

**The Jack Hylton Archive, Lancaster University:
A Report on its Current State and the Potential Research, Performance
and Educational Opportunities (April 2007)**

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1. Introduction: brief history

The Jack Hylton Archive contained within the Rare Books Archive of Lancaster University's Library is ostensibly the largest collection of materials and memorabilia pertaining to the bandleader's life, work and phenomenal success. This Archive was presented to the University by the Jack Hylton Estate some time following Hylton's death in 1965; prior to this the collection had been housed in the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane.¹ The connection between Lancaster University and the Hylton name is also strengthened by the Jack Hylton Music Room, presented to the University with funds raised by *The Stars Shine for Jack* concert on 28 May 1965.² The collection arrived unsorted, and remained that way until completion of the Rare Book Archive in 1997 when it was transferred to its current housing and work began on assembling a usable, catalogued source. Although work on the Archive has been continuous since being relocated, it is still far from being entirely sorted; nonetheless it is already possible to use the Archive for research purposes, and to ascertain the potential that it may offer when cataloguing is complete.

2. Archive contents

The physical materials within the Archive include: music arrangements, newspaper cuttings, programmes, appointment diaries, 78 rpm and 12" records, photographs, libretti, publicity flyers and posters, and memorabilia.

2.1 Manuscript band arrangements

For the purposes of the Hylton Project (December 2006–April 2007), involving Dr Deborah Mawer as Principal Investigator and Adam Grieg as part-time Research Assistant (funded by PALATINE buy-out), the most pertinent source has been the

¹ Materials relating Jack Hylton and the Adelphi Theatre, as well as some of the materials associated with circus, and funfair management are still held in the Theatre Museum, London.

² This concert, held at the Theatre Royal saw performers such as Arthur Askey, Shirley Bassey and Marlene Dietrich take the stage in tribute to Jack Hylton.

original musical arrangements.³ Comprising more than 2,000 individual files this section of the collection has been initially sorted alphabetically.⁴ Each file is in a differing state of completion, but the most common materials include: working manuscripts, skeleton scores, fragments of original printed manuscripts, and the actual band parts of the Hylton arrangements. The interest in this source stems from the unique ability it provides to uncover the secrets of the Hylton sound; how Hylton and his arrangers managed to successfully dominate the jazz band/dance hall scene of Britain, Europe and America for such an extended amount of time.

The quantity of popular, classical and international melodies which underwent the Hylton process is vast, and all are represented within the Archive.⁵ As there is often more than one arrangement of the same piece, it is also possible to detect the differences in style between the various Hylton arrangers. Difficulty arises as many of the scores are unsigned, and it is clear that copyists were used to write out the numerous band parts.⁶ Often, the arrangers wrote the name of the band member who was to receive the part on the top of the manuscripts; this allows researchers not only to estimate the period of an arrangement's use but also which members of the orchestra performed on what instruments in which pieces.⁷

2.2 Press cuttings volumes

Secondary to the notated music, another source of information, significant for Hylton research, is the huge collection of newspaper clippings, which are categorised either by year or by topic.⁸ These collected volumes provide substantial contextualisation as they contain contemporaneous reviews and news of Hylton and his band. It is important to note the sheer number of reviews present, with many articles being repeated nationally and internationally. The success shown in the press correlates with the development of Hylton's momentum and his abilities as an entrepreneur.

³ For a current list of the catalogued arrangements see:

<http://libweb.lancs.ac.uk/hylton/bandpartstest.html>, (last accessed 18/04/07).

⁴ There are still many band arrangements in the unsorted boxes of the archive.

⁵ For examples of the differing genres, see Appendix 1–2 below.

⁶ During the course of this work it has been possible to identify some of the arrangers using their handwriting. Difficulty arises with this as it is clear copyists were frequently used, so any recognition needs to be from working materials or skeleton scores, not just the actual band parts. An example of this is the identification of Major Williams' writing through his characteristic 'M'. His signature can be found in JHA File no. F8, *Flapperette*, or JHA File no. T47, *Thais*.

⁷ It is clear that many of the band members were required to switch instruments during certain pieces—a tribute to the professionalism of the musicians within the band.

⁸ For a list of the titles of the newspaper compendia, see:

<http://libweb.lancs.ac.uk/hylton/presscuttings.html>, (last accessed 18/04/07).

2.3 Programmes

Another useful source of primary information is the collection of programmes. Work is currently being carried out to finalise ordering and cataloguing this area of the collection, which totals over 3,500 items, and the list of these is due to appear on the Jack Hylton Archive website in due course. The majority of the programmes are from Hylton's stage productions, but there are also many from his band's concerts, both nationally and internationally. Many of the programmes within the Archive are for productions that Hylton attended but was not actively involved in. As a sizeable portion of these are annotated it is possible to determine some of the acts that Hylton intended on approaching to employ and, to some extent, track his whereabouts.⁹

2.4 Audio recordings

The audio dimension provided by the collection of original 78 rpm and 12" records is one that has been added to the collection since its was received by Lancaster. Unfortunately the records did not come to the Archive with the rest of the Estate, but effort and expense is being put to re-collecting as many of these as is possible. To date there are in excess of 200 extant records, with one track on each side, which have been catalogued by track name.

In addition to these, the main Library collection contains 22 of the re-released vinyl recordings and re-mastered CDs.¹⁰ The benefit of this source relates to the original arrangements. Not only is it possible to discern which of the, frequently multiple, arrangements was recorded; the records also provide another level of primary information on the Hylton sound. Through a process of reading the scores in relation to the audio recordings, it is possible to elucidate the extra interpretative practices of the band members as well as confirm more general points on performance practices of the era.

2.5 Appointment diaries

The 47 appointment diaries covering the years of 1944–1965 were kept by Hylton's assistants in his offices. Although these do not contain vast quantities of detail, they

⁹ Within the box of Continental Programmes are many from Hylton's time in Paris, including those for the Moulin Rouge.

¹⁰ These items are in the main Library stock, accessible through the Library catalogue: <http://cat.lib.lancs.ac.uk>, (last accessed 18/04/07).

do allow for verification of performance dates, and also show the length of time it would take from auditioning for a performance, rehearsing it and finally staging it. Hylton's incredibly full schedule is testament to his drive as an entrepreneur, and these records give a taste for the direct involvement he had in the workings of his business.

2.6 Libretti

As well as the large quantity of scores and parts for the various musical productions that Hylton's company staged, there are in the region of 200 libretti, including non-musical works and perusal copies of potential shows. These shows are catalogued in a searchable database with fields including title, author, and year of production. Of the libretti that have been used, many have been annotated with stage directions, lighting cues and prompting notes. One benefit of this resource could be to enable the re-compiling of the musical scores and parts in a more ordered fashion since these are largely unsorted at present. Again, there are many volumes of press cuttings relating to Hylton's theatre productions, as well as original programmes of these events.

2.7 Photographs

The photographs within the Archive remain largely unsorted although there have been initial attempts to organise these into useful categories including: productions, specific people, locations, and personal pictures, with dates and subject matter noted where known. At present there is no accessible listing of these materials.

3. Further research potential

There is considerable scope for future research to be undertaken on the materials described in Section 2 above. As previously mentioned, Dr Mawer's current work has been to investigate connections between Hylton and France. Hylton toured Europe during the 1920s and 1930s period, including performances in France, Germany, and Italy.

3.1 German connections

Although Hylton's greatest connection with Europe was most certainly with France, having been awarded the Légion d'honneur and the privilege to perform at the Paris Opera house twice, the most obvious alternative avenue of research in this area would

be the German connection. Hylton performed to, among others, Goebbels and Göring, immediately before WWII, so interest would most certainly come from a variety of disciplines.¹¹ There are numerous arrangements of German music within the collection, as well as newspaper clippings related to this period. It should also be noted that later press articles refer, in amazement, to performances of American jazz at these performances.¹²

3.2 American connections

Outside of Europe, Hylton took on the American music scene during the mid-1930s. Having not been allowed to take his band with him, due to strong resistance from the American Musicians Union, in particular the band leader Paul Sprech, Hylton had to re-create his orchestra from American stock, apart from his key solo performers.¹³ This tension between the American Musicians Union and the British equivalent became even more apparent when American performers were denied permission to perform in Britain. This intense rivalry can be traced through the newspaper clippings,¹⁴ and would constitute a useful research topic within the study of American/British jazz relations.

Hylton's success in America did not appear to have been affected by this hiccup, as he spread across the airwaves using radio as his primary method of transmission. Backed by leading companies, Hylton enjoyed immediate success, initially on the East Coast but eventually achieving national saturation.¹⁵ His approach in America differed from that in Europe as he won the country's favour using his soloists and his European acclaim, frequently being associated with performing for the crowns of Europe. We can be certain of America's acceptance of the British twist to their own jazz sound, as Hylton's orchestra performed for a special radio broadcast for President Franklin Roosevelt's birthday celebrations.

Following Hylton's return to Britain in 1936 there were rumours of a second tour of America but this never happened, perhaps due to residual feelings from the

¹¹ Other notable European people for whom Hylton performed include: Crown Prince Leopold and Princess Astral of Belgium, and Admiral Horthy of Czechoslovakia.

¹² These comments are to be found in the volume of press cuttings headed *USA General 1935–1936*.

¹³ His most successful soloists in America were the pianist Alex Templeton and the vocalist Pat O'Malley.

¹⁴ The two main volumes on this topic are the *USA General 1935–1936* and the *USA Tour 1936*.

¹⁵ The initial company that backed Hylton was Standard Oil but in 1936 sponsorship was taken over by Real Silk: *USA Tour 1936*.

initial rebuttal of the American Musicians Society. However, Alec Templeton continued enjoying a successful American career founded on the initial acclaim he had achieved from the Hylton Tour. The volumes of press cuttings, *USA General 1935–1936* and *USA Tour 1936*, document Hylton's, and subsequently Templeton's, movements and triumphs within America. Again, when combined with the extra information provided by the musical arrangements, this topic would develop the European dimension of Hylton inquiries by investigating the relationship between the British dance band impresario and the American roots of jazz music (Hylton having started arranging in his signature style after hearing Paul Whiteman records in the early 1920s).

3.3 Research scope regarding Hylton's post-war career

Following 1940, Hylton concentrated on productions within Britain. Although the fervour of his dance band success had been quelled, partly due to losing many members called up for war service, he continued his career by staging theatre productions, musicals, and general entertainment, based in London's West End but also working across England. By 1955 he had expanded into television, as adviser of light entertainment for Associated Rediffusion, in an attempt to broadcast to the nation in the style of his West End successes. Separate from the band arrangements within the Archive is Hylton's collection of musical arrangements produced for these television shows. His television career ended in 1959, and although this could be seen to be a failure in comparison to the immense live career he enjoyed, the documentation within the Archive contains an important slice of television history. It is also possible to determine how the style of music that he used developed from the early 1920s through to this point as there are often early and later arrangements of the same pieces.

4. Performance potential

One of the most fruitful initial outcomes for the Archive would be for its band parts to be used for regular concert performances. The Archive has already provided the music for a number of specific concerts including international performances in Finland and the USA.¹⁶ Within the University, the Music Society's Big Band has

¹⁶ The concert in the USA was staged in association with Jack Hylton's daughter.

shown interest in the arrangements and performances have taken place; unfortunately, however, with the ever-changing Music Society Committee, this link has not been maintained.

As part of this survey a small list of works has been compiled that it would be possible to perform in their current condition, as given in Appendix 1 (at the end of this report). Due to the all-encompassing nature of the Archive, it would also be possible to recreate or rearrange some of the works which are incomplete, either with the aid of recordings, or by means of copying the arranger's style. Examples of these works are given in Appendix 2.

Since the Music performance modules within the University's Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts are undergoing further development, it is hoped that in coming years there will be the possibility of creating an ensemble suited to performing the Hylton arrangements. This idea is already being discussed with the Director of Performance, Dr Edward Venn, with the intention of testing it out in the 2008–09 academic session. The Hylton Estate appears content for the music to be performed as long as it is not for financial gain, and the Archive is able to provide photocopies of materials so long as the proper copyright permission is obtained where necessary.

5. Educational potential

The educational benefit that the Archive could provide has not yet been fully realised. Within the Lancaster Institute for the Contemporary Arts there are many possibilities for making use of this holistic resource on Jack Hylton, his life and career.

5.1 Postgraduate scope: doctoral and master's levels

The possibility for doctoral work on any of the aforementioned topics or others beyond is most certainly viable and, within Music's current master's scheme, the Archive makes a perfect test subject for developing skills in working with primary sources.

5.2 Undergraduate scope

At undergraduate level, the performability of the music has already been discussed (see Section 4. above). Beyond this, a new final-year dissertation research group set

up by Dr Mawer on jazz and dance band¹⁷ plans to develop students' research skills and interests by incorporating exploration of real archival materials.

Phased work, initiated by Prof. Jeffrey Richards (History, Lancaster University), is being carried out to transfer Hylton's reel-to-reel recordings onto CD and, although the originals are too fragile to be worked on by students, the Archive is able to allow student music technicians to work on cleaning up the audio sound on the CDs, thus benefiting the Archive and giving the students a chance to work with real materials. As these reel-to-reel recordings were made by Hylton himself, they may provide primary audio materials other than those of the publicly released records. Some work will need to be done on identifying the recordings, but the potential augmentation of the Archive via this unique source is especially valuable.

The interdisciplinary nature of LICA is also served by the Archive as it provides visual, audio, written and historical materials. The range of sources can best be seen in relation to the Hylton creation *Wonderful Town*. This production was fully prepared for the American stage but was never performed. The uniqueness of this production can be seen in the collection of Miles White costume designs that accompany the other materials.¹⁸

Another interdisciplinary line of enquiry serviced by the Archive is that of the Royal Command Performances that Hylton undertook: again, the materials comprise a range of sources that would enable a multi-faceted approach to this subject. A more encompassing study of the development of British culture pre- and post-WWII would also benefit greatly from using this exceptional resource.

6. Final comments

The continuing work of the Lancaster University Rare Books Collection archivists is instrumental to the development, preservation and cataloguing of the Jack Hylton Archive.¹⁹ The recent appointment of a temporary staff member with explicit music research knowledge should aid in the sorting of large amounts of still untouched materials. A redeveloped website, including the latest databases of newly organised materials, is due to be launched in the near future. The exceptional helpfulness and flexibility of the staff should also be noted since, without their willingness to aid

¹⁷ Module MUSC 341.

¹⁸ Miles White produced the original costumes for *Oklahoma* and *Carousel*.

¹⁹ The archivists in charge of the Rare Books Archive at the time of this Hylton Project were Helen Clish, Subject Librarian, and Liz Fawcett, Senior Library Assistant.

enquirers, the collection might only constitute a dormant resource. Combined with the work being carried out on the recordings, Dr Mawer's Hylton Project and a growing interest in researching jazz and popular music, the Archive can reasonably hope to become a more prominent collection within and beyond the University.

Sources Consulted

Fawcett, Elizabeth, 'The Jack Hylton Archive at Lancaster University', *Brio*, 41/1 (2004), 32–36.

Paxton, Gillian, *A Guide to the Jack Hylton Archive at Lancaster University* (2005).

Jack Hylton Archive Website: <http://libweb.lancs.ac.uk/hylton> (last accessed 18/04/07).

Peter Faint's Jack Hylton Website: <http://www.jackhylton.com> (last accessed 18/04/07).

Appendix 1
Examples of Performable Arrangements

Arrangement Title	Recorded Title	Arranger	Reference	Orchestration	Comments
<i>French Pop Tunes</i> [637/1]	<i>Nos bons vieux airs</i>	Peter Yorke	F30	3 vlns, 3 alt sax, ten sax, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	First page of score is separated from the rest.
<i>French Pop Tunes</i> [637/2]	<i>Pot-pourri de vieilles chansons</i>	Peter Yorke	F30	3 vlns, 3 alt sax, ten sax, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	First page of score is damaged.
<i>French Pop Tunes</i> [638/1]	<i>Pot-pourri de vieilles chansons</i>	Paul Fenoulhet	F30	3 vlns, 3 alt sax, ten sax, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	First page of score is missing.
<i>French Pop Tunes</i> [638/2]	<i>Nos bons vieux airs</i>	Paul Fenoulhet	F 30	3 vlns, 3 cl, ob, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	First page of score is damaged
<i>Ellington Medley</i>	-	-	E 60	Tpt (solo), 3 vlns, 2 alt sax, ten sax, bass, drums, piano	Piano part is particularly challenging.
<i>French Pot Pourri</i> [442/1–2]	<i>Vieilles chansons françaises</i>	Léo Vauchant	F4	3 vlns, 3 alt sax, ten sax, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	-
<i>She Shall Have Music</i> [1226/A] [53]	<i>She Shall Have Music</i>	-	S17	2 vlns, 2 alt sax, ten sax, bar sax, 3 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, guitar, drums, piano	[53] is the dance orchestration
<i>Chevalier Medley</i> [566 (Pt 1)]	<i>Maurice Chevalier Medley</i> (Pt 1)	-	C5	3 vlns, 3 alt sax/cl, ten sax, ob, 2 Tpt, 2 Tmb, Bass, Banjo, Piano	Wind parts interchange. Would need to reconstruct the lyrics.

Appendix 2
Examples of Arrangements Requiring Some Work to be Performable

Arrangement Title	Recorded Title	Arranger	Reference	Orchestration	Comments
<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>	<i>Rhapsody in Blue</i>	-	R27	-	Parts need reconstructing from band cards and score.
‘Ça c’est Paris’ [69]	‘Ça c’est Paris’	Leighton Lucas	C26	2 vlns, vla, sop sax, 3 alt sax, 2 cl, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	This arrangement would need the woodwind parts re-orchestrating due to the frequent instrument changes required.
<i>Yvain Medley</i> [3b61]	<i>Memories of Paris</i> (Pt 2) <i>Les Succès d’Yvain</i>	Peter Yorke	Y1	2 vlns, vla, 4 wind, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, vibraphone, piano	Wind parts would need transcribing as this arrangement requires multiple instruments per performer.
<i>Padilla</i> [3b63]	<i>Memories of Paris</i> (Pt 1) <i>Les Succès de Padilla</i>	Bill Ternent	P2	2 vlns, vla, 3 alt sax, ten sax, 2 tpt, 2 tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	Wind parts would need transcribing. There is also a large amount of printed materials in the parts that might pose a potential copyright problem.
‘Fleurs d’amour’	‘Fleurs d’amour’	Leighton Lucas	F25	vln, 3 alt sax, ten sax, 2 tpt, tmb, bass, banjo, drums, piano	No score present and the parts are in a delicate state. Would need some transcribing/arranging to complete.