

LAURIE JOHNSON, COMPOSER AND PRODUCER, RECEIVES MBE IN BIRTHDAY HONOURS

Submitted by: Bank House Books

Saturday, 28 June 2014

The composer whose music has illuminated the performance of stars such as Peter Sellers, George C Scott, Peter Ustinov and Maggie Smith in film and, in television Shirley Maclaine, Hugh Grant, Joanna Lumley, Gordon Jackson, etc, and whose famous TV themes have become permanently engrained in the public memory was born in Hampstead, London in 1927, studied at the Royal College of Music and served his National Service with the Coldstream Guards.

RADIO

By the age of 20, he was conducting his own orchestra on BBC radio and writing arrangements for the leading bands of the time – Ted Heath, Geraldo and Ambrose.

CINEMA

Entered the film industry in 1957, subsequently composing many scores, including the Stanley Kubrick classic, Dr Strangelove, Hedda, Tiger Bay, First Men in the Moon among others.

TELEVISION

Composed numerous memorable themes and scores for the likes of The Avengers, This Is Your Life, Animal Magic, Whicker's World, No Hiding Place, The New Avengers and The Professionals, the last two series produced by companies he jointly owns, as were the star-studded films based on the romantic novels of Dame Barbara Cartland.

CONCERT HALL

Founded the London Big Band, which contained the very best jazz soloists and musicians. Produced and conducted recordings and concerts at major London venues such as the Royal Albert Hall and the Barbican, presenting the band in conjunction with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. Composed a symphony for combined jazz and symphony orchestras and more than ten orchestral suites. Responsible for composing much of the dedicated music for military bands and royal occasions.

THEATRE

Composed the music for the award-winning musical, Lock Up Your Daughters, with lyrics by Lionel Bart; The Four Musketeers with lyrics by Herbert Kretzmer; and a review, Pieces of Eight with Peter Cook.

BOOKS

Autobiography, Noises In The Head and an illustrated coffee-table 'photobiography' based on this, as well as three compilation books based on the works of Charles Dickens and a book on the origins of famous characters in literature entitled Drawn From Life.

HONOURS AND AWARDS

Received an honorary doctorate from Middlesex University, was appointed Emeritus Composer to the Royal Air Force, admitted into the Freedom of the City of London. Won an Ivor Novello award statuette and awarded the Gold Badge of Merit by the British Academy of Songwriters and Composers.

RECORDINGS

Made dozens of LPs and single records in a career spanning six decades.

BANK HOUSE BOOKS, Publishers of Laurie Johnson's literary works are delighted that Laurie is receiving this fitting honour for his contribution in so many fields, and we are proud of our long and inspiring association with the man described by Encore magazine as 'a musical genius of his era.'

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