

# WE WERE HAPPY THERE!



*How many millions of years has the sun stood in the heaven? But it never looked down until yesterday upon the embodiment of so much energy and power.*



# WE WERE HAPPY THERE!

MUPS 375  
STEREO

This stereo record can be played on mono reproducers provided either a compatible or stereo cartridge wired for mono is fitted. Recent equipment may already be fitted with a suitable cartridge. If in doubt, consult your Dealer.

*Narrated by*  
**JOHN GIELGUD**  
*Songs sung by*  
**GEORGE HOWE**

Readings selected by Patrick Garland Music composed by Carl Davis Lyrics by George Howe  
Devised by Carl Davis Record Produced by Mike Leander



MCA RECORDS LIMITED,  
139, PICCADILLY, LONDON W.1, ENGLAND

Printed and made by Ernest J Day & Co. Ltd., London, W.11

*Come sail with me on Britain's world-wide sea, we'll use our heart and hand to build a better land*

Cover Design and Art Roland Piper

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I am in a sense the step-father of 'We Were Happy There' since it has been written by two performers in my play, 'Forty Years On' and on themes suggested by it. 'Forty Years On' is set in a run-down public school, Albion House, a loose metaphor of England today. The traditionalist headmaster is retiring, to be replaced by a more progressive figure. To mark his retirement, staff and boys put on a play which looks back with mockery and affection to the period 1900-1940 as seen through the eyes of an upper-class couple during the Second World War. Their memories range over the matchless lawns of Edwardian England, the loneliness of the night nursery; they recall the Lost Generation of the First War, Bloomsbury, Chamberlain and Munich. And throughout, their memories are shot through with the hopes and expectations engendered by the 1939-45 War. Some of these themes find direct echoes in 'We Were Happy There' for both are in a sense about memory, the past as seen through the eyes of different generations.

What I had not bargained for in writing the play was the attitude of the twenty or so boys who were to take part in it. The period 1900-1940 is for me a matter of heresy, and knowledge gained from books; it is only when we emerge from the Second War that remembered fact and personal recollection takes over. It came as something of a shock for me to find that this was not the case for these sixteen and seventeen year old boys. For them, for George Howe writing about it, the Second War is as remote as the First is for me. 'What happened in 1939' said one boy, 'was it the General Strike?' 'This

Krupps place we bombed, was it a restaurant?' If the boys in the play were remote in time from its events, Carl Davis, who wrote the music for 'Forty Years On' was remote by upbringing. He is an American, brought up in East Flatbush, Brooklyn, which is about as remote as you can get from the smooth and sacred lawns of the Edwardian era. Not his the remembered terrors of the night nursery or the lingering regrets for an imperial past. And very different from the collaborator he found for himself in the cast, George Howe . . . public schoolboy, house captain, captain of games, Greyfriars at its best. Their involvement in the play, combined with their separate detachment from its point of view come out in this record, for which Carl Davis wrote the music, George Howe the words.

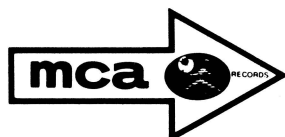
The beginnings of the title song I first heard on the huge draughty stage of the Palace Theatre, Manchester, where we had opened for a pre-London run in September, 1968. It was a dismal time; the play was going badly, the audiences were thin and unappreciative and we were rehearsing pretty well all the time. In the all too few intervals from rehearsals, some of the boys began to put together the lyrics of the song which became 'We Were Happy There'. This title song was a truly co-operative effort, with lines contributed by odd boys who drifted in from rehearsals, snatches tried out by different combinations of voices, while Carl Davis improvised music on the organ accompanied by the strange group of instruments available in the cast, guitar, flute and horn, and the final version of the lyrics battered out in the Tea Centre, Oxford Road. For me, this song, which is about

nostalgia, has already acquired a nostalgia of its own, utterly remote from the events it talks about . . . souvenir of a time which in experience was gloomy and depressing but in retrospect seems fruitful, rich and happy.

The songs are linked by readings taken from various sources and spoken by Sir John Gielgud. There is no fixed relationship between song and reading: the one is sometimes an ironical comment on the other. An account of the Empire on the occasion of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee is followed by Come Sail With Me, a breezy farewell to imperial ambitions. Extracts from Julian Grenfell's letters from the front, rejoicing in the war introduces The Lost Generation, a song about the dead of the First War, of which he was to be one. In 'Spain' a couple daydream on a Spanish beach today knowing nothing of the Civil War which agitated their parents thirty years before.

War is one of the recurring themes of the record, but not the symbol of Vietnam but war as we have known it in Europe; the First War, futile and romantic therefore, the Second, a very painful war and near enough in time to be remote in imagination. War, and also patriotism, a patriotism which ranges from 'the mightiest and most beneficial Empire ever known in the annals of mankind' and Julian Grenfell's belief in 'the Old Flag and the Mother Country, the Heavy Brigade and the Thin Red Line' to that sceptical and limited patriotism which survived the Second War only to be turned into that tawdry parody we have today, when red, white and blue is a nice way of decorating a tea caddy and a Union Jack is only a paper bag.

ALAN BENNETT.



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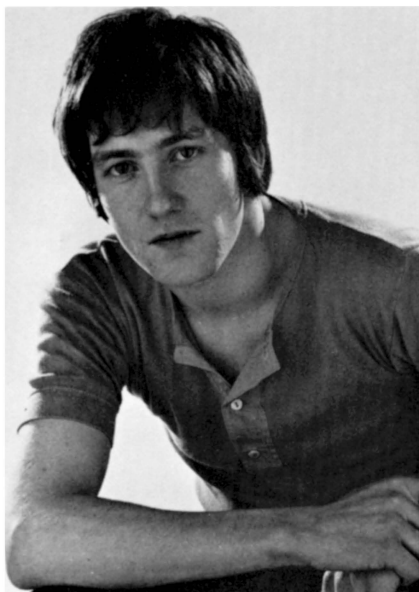
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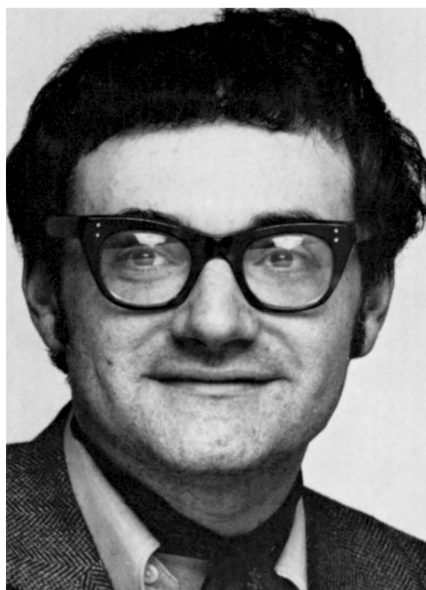
*Sir John Gielgud's current success is the part of the retiring headmaster in Alan Bennett's "40 Years On".*

*During the last six years, Sir John has appeared in many outstanding films including "Becket" and "Chimes at Midnight" (1963); "The Loved Ones" (1964); "The Assignment" (1966); "Mr. Sebastian" and "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (1967); and "Shoes of the Fisherman" and "Oh, What a Lovely War" (1968).*

*Recent television appearances include the ATV series "Conflict" and "The Mayfly and the Frog" (1966); "Alice in Wonderland" and "From Chekhov with Love" (1967); and "St. Joan" (1968).*



*George Howe was born in 1949 at Bromley, Kent. He was educated at St. Edmonds School, Oxford, becoming Head of House, and school colours, First XV in rugby and he is fond of skiing, swimming and surfing. He learnt to play the guitar at the age of eight, and has learnt the piano since the age of thirteen, followed by organ lessons at Oxford. He started song writing with Carl Davis during the pre-London run of "40 Years On" and his main ambition is to write a full-length play with music.*



*Carl Davis was born in New York in 1936 and has lived for the past ten years in London. His composing credits in England include the revue "Twists", two television operas commissioned by the BBC, many incidental scores for TV plays and radio, and the film "The Borfors Gun". He was musical director and arranger for Alan Bennett's "40 Years On" where he met and collaborated with George Howe on "We Were Happy There". He is currently co-composer, arranger and musical director for "The Stiffkey Scandals of 1932", now playing on Shaftesbury Avenue.*



*Mike Leander producer, arranger, composer responsible for overall production of "We Were Happy There".*

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RECORDS

WE WERE HAPPY THERE

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Side  
1

STEREO

SST-L  
MUPS 375

- 1 Pax Britannica  
**THE EMPIRE BUILDER** (Davis, Howe) Leeds Music
- 2 Nanny Hawkins (Alan Bennett) **BOY** (Davis, Howe)  
Leeds Music
- 3 **Extracts of letters by Julian Grenfell**  
(The Lost Generation) Constable
- 4 **THE LOST GENERATION** (Davis, Howe) Leeds Music  
"High Wood" (Philip Johnston) New Statesman

"The Girls of Nineteen-Twenty-Six" (James Laver)  
**GIRLS** (Davis, Howe) Leeds Music  
Narration by John Gielgud, George Howe—  
Vocal. John Gielgud directed by Patrick Garland.  
All Musical Selections Composed  
by Carl Davis & George Howe  
Arranged by Carl Davis  
Produced by Mike Leander

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Side  
2

STEREO

9ST-L  
MUPS 375

- 1 **Extract from "The Civil War in Spain"** (Robert Payne)  
Secker/Warburg **SPAIN** (Davis, Howe) Leeds Music
- 2 **Vergissmeinnicht** (Keith Douglas) Faber & Faber  
**GOODNIGHT SUGAR** (Davis, Howe) Leeds Music
- 3 **Extract from "English History 1914-1945"** (A.J.P. Taylor)  
Clarendon Press, Oxford **WELL DONE** (Davis, Howe)  
Leeds Music
- 4 **I AM A PAPER BAG** (Davis, Howe)  
Leeds Music
- 5 **From "Recessional"** (Rudyard  
Kipling) Methuen & Co. **WE WERE HAPPY  
THERE** (Davis, Howe) Leeds Music

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