada's Prairie Oyster, and Dan Hicks and His Hot Licks, the Bebop Cowboys Western Swing Orchestra, and Asleep at the Wheel.

Canada is well represented also in the mainstream big band tradition in Britain in the 1920s, 1930s, and 1940s, notably by musicians and band leaders Les Allen (1902-1936), Hal Swain (1894-1966), and Guy Lombardo (1902-1977).

Les Allen was born in London, England, on 29 August 1902, and at the age of three emigrated with his family to Canada. Having studied clarinet and saxophone as a child, he decided to pursue a career as a professional musician. After playing clarinet and saxophone and singing in the orchestras of big band leaders Luigi Romanelli and Burton Till in the early 1920s, Allen landed a gig with the Toronto saxophonist Hal Swain, who in 1924 was recruiting a dance and jazz band, The Toronto Orchestra, which included Dave Caplan (banjo), Alfie Noakes (cornet), Billy Hall (trombone and saxophone), Frank Walsh (piano and organ), Ran Garrison (saxophone, trombone, and sousaphone), Ken Kenny (drums), as well as Swain, for a one-year booking which English impresario Sam Laschiver had arranged for them at the Rector's Club, in London, England. Before departing for England, the band, as Hal Swain and His All Star Orchestra, played one engagement, at the Alexandra Academy, Hamilton, on 21 February 1924. Arriving in London only to discover that the Rector's Club had closed, Swain, Allen, and the other musicians reformed themselves ad hoc as The New Princes Toronto Band for what turned into a two-year engagement at the New Princes Restaurant, Piccadilly Circus, and a concurrent recording contract with Columbia Records,

London, November 1924-February 1926, which produced fifty-four records, and side-contracts with the smaller companies Imperial and Currys, and Oliver, Pygmy, and Mimosa, which produced thirteen records, and with Regal, four records. In February 1926, Hal Swain left the orchestra over artistic differences and returned to Toronto. Les Allen continued with the New Princes Toronto Band until 1926, and went to play and sing with some of London's leading dance bands and big bands: Dave Caplan's Toronto-Band from Canada (1926), Alfredo and His Band (1927-1929), The Piccadilly Players and Sid Bright and His Band (1929-1930), Hal Swain and His Band (June-December 1931), and Henry Hall's BBC Dance Orchestra (1932-1934).

Thereafter, Allen pursued a career as a solo singer, achieving a hit record with "Little Man You've Had a Busy Day" (1934), composed by Mabel Wayne, Al Hoffman, and Maurice Sigler. In 1937, he and Canadian singers Jack Curtis, Cy Mack, and Herbie King formed The Canadian Bachelors. In 1945, he joined the British touring company revival of the popular musical *Miss Hook of Holland*, which had debuted in London in 1907. Subsequently, Allen returned to Canada to set up his own business in Toronto, where he lived until his death, on 25 June 1996. Making hundreds of gramophone recordings, Les Allen was one of Britain's most popular singers of the 1930s and 1940s. In addition, he performed as a singer and actor in two British feature films, *The Rosary* (July 1931), directed by Guy Newall (1885-1937), a crime drama in which Allen portrays "the Singer" and performs the title song, and the musical comedy *Heat Wave* (1935), directed by Maurice Elvey (1887-1967), in which he portrays Tom Brown and performs the songs "If Your Father Only Knew" and "San Felipe".

Talented as a saxophonist and a clarinetist, Allen reached his apogee as a vocalist with Henry Hall's BBC Dance Orchestra. He was a melodious throaty tenor with the delivery of a crooner, who usually found vocal distinction in the higher register. But he was also a versatile singer with a subtle technique. For example, he was equally capable of creatively interpreting a tango like "Play to Me Gypsy (The Song I Love)" (Kennedy-Vacek, 6 January 1934) or a song in waltz time such as "It's Time to Say Goodnight" (Gibson-Hall, 15 February 1934), and of subtly distinguishing rhythmically between a Foxtrot like "Love Thy Neighbour" (Gordon-Revel, 7 June 1934) and a slow quick step such as "Butterflies in the Rain" (Reaves-Myers, 11 January 1933), and when a Foxtrot called for an irony delivery, such as "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?" (Gordon-Revel, 12 December 1933), Allen could deliver it by exploiting the lower register of his voice, which this scene reveals was equally as rich as his higher register.

Hal Swain was born in Halifax, West Yorkshire, and migrated to Toronto, Ontario, as a young apprentice engineer, where, like Les Allen, he became involved in musical culture. After leaving The New Princes Toronto Band in 1926, Swain led several big dance and jazz bands to great success in England: Hal Swain and His Kit Kat Band (1930), Hal Swain and His Sax-O-Five (1930), Hal Swain and His Band (1931-1936), Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band (1936), Hal Swain and His Swing Sisters (1937-1939). On 24 January 1945, he served as musical director of *Round the Halls*, an episode of the popular war-time radio programme *The Happidrome*, 1941-1947; the half-hour episode broadcast on 24 January 1945 from the Palace Theatre, in Halifax, Swain's home town, and featured Harry Korris, Robbie Vincent, Pat Lennox and Sylvia, The Four Charladies, and Hal Swain and His Swing Sisters (Foster and Furst 65). Swain also appeared in four short performance films directed by Alexander Oumansky: *Hal Swain and His Sax-O-Five* (January 1930), in the Gainsborough Gems series, produced by Michael Balcon; and three films in Gainsborough's Sugar and Spice series, featuring Hal Swain's Kit Kat Band: *Al Fresco* (February 1930), in which the band performs "Sweet Music", "Sarah Jane", "Come On Baby", and "I'm Just in the Mood Tonight", *Classic v. Jazz* (February 1930), performing "Mickey Mouse" and "Tchaikowsky Medley", and *Black and White* (February 1930), performing "Doing the Low Down". Hal Swain appeared also in the documentary short films *Eve Presents Another Novelty—Words and Music by—No. 2*. (Eve's Film Review 356, March 1928), performing "Words and Music", as Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band in *Pathé Pictorial NS 34* (1936), performing "When the Poppies Bloom Again" and "The Fleet's in Port Again", in *Saxophonist Hal Swain and His Boys* (Pathé Pictorial NS 64, June 1937), performing "Now the Day Is Over" and "We're Here Again", and as Hal Swain and His Swing Sisters in *Harold Swain and the Swing Sisters* (Pathé Pictorial 193, December 1939), performing "Smile When You Say Goodbye". These films are indicative of his performative as well as his musicianship, and of the fluidity of the names and memberships of his orchestras.

The five-minute silent short *Eve Presents Another Novelty—Words and Music by—No. 2* begins with the intertitle "Songs echo round the world—yet our most popular melody masters remain almost unknown to us. Remember these old favourites?" The following intertitle lists these song titles:

"All the Nice Girls Love a Sailor!", "Fall in Love and Follow Me!", "I Wonder If You Miss Me Sometimes!", "Take Me Back to Dear Old Blighty", and "By the Side of the Zuyder Zee". The film depicts "An unconventional meeting with their Composer, Mr. Bennett Scott, busy in his garden—" (intertitle), showing him pushing a wheelbarrow along a garden path, playing golf with a young child in attendance, as "quite a change from this—" (intertitle), namely a shot of Scott playing the piano, composing "By the Side of the Zuyder Zee", as suggested by some of the song lyrics printed in chalk on a blackboard behind him. The following scene depicts the music hall double-act of Flotsam and Jetsam [B. C Hilliam (1890-1965) and Malcolm McEachern (1883-1945)], with Hilliam at the piano keyboard and McEachern at the side performing their song composition "Little Betty Bouncer" (1927), with the lyrics and the musical score projected onto a screen in the background.

The subsequent act on the bill, Hal Swain, is introduced with the intertitle "Then there's Hal Swain—dancing tunes inspire his tuneful melodies—" The first shot of this ninety-second segment is an over-the-shoulder close-up shot of a man seated at a desk, pen in hand over a blank sheet of paper, surrounded by songbooks of "Home Sweet Home" and "Show Me the Way to Go Home", tapping the fingers of his writing hand, waiting for inspiration. The next shot is a low-angle close-up shot of Swain in three-quarter profile, dressed in a dark suit and bow-tie, his left hand nudging his temple, in a contemplative attitude. Next, a low-angle medium shot shows him seated at a table, writing, as a double-exposed image of a male violinist playing, superimposed above his head, evokes the creative idea Swain is entertaining. Further into the compositional process, another double-exposure depicts four other musicians: a saxophonist, a banjoist, a trombonist, and a trumpeter. The following shot is performative rather than compositional, a low-angle medium shot revealing the Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band sextet, playing a variety of saxophones, from bass to soprano, performing on a small stage. Then multiple exposures appear to multiply the band into an orchestra, which an intertitle confirms: "Tunes!—Tunes!—Tunes!—What is music but the voice of a Nation speaking—even though the speech be in rhythm." The following shot, the final of the segment, is an over-the-shoulder shot of the hands of a pianist at the keyboard, in the orchestra pit of a theatre, which is also a low-angle shot of the Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band performing onstage, now numbering twelve musicians, comprising five saxophonists, a tuba player, a drummer, a violinist, a banjoist, a trumpeter, a trombonist, and the pianist.

The final segment of the film features the composer Horatio Nichols, as disclosed in the voiceover: "And, permit us—Horatio Nichols—whose songs are played and sung the whole world over." Subsequent shots are over some of his songbooks and of Nichols composing at the piano, notating his composition "Janette" directly onto music paper on the stand. An intercut shot confirms the theme of the song, showing showing adagio dancers in a *pas de deux*.

The footage of Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band confirms Swain and the band as major variety artistes of 1928, comparable as performers to the immensely popular Flotsam and Jetsam. *Eve Presents Another Novelty—Words and Music by—No. 2* also reveals how Swain, like Bill Campbell, performed from the centre of the group but otherwise acted simply as a band member, in Swain's case as just another sax-player. Finally, this silent film reveals Swain's music and musicianship, which unlike Scott, Flotsam and Jetsam, and Nichols' music and musicianship, which are identified by song titles, apparently were familiar enough within British popular culture that audiences of the film would have been able to identify Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band's big band sound simply by its musicality.

Saxophonist Hal Swain and His Boys (Pathé Pictorial NS 64, June 1937), a sound documentary, reveals the mellifluous harmonies of Hal Swain and His Sax-O-Five. But a voiceover introduction also discloses the essential Canadianness of the quintet's sound and of Swain's performative: "... with us once again that famous Canadian entertainer, composer, and saxophonist, seen here with his boys, Hal Swain." The performance, a secularized rendition of the Sabine Baring-Gould and Joseph Barnby composition "Now the Day Is Over" (1865), a traditional hymn based on Psalm 91:4-5, is filmed in a medium shot with an initially stationary camera; the set is a lounge furnished with plush chairs on which three of the performers sit, while Swain and another musician stand, with a grand piano just poking through frame-right. The camera pulls in for close-ups of the base saxophonists and of Swain, and then pulls back for a medium shot of all the musicians as those seated stand up and all five take a step forward to form a line and continue playing in formation. The camera pulls in again for close-ups of different combinations of the musicians, to emphasize how they are effecting their harmonies, then back to a medium shot of the entire band for their completion of the tune.

The band mark their transition to their next tune with its markedly up-tempo rhythm, a swing rendition of Swain's own composition "We're Here Again", when one musician simply moves around the back to take a new place in the line, as if to signify a change in the key of the music. The cinematographer (uncredited) films this performance by panning along the line left to right with close-up shots of the saxophone horns and players' hands working the keys, then tilting up and panning right to left with close-up shots of their faces, followed by various medium shots of individual performers and of the quintet.

In *Harold Swain and the Swing Sisters* (Pathé Pictorial 193, December 1939), Hal Swain demonstrates his virtuoso skills as a soloist in company with The Swing Sisters, comprising three women accordionists, the back-up band he formed during World War Two, when male musicians were scarce because they had been called into military service. The voiceover narrator introduces them, noting "that music has charms, and, if you want to know, it was Congreve and the Mourning Bride[2] might not have heard it played with such charm as the charming Swing Sisters play it. The Swing Sisters are part of the feast of melody presented by the famous Canadian saxophonist and composer, the man who wrote 'Just a Rose in Old Killarney', Hal Swain." After The Swing Sisters perform a brief introduction, Swain steps into camera view stage-right, performs a dazzling saxophone solo, and the band perform the song "Smile When You Say Goodbye" (1937), composed by Harry Parr-Davies (1914-1955), which Gracie Fields premiered in Basil Dean's film *The Show Goes On* (April 1937), in which she also starred. Swain plays the melody on a tenor saxophone while The Swing Sisters play the bass and percussion accompaniment. The routine is lightly choreographed, with the players cross-stepping stage-left to stage-right through the set, an ornate arched foyer. Then they perform the rest of the song with Swain standing stage-right, facing the camera in three-quarter profile, and The Swing Sisters at centre-stage, in reverse-angle three-quarter profile, swinging their accordions and executing little walking-in-place dance steps with bent knees. In an edited shot, Swain appears centre-stage in front of The Swing Sisters and, with his saxophone hanging loose on its neck strap, sings the next verse of the song in a close-up shot, which highlights his commanding yet mellifluous tenor voice.

You've got to smile when you say goodbye.
You've got to smile till the clouds roll by.
For all the time that you're away
I'm thinking of you.
I'll write from day to day
To say how much I love you.
You've got to smile when you say goodbye.
You've got to smile till the clouds roll by.
Until we meet again
Say cheerio, and then
Give me a smile when you say goodbye.

His song is filmed with three intercut shots of soldiers saying goodbye to their families, soldiers departing by train, and soldiers at dockside, in tribute to *The Show Goes On*, when, as variety entertainer Sally Lee, Fields sings "Smile as You Say Goodbye" to soldiers massed on the deck of a ship, awaiting their departure. *Harold Swain and the Swing Sisters* concludes with the band playing a short piece of novelty music as a coda, showing Swain's virtuosity as a saxophonist, as at the opening of the film.

In this film, as in *Eve Presents Another Novelty—Words and Music by—No. 2* and *Saxophonist Hal Swain and His Boys*, Swain wears his signature costume of white tie and tails, which signifies both the formal attire conventional in the dance hall and the class contradiction of privileged dress and the subversion of swing music. Like Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers, Hal Swain and His Boys produced a wild Canadian sound that was extremely attractive to British audiences between the wars. In a similar manner, Canadian band leader Guy Lombardo (1902-1977), who at the beginning of his career performed with his quartet, The Lombardo Brothers' Orchestra and Concert Company, for the winter season, 1922-1923, at the Winter Garden, London, went on to form Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians in 1924, and managed to maintain this Canadian identity through a half-century of performances in the United States, including a thirty-three year residency at the Roosevelt Grill, New York, from which CBS broadcast their annual New Year's Eve show, and over one hundred records.

Swing music was an integral element of other Canadian variety acts in England in the 1930s, notably Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell, the singing, piano-playing, dancing, and comedy treble-act, comprising Charles Forsythe, a Canadian, and two Americans, Addie Seamon, from Newark, NJ, who was Forsythe's wife, and Elinore Farrell, from Providence, RI. They formed the group in 1931 and from the mid-1930s lived in England, performing on the variety circuit. Although little biographical information about Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell has survived, their singularly amazing performances have been preserved in three films: the feature film *I Thank You* (October 1941), directed by Marcel Varnel (1894-1947) and starring the popular British variety double-act of Arthur Askey (1900-1982) and Richard Murdoch (1907-1990), in which they sing "Say Hello to the Sun", "Oh Johnny Teach Me to Dance", and "Lets Get Hold of Hitler"; and the actuality documentaries, *The Famous Comedy Team Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell of Variety Renown* (Pathétone 236, October 1934), in which they sing "Every Little Bit of Me" and "Whistle and Blow Your Blues Away"; and *Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell* (Pathé Pictorial 398, November 1943), in which they sing "A Touch of Texas".

The Famous Comedy Team Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell of Variety Renown reveals some of the comic talents of all three performers. The film begins by showing Charles Forsythe alone at centre-stage, dramatically singing, in his resonant baritone, the following mock heroic lines:

Night is creeping,
Slowly creeping
Down the line.
Stars are peeping
And I am weeping…[3]

At this point he breaks off, interrupted when Elinore Farrell enters stage-left, pushing a grand piano across the stage. A large woman, Farrell provided much of the comedy of their trio's routines, principally because of her ambivalent performance of the body: her massive bulk packed a powerful voice, yet as a dancer she was light on her feet. Thus, her wheeling a grand piano onstage to disrupt Forsythe, the straight man of the group, and to initiate some comic business, was typical of her stage persona.

FORSYTHE: Wait a minute! Wait a minute! That's
no job for a lady!
FARRELL: Whoever said I was a lady?
FORSYTHE: I don't know, but nevertheless I don't
want that piano out here.
FARRELL: I heard you sing, and you need this
(slapping the lid of the piano) and all the help you can get. And besides, I want some hot music. I want something hot!
FORSYTHE: You want to get hot?
FARRELL: Of course I want to get hot! *I want hot*
music!
FORSYTHE: Go right ahead.
FARRELL: Alright.

Immediately Forsythe steps out of the frame of the stationary camera to take up his place at the piano, stage-right, while Farrell steps directly in front of the camera and sings a boisterous rendition of the blues number "Whistle and Blow Your Blues Away" (1932), composed by Canadians Joe Young and Carmen Lombardo, which begins:

Cause I'm nobody's sweetheart now,
I'll whistle and try somehow.
Cause I wear fancy clothes
And silken gowns.
I'm out of place
In my own home town.
When I walk down the avenue,
I ain't got false steps
To believe that it's true.
Cause I wear

Painted lips,
Painted eyes,
Wearing a bird of paradise.
It don't seem right, somehow
Cause I'm nobody's sweetheart now.

Here Farrell breaks into a dance, an extroverted flapper, demonstrating considerable skill both in her fluid bearing and in her light steps, with unrestrained lateral movement and arm-swinging, and much percussive hand-clapping. Her heavy-set yet light-on-her-feet style of dancing is typical of the 1930s in Britain. Farrell appears to have modeled her style on that of Cicely Courtneidge (1892-1980), as evident in Maurice Elvey's film *Soldiers of the King* (March 1933), in which in a rehearsal scene Courtneidge, as Maisy Marvello of the Marvellos music hall troupe, dances to several renditions of the song "When Love Comes Knocking at the Door", in the styles of an 1890s songster, a 1920s flapper, and a 1930s bopper. Like Courtneidge, Farrell is a gangly dancer who dances with her entire frame and mass of body and who takes advantage of the entire space of the dance floor and the entire field of vision of the stationary movie camera. She concludes her buxom, gutsy performance by reprising the final verse, but more importantly by finally dancing out of frame, stage-right.

Cause I wear
Painted lips,
Painted eyes,
Wearing a bird of paradise.
It don't seem right, somehow
Cause I'm nobody's sweetheart now.

At the completion of the song, Forsythe immediately stands up from the keyboard, walks to centre stage, where he meets Addie Seamon, who enters stage-left. Their exchange is typical of how Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell use comic patter mainly as a connecting device between the musical and dance performances. Here Forsythe serves as the straight man to Seamon's dizzy blonde. Both in her addled temperament and in her petite physical stature, Seamon provides the counterpoise to Farrell's brain and brawn.

SEAMON: Mister, mister, is that Mae West?
FORSYTHE: Oh ho ho! It's Tugboat Annie.[4]
SEAMON: You know, I like you.
FORSYTHE: *(taking her hand)* You really do?

Seamon moves directly into her song and dance number, "Every Little Bit of Me", which she sings in the puerile voice of the dizzy blonde and in the style of Betty Boop.[5] Farrell accompanies her on the piano. The contrasts of their voices, the resonant baritone of Forsythe, the squeaky soprano of Seamon, the brash mezzo-soprano of Farrell, are reflected in the contrasts of their costumes, the neat elegance of Forsythe's black tuxedo, white shirt, and black tie, the little girl tartiness of Seamon's frilly miniskirt and spangled chemise with puffed sleeves, the big girl trashiness of Farrell's evening gown and ratty shawl.

SEAMON:
I like you,
I just love you.
I feel my fingertips love you
Cause every little bit of me
Loves every little bit of you
The sun needs you…
FORSYTHE: *(spoken interjection)* She can sing it
in English too.
SEAMON:
(pointing to the audience) And they need you.
And everybody down in the light need you.
Every little bit of me
Needs every little bit of you.
FORSYTHE:

(singing)
Hey, I love to see you smile,
Honest, I do.
And I love you dear…
FARRELL: *(interjection of shouts and hand-clapping)*
SEAMON:
My aunt loves you,
My aunt loves you,[6]
I want to hold the chance of you cause…
FORSYTHE AND SEAMON:
Every little bit of me
Loves every little bit of you.

Here, Seamon breaks into her tap dance, which, although exuberant, is the antithesis of Farrell's modern Duncanesque dance earlier. Her style, although less elegant, is reminiscent of the lithe, high-kicking style of English actress Jessie Matthews (1907-1981), notably in Victor Saville's film *The Good Companions* (February 1933), in which she plays Susie Dean, a singer and dancer with The Dinky Doos, a Pierrot troupe. Seamon's dance is remarkable for her multiple pirouettes, which she executes at an alarming pace as Farrell's piano–playing increases in tempo, until the film ends as Seamon steps out of her spin.

As the straight man in *The Famous Comedy Team Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell of Variety Renown*, as well as of the trio, Charles Forsythe serves both as a performer and as a kind of chairman, introducing and presiding over Farrell and Seamon's song and dance numbers and joining in on them both, but not performing a solo number of his own. Nevertheless, as in double-acts in which the straight man and the comedian get equal billing, despite the fact that one of them might get nearly all the laughs, in this treble-act, Forsythe, the straight man, chairman, pianist, and singer, Farrell, the comedienne, modern dancer, pianist, and singer, and Seamon, the *ingénue*, tap dancer, and singer, are equal partners in an unusual variety act that is mainly about the asymmetry of their musical styles, their costumes, and their performances of the body. In this regard, their act touched the essence of variety.

In *Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell* (Pathé Pictorial 398), which was recorded on 15 November 1943, the performers exploit a similar asymmetrical dynamic in a sketch that follows a similar structure, consisting of comic patter and song and dance numbers. The film opens with a voiceover introduction: "But a fat lot she cares! In fact she makes fun of it. She, at the piano, being Elinore Farrell, of that popular team of radio and variety entertainers Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell. The singer is Charles Forsythe." Forsythe, dressed in a black double-breasted suit, white shirt, and black bow-tie, is positioned in a formal recital pose, standing at the side of the piano, with his right hand on the lid and his left hand slipped into his jacket pocket, while Farrell, wearing a metallic sleeveless floor-length ball gown, sits at the keyboard. Singing the final bars of an aria, demonstrating his virtuosity as a baritone in the lower register, Forsythe burlesques the performativity of opera and chamber lieder:

…I don't know, what makes the grass so tall.
I only know that I'm no good,
I'm no good without a song.

Forsythe and Farrell now shift from their roles as soloist and accompanist to their roles in a light comic double-act, which expands into a treble-act upon Seamon's entrance.

FORSYTHE: Oh, I don't feel like singing today.
FARRELL: Oh, what's the matter with you?
FORSYTHE: Oh, I had a terrible accident. I took
a little girlfriend out for a ride in my car, got her way out here in the country, and all of a sudden my car broke down. *(Seamon arrives stage-left, walks behind Forsythe, and tugs at the seat of his trousers)(to Seamon)* Let go my pants! I got out to see what was the matter with my car *(Seamon again tugs at the seat of his trousers)*, and what do you suppose my girl said to me? *(to Seamon)* Let go my pants!

The sexual innuendo here is fairly typical of Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell, not because their comedy was blue, like that of the Brighton comedian Max Miller, "The Cheekie Chappie", but because it had to appeal to British preconceptions of North American impropriety. A film edit now cuts to a performance already underway, of the World War Two country blues song "A Touch of Texas", composed by Jimmy McHugh and Frank Loesser for the film *Seven Days' Leave* (1942), starring Lucille Ball and Victor Mature. Seamon, in a medium shot centre-stage, performs an exuberant high-stepping tap dance, and Farrell, off-camera, belts out the lyrics, while accompanying herself on piano.

I've got a touch of Texas in my talk,
I've got too much of Texas in my talk;
Oh, this place will be my ruin,
Ki-yi-yip-pin' and wahooin',
Oh, take me back to New York!
I've got a touch of Texas in my hair,
I've got too much of Texas in my hair.
Yes, the sand from Amarillo
Keeps a scratchin' on my pillow,
Oh, take me back to Times Square!

For I've seen ev'ry part of,
Ev'ry part of
What I'm deep in the heart of.

I've got a touch of Texas in my walk,
I've got too much of Texas in my walk.
Oh, the sage may be a-bloomin',
But for miles there's nothin' human,
Take me back to New York!

Next, in another editing trick, a fade-out as Seamon pirouettes, and a fade-in to Farrell at centre-stage, where she sings and dances the rest of the song in her typical raucous style. When she sings the line "Oh, the brush that's full of rabbits / Got me in these jumpin' habits", she hitches up her dress to the knees and jumps two feet in the air; when she sings "Well, I've seen every part of", she raises her arms over one shoulder and claps her hands loudly four times; when she sings the verse that begins "I've got a touch of Texas in my walk", she performs a Texas two-step on the spot, hitching up the hem of her dress and flinging her arms and legs, and Forsythe and Seamon join her onstage and all three take their bows.

Although Elinore Farrell drew on the comedics of the big women and men in silent film, such as Marie Dressler, May White, Mack Swain, and Roscoe Arbuckle, and the dance style of Cicely Courtneidge, and Addie Seamon drew on the work of female comedic actresses in silent films, such as Thelma Todd, Zasu Pitts, Jean Harlow, and the cartoon character Betty Boop, and on the dance style of Jessie Matthews, the singing, dancing, and comedy trio of Forsythe, Seamon, and Farrell was an original act in British music hall and variety, a novelty act comprising odd combinations of bodies, voices, and styles, who embodied asymmetry, but also a versatile group of sketch artistes who took an interdisciplinary approach to light entertainment, peppered it with North American song, dance and jokes, and thus personified variety entertainment.

Other Canadian performers active in British music hall and variety in the 1930s included Ted Andrews (1907-1966), Carrol Levis (1910-1968), and Herschel Henlere (1890-1968). Ted Andrews was born in Toronto, where he worked as a musical director before migrating to England in the 1930s, performing in a series of musical double-acts. By 1939, he had hired a concert pianist, Barbara Morris, to work as his accompanist, and they managed to form a successful musical variety double-act, "Ted Andrews and Barbara". When they married, Andrews became step-father to Morris' daughter from a previous marriage, Julie, and eventually a mentor to one of Britain's greatest stars of musical comedy, Julie Andrews (1935-). As a child and an adolescent, with a growing reputation as a singing and comic prodigy with a four-octave range, Julie Andrews performed in her parents' variety act, which provided her with an invaluable apprenticeship to the theatrical stage (she led the singing of the National Anthem and appeared in the finale at the Royal Command

Performance of 1948 and made her professional stage debut in 1954, in the Broadway musical *The Boy Friend*) and to motion pictures (her first principal role was in the musical *Mary Poppins* [1964], for which she received the Best Actress in a Leading Role Academy Award).

Ted Andrews' stage performative survives in *Pathé Pictorial NS 103* (March 1938), a documentary short in which Andrews performs in an earlier version of his double-act, "Ted Andrews and His Girl Friend". Andrews first appears alone, in a medium close-up shot from a stationary camera, singing "Star Dust" (31 October 1927) by Hoagy Carmichael (1899-1981) and accompanying himself on a metal-stringed hollow-bodied acoustic jazz guitar. Wearing a white dinner jacket, black bow-tie, white shirt and black trousers, he performs the song in an unassuming manner, holding his stage mark throughout, singing with his high-register, high-vibrato tenor, and strumming and fingering his guitar percussively. Toward the end of the song, in a cut to a long-shot, the Girl Friend (an uncredited performer) suddenly enters stage-left, wearing an ankle-length chiffon ball gown and, lifting the hems of the skirt of her dress to create a diaphanous flowing effect, she performs an elegant dance in front of him, waving her arms, dipping and pirouetting as Andrews follows her with his eyes laterally. Then, she suddenly unfastens and removes the skirt to reveal a dazzling miniskirt underneath, the Girl Friend signals the bridge to their second song, "You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming" (1937), a swing jazz number composed by David Franklin and Cliff Friend, and signals also a transition to more vigorous and provocative style of singing, dancing, and instrumentation, as is evident in the double-entendre of the verse "You can stop me from holding hands, / Make me listen to your commands. / You can turn me down, honey, that's all right, / But I'll get even with you tonight, / 'Cause you can't stop me from dreaming".

The Girl Friend performs a frenetic, acrobatic tap-dance to the song, providing the percussion now that Andrews is playing his guitar rhythmically rather than percussively, in a quick-step blues cadence. She dances mostly facing the camera, a hard tap dance which she drives by pumping and swinging her arms and bobbing her head. While he sings the chorus, "From one o'clock till nine / I'll dream you're mine. / I'll steal a kiss. / See what you're gonna miss", she performs three standing forward somersaults and two cartwheels in succession, demonstrating a raw energy to complement the song's innuendo. Her performance is neither sexual nor vulgar, although her act of removing her skirt is sexualizing and Andrews' wandering eyes imply the conventional male gaze and tend to cast her as the object of his peremptory love-making and dreaming.

"Stardust", Hoagy Carmichael's most popular composition, provides an important link between Ted Andrews and Carroll Levis, in addition to that of their shared birthplace of Toronto. Born on 15 March 1910, Carroll Richard Levis "began as a boy actor, was a journalist, a hypnotist and an all-in wrestler, and then became a radio announcer, all in his home country, Canada" (Hudd 104); he "began his performing life as The Great Richelieu *Magician, Eminent Hypnotist and Necromancer*" (Kilgarriff 157). He emigrated to England in 1935, where he accepted a position as a compère with BBC Radio. His main contribution to British variety was the talent or "discovery" show, as in his *Discoveries* and *The Carroll Levis Show* radio shows and *The Carroll Levis Discovery Show* on stage, which toured the variety circuit for twenty years, 1935-1955, and later, although less successfully, on television in the late 1950s and early 1960s, in which he performed as compère, in the style of a music hall chairman, with a touring company and using some local talent. Among the talent he discovered and promoted on the show were comedian Barry Took (1928-2002), movie actress Anne Heywood [Violet Joan Pretty (1931-), song and dance man Jim Dale (1935-), and the musical group Johnny and the Moondogs, comprising pre-Beatles John Lennon, Paul McCartney, and George Harrison, and Ken Brown. He and his shows were immediately popular in Britain, in the manner of the *Idol* phenomenon today on television; Levis played his radio and variety persona in two films based on his radio series: *Discoveries* (September 1939), directed by Redd Davis, in which rival manufacturers, Schwitzer, a cheese company, and Spinelli, a spaghetti company, compete to sponsor Levis' radio show and Levis drives around Britain auditioning new talent to fill the two-minute slots on his show; and *The Brass Monkey* (December 1948), directed by Thornton Freeland, in which Levis portrays a radio star who frustrates a collector of Buddhist art, trying to steal a brass monkey. Levis also appeared in one straight film acting role, in *The Depraved* (November 1957), directed by Paul Dickson, a military drama in which Levis portrays the minor character Major Kellaway. He was also the author of a book, *A Showman Goes East* (1944), which is his personal narrative about his travels and other activities and experiences during World War Two.

Although Levis was a talent spotter and compère responsible for other people's performances, he was also a performer in his own right, able to attract and keep an audience on radio, in the variety theatre, and also in movies and television for more than two decades.

As compère, he performed an act to introduce the acts. He was as much a part of the variety performative as the chairman who introduces music hall acts was part of the bill. His popularity outside the stage is evident in the Pathé documentary *One Minute News*(14 July 1947), in which Levis appears in a story about an event in Poole, Dorset, where three hundred British women showed out in force with their babies for a baby show, and effectively to advocate the baby boom. He is shot holding a baby on his lap and amusing it by shaking its rattle, and the voiceover introduces him in an amusing fashion: "also there to spot new talent was Carroll Levis, the Canadian-born star-discoverer. *(medium tilt shot of a young pretty woman reclining in a deckchair)* Babes in cots weren't the only ones on parade, so Mr. Levis found his hands pretty full. But it's all part of the job to find the discovery of today who will be the talent of tomorrow." His appearance may be only a photo opportunity in a post-war propaganda film, but it acknowledges the popularity and trust he then enjoyed in Britain and also his performative, evident less in spotting babes, young or old, than in his facility for working the crowd, for being comfortable in front of the audience, as on stage, radio, or television, and, in this instance, within the audience. Levis was a master showman, as is evident even in the brief footage devoted to him in this documentary, which concludes showing him walking off arm-in-arm with the attractive woman shown earlier. Like Big Bill Campbell, Levis was always identified as a Canadian, because, it seemed, British audiences who essentialized him as Canadian demanded also that he perform his Canadianness.

Like Bill Campbell, Musaire [pseud. Joseph Forrest Whiteley (1894-1984)] was an innovative musician, with the exception that he was strictly an instrumentalist and he worked not to modify or parody but to subvert tradition, specifically by taking advantage of new technology and the process of mediatization to make pure electronic music on the music hall and variety stages, when other artistes at that time were mainly exploiting the new media merely by introducing microphones and by broadcasting on the radio.

Born in Leeds, England, Whiteley emigrated with his family to Canada in the 1900s. He grew up in Milltown, New Brunswick, and worked as a commercial traveller, before enlisting in the Canadian Army in 1916, serving in England and France with the 1st Battalion Canadian Tank Company during World War One. In addition to his military duties with the tank corps, he performed with a musical group called the Dumbbells, entertaining the troops. After the war, he settled in England and worked for a piano manufacturer until 1932, before discovering in 1932 an unusual performative outlet for his musical talent, on an instrument that would ensure his entry into music hall.

Whitely purchased his electronic instrument, the Thérémin (1921), named after its Russian inventor Lev (Léon) Sergeivitch Thérémin, in 1930, from Selfridges department store in Oxford Street, London. Thus, the novelty of his novelty act was not his strange instrument, which was commercially available, but in how he used it, both how wonderfully he played it, a combination of playing and conducting in which the executant musician never actually touches the instrument, and how he fashioned a unique stage act around it, billing himself with a curious stage name, Musaire, and as "Europe's only Théréminist", which would include about twenty other unusual musical instruments, which he would also play to delight the audience. So popular was his act that in the 1930s and 1940s Musaire performed more than thirty times at the Royal Albert Hall and was a frequent guest on BBC Radio. Yet, his claim to be "Europe's only Théréminist" was hardly accurate: in fact, the Théréminist Clara Rockmore (1911-1998), accompanied by her sister, Nadia Reisenberg, performed classical duets for Thérémin and piano in concerts in the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, playing music by Bach, Rachmanioff, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Dvorák, Chopin, Ravel, Kreisler, Stravinsky, Gershwin, and Villa-Lobos.

An electronic instrument consisting of a small wooden box with a small vertical antenna on top and a circular antenna on the left side, with a speaker amplifier on the bottom, and powered by an alternating electronic current, the Thérémin produces pitched tones when the player, by approaching his or her hand towards and away from the antenna, disrupts the electromagnetic waves that gather around it and thus alters the electromagnetic field, the frequency of the alternating current, and as a result the tone. The player could raise the pitch of the tone by bringing the hand closer to the antenna, increase the intensity of the tone by raising the hand above the vertical antenna, and increase the volume by drawing the hand closer to the circular antenna. The Thérémin sound resembles a combination of a soprano voice, a violin, and a musical saw, all in high register. Because for the most part the Thérémin performer plays the space around the antennae rather than the instrument itself, as distinguished from plucking, strumming, bowing, hitting, blowing, or otherwise touching a conventional musical instrument, Musaire was able to create a prestidigitational performative, like that of an eccentric music conductor, and in certain respects reminiscent of Herschel Henlere.

Because music hall audiences, even though they were traditionally fascinated with novelty acts ranging from plate spinners and rope spinners to step dancers and trick bicyclists, were initially indifferent to his straight instrumental performances on the Thérémin, Whiteley had to devise a more complex act in which he mimicked the novelty of his instrument by creating a distinctive performative persona for himself, part illusionist, part orchestra conductor, part repatriated soldier, part music hall artiste and chairman, part minimalist executant musician, and part commercial traveller, an image which he promoted also in his bill-matter, archly calling himself "The Harry Lauder of the Canadian Tanks" and "Music from the Air".

Two surviving documentary films featuring Musaire, *Pathé Pictorial NS 49* (1937) and *Pathé Pictorial NS 111* (1938), disclose the main features of his performative. In both films Musaire appears immaculately dressed in the costume of a conductor and a magician, wearing white tie and tails, with a white carnation for a *boutonnière*, and sporting a monocle. His Thérémin also is in costume, a tall white box decorated with musical notes. In his body language, while playing the Thérémin and while addressing the audience in his patter, he reinforces the ambivalent image of conductor-magician. Thus, in the opening segment of *Pathé Pictorial NS 49*, filmed with two cameras, he performs the Roy Fox and Wayne King composition "Miracles Sometimes Happen", which Roy Fox and His Orchestra recorded 16 October 1936. The first camera shoots the Thérémin in a three-quarter shot from the back, with Musaire standing behind, conducting with his right hand towards and away from the vertical antenna and with his left hand, away from the camera and partly concealed by his torso, tapping the air near the round antenna with his fingertips. The second camera shoots in reverse angle, a three-quarter shot of Musaire in right-profile slightly from behind. In both shots, he conducts in earnest, as if he were trying to entice the subtlest notes from a virtuoso human musician. At the end of this opening short demonstration piece, he identifies the composition and sums up his performative:

Playing this instrument proves the title of this song I've just played, that miracles sometimes happen, because I play it without touching it in any way. And as the Frenchman said, 'I peek my musiek from the hair'. Like this…*(with his right hand, demonstrating ascending and descending scales)*

Next, he demonstrates the Thérémin as a novelty instrument and shows off his skill as a sound effects artiste and impressionist: "Now I'll give you a little impression in the style of a BBC commentator, of the *Queen Mary* arriving at Southampton". Delivering this parody with a mock plummy English accent and a *mot juste* stammer, Musaire appears to revel in the comedy, fancying his chances as a comedian.

Well, here we are, here we are at Southampton docks. We're waiting for the *Queen Mary*. I believe she's coming up the Solent.[7] Just a minute. Oh yes, I see a large boat… steamer… vessel… ah, with three, uh, chimneys, yes, three chimneys… smokest… funnels. And, ah, just a minute now, I'll peak through my binoculars. *(mimicking binoculars by joining the tips of his index finger and thumb of his right hand to form a circle and raising it to his right eye)* Oh yes, yes, it is the *Queen Mary*, it is the *Queen Mary*. I can read her name on her! *(with the Thérémin simulating three deep long blasts on the ship's horn)* Can you hear her? *(now making one higher and shorter blast)* And that was one of the tugs. *(making an even higher and shorter blast)* And that was one of the little tugs. *(making a tiny sound)* And that was one of the little wee tugs. *(now making the trilling sound of several seagulls by fluttering his fingers up and down alongside the vertical antenna)* And here's a view of the seagulls. Oh, just a minute, just a minute. I see an old seagull at the end of the dock. I'll pop over there with the microphone and get it to do, well, *(glancing upwards archly)* whatever seagulls do do. *(now making shrill, moaning seagull sounds by trembling his finger tips at the base of the vertical antenna)* And that brings us to a very appropriate close for "The Fleet's in Port Again".

Musaire was a genial comedian, seemingly intent on delighting his audience with his showmanship, specifically his act of showing them the very tricks that most delight him, showing them what his Thérémin can do and, in the process, in his capacity as a magician, with a magic box and magic wands, who makes "miracles sometimes happen".

In his performance of the Noel Gay composition "The Fleet's in Port Again" (1936), Musaire demonstrates the same technique in playing the Thérémin as in his performance of "Miracles Sometimes Happen", conducting with his right hand at the vertical antenna and poking at the round antenna with his left hand, much like a string player with one hand on the fret board and the other on the body of the instrument, or like a pianist, harpist, or woodwind player using both hands, spaced widely apart, to operate the keys. He perhaps most closely resembles an organist in his technique, in that he plays the Thérémin at two different levels, with the right hand high and the left hand low, and if on two keyboards simultaneously.

Here the cinematographer shoots Musaire from the front as well as in profile, revealing his intent facial expression as he performs, markedly different from the wry looks he assumes when he is making comic sound effects. Close-ups of his hands reveal his meticulous movements, not just his choreography, his dramatization designed to sell the act, or even his performance of the body, but also his technique as a player in response to the metaphysical demands of his instrument. If a violin is more difficult to play than a guitar, because it has no frets, then how much more difficult was a Thérémin to play, without frets, without a neck, virtually without a body? Rather than playing an instrument to produce sound, Musaire appeared to be playing not the air but sound itself, disembodied sound. His technique of positioning his fingers to produce the right notes and to bend notes and create harmonics, especially with no part of the instrument to rest them against and with no performative tradition on which to draw, other than the work of his contemporary Théréminist, Clara Rockmore, was astounding. This was the art of his showmanship. But his showmanship, precisely because he never touched his instrument and purported to be working miracles, like a shaman or a ventriloquist making sound come from within a box, signified equally with confidence trickery and the carnivalesque. Musaire's may have been a novelty act but it was also original and even avant-garde, with reference both to the mediatisation of the performance arts early in the twentieth-century and to electronically amplified musical instruments, music synthesizers, and computer-generated music, in the later the twentieth century.

In *Pathé Pictorial NS 111*, Musaire appears to adopt a new persona when, wielding a large microphone, he starts the act by addressing the audience with an Irish accent:

Hello, everybody. This is Radio Athlone here, and we're waiting for one of the planes to take off for Newfoundland. You all know where Foynes[8] is, don't you? It was only a grease spot on the map of the world a couple of years ago, but, sure, everybody knows where it is now. And while we're waiting I should say what a marvellous era we're living in. Of course, in Ireland we still have the Dubilier…[9] But just stand by now for a minute. The plane's getting ready to take off. Can you hear it? It's there now! Can you hear it?

As well as establishing his Irish persona here, Musaire introduces his Thérémin as part of twentieth-century technology, like the Dublier, which, using a mica capacitor, transforms electric light current into electrical waves capable of transmitting sound, and like the airplane, of connecting Foynes and Newfoundland. Hence, Musaire creates his first sound on the Thérémin, that of an airplane taking off from Foyne for Newfoundland. In this phase of his routine, Musaire draws on the tradition of music hall sound effects artistes, mimics, and animal and bird impersonators, notably Percy Edwards, "The Pied Piper from Suffolk", who, after his music hall career as an animal and bird impersonator, found a new career under the tutelage of music hall comedian Charlie Chester (1914-1996) "happily making noises for radio and TV drama as well as for feature film sound tracks" (Kilgarriff 97).

Musaire makes the sound effect of an airplane taking off by raising his right hand, half-clenched into a fist, in front of the top antenna of the Thérémin, and pumping it slightly to mimic the drone of the engines as the plane speeds down the runway and holding his hand in place to simulate the hum of the engines as the plane begins its ascent. In his left hand, closest to the camera, he holds the microphone, into which he speaks to narrate the events that he scores with sound, and, possibly, to hum into, to round out the hum of the engines on the Thérémin. To diminish the engine sound, as the plane flies away, Musaire pulls the microphone away from his mouth, lowering it to touch the side antenna, to signal the end of the demonstration, which he further signals, in the manner of a conductor or a magician at the end of his performance, by clutching the air triumphantly with his right hand, in his signature move. In this regard, his clutching action also signifies his triumph over the air waves, over the electromagnetic field, and over the arcane, what is hidden, which the voiceover to *Pathé Pictorial NS 49* confirms in the introduction "Now to sound, to silvery notes plucked from the ether by that master of melody, Musaire." To distinguish his performance of a sound effect from musical performance, Musaire says, "Happy landing. And now, let's cut the comedy as I play for you 'Bird Songs of Eventide.'" The song, which is actually titled "Bird Songs at Eventide" (1926) was composed by Royden Barrie and Eric Coates for voice and piano, and carries new associations in Musaire's hands-off instrumental rendition, though it is accompanied by an uncredited pianist, who does not appear on camera.

His performance of this composition, like his performance of "The Fleet's in Port Again", in *Pathé Pictorial NS 49*, is filmed with intercut shots of seascapes and landscapes, according to the themes of the songs. These shots, while distracting viewers from monitoring Musaire's performance technique, also offer a new perspective on the sound of the Thérémin.

Thus, in providing the audio track for the intercut shots of "Bird Songs at Eventide", the Thérémin sounds electronic, reminiscent of someone turning a knob to tune in a radio station, and artificial, far removed from bird song, and detached also from conventional musicality. Ironically, witnessing Musaire perform the song emphasizes the soprano, violin, and musical saw qualities of the sound, despite the fact that the Thérémin itself, and the audio speaker on which it sits, mere wooden boxes, hardly signify conventional music. In the end, Musaire is a light comedian and novelty performer in British music hall and variety, performing cover versions of recent song and sentimental favorites, but his place in music history surpasses his contribution to popular entertainment, important as that is. As one of only two people to play the Thérémin professionally before World War Two, Musaire was a musicological pioneer, a member of the avant-garde, albeit one over-dressed in white tie and tails, and a precursor of electronic music, experimental music, and performance minimalism. In that he played the Thérémin without touching it, Musaire's performance could be seen as the ultimate performance of the body, anticipating that of American *a cappella* jazz musician Bobby McFerrin (1950-), and in this regard his performativity was essentially that of a magic act, a magician, making the invisible visible, and a confidence trickster, making the visible invisible.

Some of these Canadian performers enjoyed long careers on British stage: R. G. Knowles' career lasted more than forty years, 1878-1919; Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers, and Hal Swain and Les Allen played in various orchestras through the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. Like Maud Allen, Herschel Henlere, and Beatrice Lillie, they often made sexuality and sexual innuendo integral parts of the their acts, notably Charles Forsythe and Addie Seamon in their cheeky sketches and Elinore Farrell in her vulgar songs and vivacious dancing. Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell, and Musaire, whose careers were limited to the 1930s and 1940s, seem no less accomplished than performers with longer and more dazzling careers, given that they managed to develop original acts and sustain them beyond novelty.

Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers made original contributions to big band, hillbilly, and country swing music in Britain, and even helped to set a foundation for Texas-based western swing and rural dancehall music in the 1960s and 1970s. Hal Swain and Les Allen's orchestras were as popular as any of the big bang and swing orchestras in 1930s and 1940s England. Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell were an original act combining music, dance, and comedy. Playing the Thérémin, but also portraying the symphony orchestra conductor and the magician, Musaire was a unique performer, the antithesis of variety, yet performing on the variety circuit, which was his greatest oddity. Similarly, Herschel Henlere played the variety circuit, but preferred to be a unique act on the periphery of variety, the artiste who defied the music hall chairman by running long, the artiste on whom the theatrical curtain always closed, the antithesis of the opening act and the top of the bill.

One of the distinguishing features of these performers was their eccentricity, less the oddity of the cowboy hat or the white tie and tails, and the personae of Big Bill and Musaire, than their skill at combining country music and swing music, popular music and experimental music, popular music and classical and jazz music, and all adding comedy to the mix. All these performers, in their own ways, managed to create sensations in Britain. Their sensational eccentricity was attributable only in part to their Canadianness, to their kind of provincial exoticism, and to the British essentialization of Canadians as "very peculiar" Americans. The main explanation for these performers' enduring attraction to audiences in music hall and variety seems to have been that they managed to embrace the avant-garde in the theatrical performance arts by drawing on contemporaneous visual and performance art movements, and in some cases even anticipating them.

R. G. Knowles masqueraded for twenty-years in Britain as "The Very Peculiar American Comedian", all the while, no doubt, appreciating the irony of his Canadian origins. As a stage comedian he risked taking fast-talking to the point in inaudibility and then berating the audience for not getting his jokes. Rather then simply dealing with hecklers, which every music hall and vaudeville performer, and especially the comedian, was equipped to do, Knowles heckled the audience, and thus made them part of his performance. To engage an audience was a premise of the stage, but to enlist them as performers, to make them part of the act, is typical more of postmodern performance theory than of the stagecraft of late Victorian England.

In Musaire, Joseph Forrest Whiteley created a refined conservative persona not only as a face for one of the most bizarre acts in the history of British music hall and variety but also as a front for some of the most important experiments into electronic music being conducted in Britain in the 1930s and 1940s, which were especially remarkable because they were done in a public form and under the guise of popular

music. Musaire's innocuous performance, a kind of musical saw act without the saw, under the guise of eccentricity, was the avant-garde of late 20th-century electronic, synthetic, and computer music.

Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers also embodied eccentricity, both because they were from Alberta rather than, like most Canadian music hall variety performers in England, from Ontario, and because they were willing to exploit British preconceptions about the rugged Western Canada, by wearing western costumes, boots, and cowboy hats, all as a cover to play the new music of the 1930s and 1940s: big band swing and jazz, and various fusions of swing with country and western, hillbilly, and cowboy music. Like Whiteley as Musaire, Bill Campbell, both as Big Bill and as Old Zeke Winters, created a distinct persona with which to pitch his brand of musical entertainment and to pitch also his brand *Western Canada*.

Big Bill Campbell and His Rocky Mountaineers were more a swing band in the big band tradition of jazz in the 1930s than a cowboy, country and western, and hillbilly novelty act, although they did, significantly, fuse the two styles to create a distinct sound in 1930s and 1940s Britain. Similarly, both Hal Swain, fronting several bands through the 1930s, Hal Swain and His Kit Kat Band, Hal Swain and His Sax-O-Five, Hal Swain and His Band, Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band, and Hal Swain and His Swing Sisters, and Les Allen, both with Hal Swain and his Band and with various bands in the late-1920s and 1930s, Dave Caplan's Toronto-Band from Canada, Alfredo and His Band, The Piccadilly Players and Sid Bright and His Band, and Henry Hall's BBC Dance Orchestra, were at the forefront of swing jazz in Britain, and were instrumental in exploiting its improvisational techniques. This kind of jazz improvisation is evident, for example, when at the beginning and the end of the film *Harold Swain and the Swing Sisters* (1939), Swain performs dazzling saxophone solos *extemporanées*, when Big Bill Campbell and the Rocky Mountaineers perform their trumpet, violin, and clarinet solos in their western swing performance in the film *Pictorial Review of 1943* (1943), and when Ted Andrews, accompanying himself on a hollow-bodied acoustic jazz guitar, sings "Stardust" (31 October 1927) by Hoagy Carmichael, originally a cornet player who was inspired by the improvisational cornet-playing of Bix Beiderbecke and the Woverines to compose the song as a jazz stomp, and when Andrews sings the jazz swing number "You Can't Stop Me from Dreaming" (1937), by David Franklin and Cliff Friend.

Clearly, performers as diverse as Big Bill Campbell, Les Allen, and Hal Swain can be categorized as jazz musicians only to varying degrees, but each performer in his or her stage act responded to the emergent ethos of jazz in Britain in the 1900s-1950s, and especially in the 1920s, "The Jazz Age", much as the general public responded to jazz to varying degrees during this period by gathering in dance halls throughout Britain, mainly to dance the Foxtrot, yet collectively managing to support the performances of the approximately three hundred major orchestras, comprising thousands of musicians, that flourished in Britain during the big band era, 1920-1945. Dance and dance hall music generated a huge social movement in Britain between the world wars, in which performers from music hall and to a greater extent variety, including some Canadians, played significant creative and executant roles. Among Canadian artistes, jazz performativity, jazz music, dance, and culture, was the common trait. Even the music hall performer R. G. Knowles, who flourished in the 1880s and 1890s, can be seen as anticipating jazz in his extemporaneous riffs to the audience and in the apparently unstructured pacing of his comic stories, poems, and jokes. In this regard, Knowles was quite an avant-garde performer.

Still, the only universal shared characteristic among Canadian performers in British music hall and variety was expatriation itself, with the exception of Les Allen and Hal Swain, both of whom were born in England. Canadian performers, including Allen and Swain, went to Britain mainly for the professional and economic opportunities which theatre, radio, film, gramophone, and television offered them there. Ironically, at the start of the twentieth century the performing arts in Canada had come under the control of American and British interests, which promoted their own national touring companies in Canadian theatres, because of the professional and economic opportunities that Canada offered them, albeit chiefly as a springboard to the United States. The mobility of performing artists among Canada, the United States, and Britain, and the opportunities to take shows on tour to other English-speaking countries such as South Africa, Australia, and New Zealand, produced a migratory syndrome, a performance mobility, not unrelated to late twentieth and twenty-first-century globalization. As Les Allen and Hal Swain were able to return to Britain after having launched their careers as musicians in Canada, so Canadian performers such as Maud Allan and Herschel Henlere were able to return to Canada to perform after having established their careers in England and elsewhere abroad.

The issue of expatriatism in the performing arts was not as pronounced in the 1880s-1920s as it was in the second half of the twentieth century, when Canadians had the beginning of a choice to work in the infrastructure for the arts in Canada and the prospect of a career here seemed credible.

The principal issue that these Canadian artistes evoke, therefore, is one of patriotism only because it is one of national recognition in Canada. With the exception of Beatrice Lillie, most of these artistes are virtually forgotten in Canada in the twenty-first century. Maud Allen is a long footnote in the history of Modern American dance, and Les Allen and Hal Swain are a long footnote in the history of the Big Band Era. Musaire has pretty much gone the way of his Thérémin, becoming merely a performance anachronism. Big Bill Campbell may not have been big enough to garner the name recognition in Canada of other singing cowboys like Gene Autry and Roy Rogers. Other performers such as Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell and The Maple Leaf Four have simply not left behind much substantial performative evidence of their careers, as on audio recordings and film and in photographs and print. Still others such as Ad Robbins, W. V. Robinson, Max Goldberg, and Joe and Kay Stuthard are forgotten, effectively vanished from Canadian performance history.

Sound Recordings

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—. "Did You Ever See a Dream Walking?" Rec. 12 December
1933. *The Golden Age of Henry Hall and the BBC Dance Orchestra*. EMI, n.d.
—. "Play to Me Gypsy (The Song I Love)." Rec. 6 January
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—. "It's Time to Say Goodnight." Rec. 15 February 1934.
This Is Henry Hall. EMI, n.d.
—. "Love Thy Neighbour." Rec. 7 June 1934. *This Is Henry*
Hall. EMI, n.d.
Knowles, R. G., perf. *A Cook's Tour*. Berliner, 13 January
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—. *The Order of the Bath; A Honeymoon Trip; A Nightmare*.
Berliner, 18 January 1899.
—. *Adam Missed It; Oh! Dear No*. Berliner, 19 January
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—. *If That's Your Game I'm Going*. Berliner, 23 February
1899.
—. *Silence Reigned Supreme; Love, Marriage and Divorce;*
Dreamy Eyes; Time Is Money. Gramophone and Typewriter. 25 May 1903.
—. *The Girl, the Woman and the Widow; Pins; Adam Missed*
It; The Insecurity of a Sure Thing; Modern Woman; Every Little Bit Added to What You've Got Makes Just a Little Bit More; That's Philosopy; £.S.D. VF, October 1912.

Filmography

Robbins, Champion of All Champions. Perf. A. D. Robbins. Warwick Trading Company, July 1902. Short.*Dreamy Eyes*. Dir. Arthur Gilbert. Perf. R. G. Knowles. Gaumont Chronophone, October 1905. Short.*Eve Presents Another Novelty—Words and Music by—No. 2*.

Perf. Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band, Scott Bennett, B. C. Hilliam, Malcolm McEachern, Horatio Nichols. Eve's Film Review 356, 29 March 1928. Short.*Hal Swain and His Sax-o-Five*. Dir. Alexander Oumansky.

Perf. Hal Swain and His Sax-o-Five. Gainsborough Gems Series 5. Gainsborough (JMG), January 1930. Short. *Al Fresco*. Dir. Alexander Oumansky. Perf. Hal Swain's Kit

Kat Band, Elsie Carlisle, The Prince Twins, The Plaza Boys. Sugar and Spice Series 1. Gainsborough (Ideal), February 1930. Short.*Black and White*. Dir. Alexander Oumansky. Perf. Hal

Swain's Kit Kat Band, Johnny Nit, The Plaza Boys, The Barrie Sisters. Sugar and Spice Series 3. Gainsborough (Ideal), February 1930. Short. *Classic v. Jazz*. Dir. Alexander Oumansky. Perf. Hal

Swain's Kit Kat Band, The Adagio Twins, The Barrie Twins. Sugar and Spice Series 4. Gainsborough (Ideal), February 1930. Short. *The Rosary*. Dir. Guy Newall. Perf. Les Allen, Margot

Grahame, Elizabeth Allan, Walter Piers, Leslie Perrins, Robert Holmes, Charles Groves, Irene Rooke. Twickenham (WP), July 1931. Feature. *The Famous Comedy Team Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell of Variety Renown*. Perf. Charles Forsythe, Addie Seamon, and Elinore Farrell. Pathétone 236, October 1934. Short. *Heat Wave*. Dir. Maurice Elvey. Perf. Les Allen, Albert

Burdon, Cyril Maude, Anna Lee, Vera Pearce, Bernard Nedell, C. Denier Warren, Bruce Winston, Edmund Willard, The Lecuona Cuban Boys, Grace Poggi. Gainsborough (Gaumont), May 1935. Feature.*Pathé Pictorial NS 34*. Perf. Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band. 1936. Short.*Pathé Pictorial NS 49*. Perf. Musaire (pseud. Joseph

Forrest Whiteley. Pathé, 4 March 1937. Short.*Saxophonist Hal Swain and His Boys*. Perf. Hal Swain and His Saxophone Band. Pathé Pictorial NS 64, 17 June 1937. Short.*Harold Swain and the Swing Sisters*. Perf. Hal Swain and

His Swing Sisters. Pathé Pictorial 193, 14 December 1939. Short.*Pathé Pictorial NS 103*. Perf. Ted Andrews and His Girl

Friend. Pathé, 17 March 1938. Short.*Pathé Pictorial NS 111*. Perf. Musaire (pseud. Joseph

Forrest Whiteley. Pathé, 12 May 1938. Short.*Discoveries*. Dir. Redd Davis. Perf. Carroll Levis,

Afrique, Issy Bonn, Julien Vedey, Bertha Belmore, Ronald Shiner, Doris Hare, Kathleen Harrison, Zoe Wynn, Barbara Everest, Shayle Gardner, Cyril Levis, The Three Ginx, Dump and Tony, George Meaton, The Radio Rascals, Pearl Venters, Archie Galbraith, Glyn Davies, Tony Vaughan, David Delmonte, Ken Bonner, May Patterson, Edith Ellis, Evelyne Skinner, Cecil Phillips, Wally Hill. Vogue (GN), September 1939. Feature.

I Thank You. Dir. Marcel Varnel. Perf. Charles Forsythe,

Addie Seamon, Elinore Farrell, Arthur Askey, Richard Murdoch, Lily Morris, Moore Marriott, Graham Moffatt, Peter Gawthorne, Kathleen Harrison, Felix Aylmer, Cameron Hall, Wally Patch, Issy Bonn, Joy Shelton, Billy Russell, Roberta Huby, Phyllis Morris. Gainsborough (GFD), September 1941. Feature.

Pictorial Review of 1943. Dir. Fred Watts. Perf. Big Bill

Campbell and the Rocky Mountaineers. Pathétone, August 1943. Short.

Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell. Perf. Charles Forsythe,

Addie Seamon, and Elinore Farrell. Pathé Pictorial 398, 15 November 1943. Short.

One Minute News. Perf. Carrol Levis. Pathétone, 14 July

1947. Short.

The Brass Monkey. Dir. Thornton Freeland. Perf. Carroll

Levis, Carole Landis, Herbert Lom, Avril Angers, Ernest Thesiger, Henry Edwards, Edward Underdown, Gwyneth Vaughan, Jack McNaughton, Gus McNaughton, John Salew, Carole Lesley, Terry-Thomas, Carroll Levis' "Discoveries", Albert and Les Ward, Leslie "Hutch" Hutchinson. Diadem-Alliance (UA), December 1948. Feature.

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[1]All transcriptions of song lyrics and dialogue from films are by the author.
[2]The allusion is to the play *The Mourning Bride* (1697) by William Congreve.
[3]In its air of silliness, its prosody, and its musicality, Forsythe's song anticipates the introductory recitative of Charles Chaplin's song "Spring Has Arrived" in his film *Limelight* (1952): "Spring is here. / Birds are calling. / Skunks are crawling. / Working their tails for love."
[4]The film *Tugboat Annie*, with Canadian actress Marie Dressler (1868-1934) in the title role, had been released in August 1933. When *The Famous Comedy Team Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell of Variety Renown* was shot on 1 October 1934, Mae West (1893-1980) had appeared in four films: *Night After Night* (October 1932), *She Done Him Wrong* (January 1933), *I'm No Angel* (October 1933), and *Belle of the Nineties* (September 1934).
[5]The animated character Betty Boop, which first appeared in the short film *Minnie the Moocher* (March 1932), had already appeared in thirty-three animated cartoon shorts, 1932-1934, by the time *The Famous Comedy Team Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell of Variety Renown* was shot on 1 October 1934.
[6]In the first line Seamon pronounces the word *aunt* as "ănt", and in the second line as "änt".
[7]The Solent is the sea straight between the Isle of Wight and the mainland of England.
[8]Foynes is a small town and port in County Limerick, Ireland.
[9]The Dubilier was a form of portable wireless telephone introduced in the 1900s, named after its inventor, William Dubilier, an American electrical engineer. Musaire's pun on the words *era* and *Dubilier* is typical of his genial humour.