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Frederick Lawrence Wright

BIRTH	15 Feb 1888 Leicestershire, England
DEATH	19 May 1964 (aged 76) Blackpool, Blackpool Unitary Authority, Lancashire, England
BURIAL	St Stephen On-the-Cliffs Churchyard Blackpool, Blackpool Unitary Authority, Lancashire, England
MEMORIAL ID	193316908 · View Source

Lawrence Wright was born at 23 Upper Conduit Street, Leicester. His father ran a music shop, so it was hardly surprising he would go into the music business himself. Wright went on to found the UK equivalent of Tin Pan Alley, writing and publishing his own songs, and founding “Melody Maker” as a monthly newspaper.

The first issue was dated January 1926, and sold for 3d or 4 shillings annual subscription post free.

Page 1 announced: “In this, our first issue, we are indebted to the famous British composer, Mr. Horatio Nicholls, for allowing us the privilege of publishing his photograph.”

And according to the “EDITORIAL” , Mr Nicholls was “now admittedly one of the finest and most popular composers of lighter music, not only in England, but throughout the world.”

While on page 3, an advertisement for “ARABY” by Horatio Nicholls, included the great man’s photograph:

“THE WORLD'S GREATEST POPULAR COMPOSER” was said to have composed “THE MOST HAUNTING REFRAIN EVER WRITTEN”.

Horatio Nicholls was of course the pen name of Lawrence Wright, who although a tireless self-publicist was anything but a great songwriter, although his biggest hit was well-deserved. “Among My Souvenirs” was not simply big but massive; it was co-written with American lyricist Edgar Leslie, and was rated the

top song in America for February 1928 by "Variety". It has been widely recorded ever since.

Wright crossed the Atlantic specifically to carry out a publicity stunt. Halfway across aboard SS Majestic he wrote the music for "Shepherd Of The Hills" which was completed in New York by Leslie then performed near simultaneously on both sides of the Atlantic, the first time anything like this had ever been done. He dictated the score down the telephone from Leslie's fortieth floor Broadway office to his own London office where it was taken down by the bandleader Jack Hylton. The half hour February 27, 1927 phone call is said to have cost nearly £150.

In 1930, Wright wrote the music for "Amy", a tribute song to the lady aviator Amy Johnson. Most of his other songs like "Queen Of The Sea 'Queen Mary'" are best forgotten.

In 1962 he received an Ivor Novello Award for his outstanding contribution to popular music.

A memorial service was held for him on July 2; the Reverend Gordon C. Taylor officiated at the event which was held at Saint Giles-in-the-Fields, Holborn. His estate before death duties was well in excess of £300,000.

Created by: a_baron

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