

# '60s INSTRUMENTALS



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*Clarinetist Acker Bilk  
was no stranger  
on our shores after  
his British hit topped  
the U.S. charts.*

## '60s INSTRUMENTALS

In the spring of 1963, tenor saxophone player Homer L. "Boots" Randolph had every right to be proud of his new hit, **Yakety Sax**. A veteran of jazz clubs around Evansville, Indiana, Randolph had been brought to Nashville by Chet Atkins at the very dawn of the so-called Nashville sound. During a routine recording session for another artist in 1958, Boots had come up with a "kooky type of solo" based on the chord progressions of *When the Saints Go Marching In*. As he recalled, he and a friend, guitarist Spider Rich, "came back and dressed it up. Finding a title was not hard at all. *Yakety Yak* by the Coasters was really big at the time, and because of the solo King Curtis played on that record, I said, 'Let's title it *Yakety Sax*.'"

The piece was first recorded for RCA in 1958 in a bizarre arrangement that would become as well known as the melody. Towels were stuffed over the bass strings of Floyd Cramer's piano and a piece of copper tubing placed over the high strings. The result was a distinctive "clank" in the rhythm section, which the new audio technology captured to a T.

Although the record sold poorly, Randolph continued to get session work in Nashville and even accompanied a Nashville delegation to the 1960 Newport Jazz Festival. In 1963, he remade *Yakety Sax* for the new independent label Monument, and this time people listened. By now he was on TV's *Jimmy Dean Show* and was able to promote his music to a national audience. But one of the real reasons for the tune's popularity had to do with Sears, Roebuck.

In the early 1960s, the first complete stereo systems

were finding their way into American homes. At the start of 1961, Americans owned some 30 million phonographs, but around three-fourths of these were still monaural. All the major chain-store outlets had set up audio departments and were busy demonstrating to listeners that stereo was the way to go, usually with appealing stereo albums. Thus it was with Sears, Randolph recalled. "They would play my album *Yakety Sax* on those stereos in Sears. Sears was one of the biggest sellers of my albums." Parents would hear the sound, and their kids would like the record. Often they would buy the album, and the stereo to go along with it.

The rise of home stereos had a major effect on how pop music was created and marketed. Sales of hit singles had dropped by a third in 1959. As a result, record companies began to turn their attention for the first time to albums. An LP would be recorded and released, and then, if one of the tracks looked promising, the company would issue it as a single. Thus hits like **Yellow Bird** and **A Walk in the Black Forest** came out with legends on the labels reminding listeners that the piece was from a particular album, implicitly advertising the LP.

A prime source for the new pop instrumentals continued to be theme songs from films and television. **The Theme from "A Summer Place"** came from the pen of one of the greatest of film composers, Viennese-born Max Steiner. His scores ranged from *King Kong* to *Gone with the Wind*, and by the time he was commissioned to do the score for the 1959 teen love picture *A Summer Place*, he was able to insist, "Keep the director away from me. I won't take any advice."

The result was a case of a score better than its picture, but Steiner couldn't convince his publishers of this. "My own publisher wouldn't touch that song," he remembered. "Said it was nothing. Then Percy Faith did it and sold 10 million copies." Faith, for his part, gave credit to the many teenagers who had seen the movie and "wanted to relive that night at the theater."

Another Vienna native, Ernest Gold, was responsible for the music for 1960's *Exodus*. Otto Preminger's three-million-dollar epic about the birth of Israel had a budget that allowed him to bring Gold to Israel for firsthand inspiration. Gold completed the score but had a harder time working out a suitable main theme. "I was after a certain nobility," he remembered, "a certain martial quality associated with the leading character Ari. The theme is really a Jewish heroic march." He came up with a melody but was not happy with it; deadlines, though, were looming, and he finally let it go.

A few months after the film was released, two former Juilliard students named Art Ferrante and Lou Teicher discovered the theme; they had been touring as a classical piano duo, and slowly starving. Eager to try anything, they arranged the *Exodus* theme to showcase their pianos and released it on the United Artists label. The resulting success not only established them as one of the best-selling instrumental teams of the decade but also made Gold's theme a piano standard.

Blake Edwards' 1964 *The Pink Panther* introduced Peter Sellers' bumbling Inspector Clouseau to movie audiences, and its opening credits were built around a leering, animated pink feline; both characters would become favorites of a generation. The infectious title music, **The Pink Panther Theme**, was composed by the versatile Henry Mancini. The theme is in two parts: the initial misterioso section designed as sneaking-around music, and a second part featuring the hard-driving tenor sax solo by veteran Plas Johnson. Mancini recalled: "I knew Plas Johnson was going to play that solo. I could hear his sound in it and that became the sound of the panther."

named called up echoes of the big-band era, with Charly Tabor's Harry James-like trumpet setting the tone. The tune had been composed by a Berlin cabaret writer named Klaus Neumann. According to Neumann, "It was a tune I could never shake off. I would play it on the piano this way and that. Finally I got a chance to use it in a film called *Our Wonderland by Night*."

The movie wasn't successful, but then Neumann took the song to Bert Kaempfert, a house arranger for the German company Polydor. He organized a studio orchestra and did a straightforward arrangement of it. Released first in Germany, the tune still didn't make much of a splash, but when it was issued in the United States, it suddenly started selling. By 1961 it had sold a million copies and launched Kaempfert's career as a bandleader.

The stereo revolution also meant more work for a number of jazz musicians. Trombonist Kai Winding, who had made history a decade earlier with modern jazz pioneers Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk, had a top-10 hit in 1963

with his version of the theme from the film *Mondo Cane*. **More.**  
Pianist Vince Guaraldi, known



sound in it and that became the sound of the painter.  
*Doctor No* introduced Sean Connery's secret agent James Bond to moviegoers in 1963, and a few months later guitarist Billy Strange had his driving version out on a single, calling it simply **The James Bond Theme**. Another guitarist, Al Caiola, a fixture on the New York studio scene, began establishing his solo career with **Bonanza** in 1961. The television show had premiered Saturday, September 12, 1959, and was the first Western to be televised in color; though it ended its run in January 1973, syndicated reruns have kept the show and its music alive well into the 1990s.

A contemporary of *Bonanza* was *Route 66*, an adventure series starring Martin Milner and George Maharis. It lasted only four years but yielded another infectious theme song, **Route 66 Theme**, composed and conducted by Frank Sinatra's ace arranger, Nelson Riddle. Stanley Styne added lyrics to it and Teri Thornton recorded it as *Open Road*—but the vocal version never caught on the way the original did.

It was still possible, though, for an instrumental to make it on its own, and records like **The Stripper** (1962), **Calcutta** (1961) and **Wonderland by Night** (1960) all went to the No. 1 slot on the hit parade. The last-



*Piano duo Ferrante and Teicher*

later for his background music to the "Peanuts" television specials, struck gold with his **Cast Your Fate to the Wind** (1963).

New Orleans trumpet player Al Hirt had played in the bands of Ray McKinley and the Dorsey brothers before joining fellow New Orleanian Pete Fountain in a combo for *The Lawrence Welk Show* in the late 1950s. He came into his own with the success of **Java** in 1964. The tune helped the bearded trumpet player begin a run of 17 chart albums for RCA during the '60s.

—Charles K. Wolfe

## DISCOGRAPHY

- 1. A Swingin' Safari** Billy Vaughn and His Orchestra • *Music by Bert Kaempfert. Dot 16374 (1962).*
- 2. Route 66 Theme** Nelson Riddle • *Music by Nelson Riddle. Capitol 4741 (1962). Courtesy of Capitol Records, Inc., under license from CEMA Special Markets.*
- 3. Yakety Sax** Boots Randolph and His Combo • *Music and lyrics by Randy Randolph and James Rich. Monument 804 (1963). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.*

Al Hirt

- 4. Washington Square** The Village Stompers • *Music and lyrics by Bob Goldstein and David Shire. Epic 9617 (1963). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.*
- 5. Cast Your Fate to the Wind** Vince Guaraldi Trio • *Music by Vincent Guaraldi. Fantasy 563 (1963). Courtesy of Fantasy Records.*
- 6. Yellow Bird** Arthur Lyman Group • *Music and lyrics by Norman Luboff, Marilyn Keith and Alan Bergman. Hi Fi 5024 (1961). Courtesy of Everest Records.*
- 7. The Pink Panther Theme** Henry Mancini and His Orchestra • *Music by Henry Mancini. RCA Victor 8286 (1964). Courtesy of BMG Music/The RCA Records Label, under license from BMG Direct Marketing, Inc.*
- 8. The Stripper** David Rose and His Orchestra • *Music by David Rose. MGM 13064 (1962). Under license from PolyGram Special Markets, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc.*
- 9. More** Kai Winding and Orchestra • *Music by Riz Ortolani and Nino Oliviera. Verve 10295 (1963). Under license from PolyGram Special Markets, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc.*
- 10. Mexico** Bob Moore and His Orchestra • *Music by Boudleaux Bryant. Monument 446 (1961). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.*
- 11. Maria Elena** Los Indios Tabajaras • *Music by Castro L. Barcelata. RCA Victor 8216 (1963). Courtesy of BMG Music/The RCA Records Label, under license from BMG Direct Marketing, Inc.*
- 12. Stranger on the Shore** Mr. Acker Bilk • *Music by Acker Bilk. Atco 6217 (1962). Under license from PolyGram Special Markets, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc.*
- 13. The James Bond Theme** Billy Strange, His Guitar and Orchestra • *Music by Monty Norman. GNP Crescendo 320 (1964). Courtesy of GNP Crescendo Record Co., Inc.*
- 14. A Walk in the Black Forest** Horst Jankowski, His Orchestra and Chorus • *Music by Horst Jankowski. Mercury 72425 (1965). Under license from PolyGram Special Markets, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc.*
- 15. Calcutta** Lawrence Welk and His Orchestra • *Music by Heino Gaze. Dot 16161 (1961). Harpsichord solo by Frank Scott. Licensed from Ramwood Records, a Welk Music Group company.*
- 16. Fly Me to the Moon—Bossa Nova** Joe Harnell and His Organette • *Music by Gene Krupa. Epic 9773 (1961).*

Orchestra • Music by **Bari Howard**. Kapp 421 (1963).

**17. Watermelon Man** Mongo Santamaria Band • Music by **Herbie Hancock**. Battle 45909 (1963). Courtesy of Fantasy Records.

**18. Our Winter Love** Bill Pursell • Music by **John Cowell**. Columbia 42619 (1963). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.

**19. Bonanza** Al Caiola and His Orchestra • Music and lyrics by **Jay Livingston and Ray Evans**. United Artists 302 (1961). Courtesy of EMI Records Group/EMI Records. Under license from CEMA Special Markets.

**20. Java** Al Hirt • Music by **Freddy Friday, Allen Toussaint and Alvin Tyler**. RCA Victor 8280 (1964). Courtesy of BMG Music/The RCA Records Label, under license from BMG Direct Marketing, Inc.

**21. Midnight in Moscow** Kenny Ball and His Jazzmen • Music by **Kenneth Ball**. Based on a song by **Vassili Soloviev-Sedoi and M. Matusovosky**. Kapp 442 (1962). Issued under license from Castle Communications PLC.

**22. The Theme from "A Summer Place"** Percy Faith and His Orchestra • Music by **Max Steiner**. Columbia 41490 (1960). Under license from Sony Music Special Products, a Division of Sony Music Entertainment, Inc.

**23. Wonderland by Night** Bert Kaempfert and His Orchestra • Music by **Klaus Gunter Neumann**. Decca 31141 (1960). Trumpet solo by **Charly Tabor**. Under license from PolyGram Special Markets, a Division of PolyGram Group Distribution, Inc.

**24. Exodus** Ferrante and Teicher • Music by **Ernest Gold**. United Artists 274 (1960). Courtesy of EMI Records Group/EMI Records. Under license from CEMA Special Markets.

*Mongo Santamaria*



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1. **A Swingin' Safari** Billy Vaughn and His Orchestra
2. **Route 66 Theme** Nelson Riddle
3. **Yakety Sax** Boots Randolph and His Combo
4. **Washington Square** The Village Stompers
5. **Cast Your Fate to the Wind** Vince Guaraldi Trio
6. **Yellow Bird** Arthur Lyman Group
7. **The Pink Panther Theme**  
Henry Mancini and His Orchestra
8. **The Stripper** David Rose and His Orchestra
9. **More** Kai Winding and Orchestra
10. **Mexico** Bob Moore and His Orchestra
11. **Maria Elena** Los Indios Tabajaras
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Percy Faith and His Orchestra
23. **Wonderland by Night** Bert Kaempfert and His Orchestra
24. **Exodus** Ferrante and Teicher



**President:** Steve Janas

**Vice President:** Fernando Pargas

**Marketing Director/New Product**

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**Recording Producers:** Joe Sasfy, Steve Carr

**Series Consultant:** Charles K. Wolfe

**Creative Director:** Robin Bray

**Associate Producer:** Brian Miller

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**Art Studio:** A Sexton Design

**Chief Financial Officer:** Pamela Chin

**Associate Director of Production:** Karen Hill

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**The Author:** Three-time Grammy nominee Charles K. Wolfe teaches English at Middle Tennessee State University. He has written numerous books and articles on country music and has also produced country and folk music recordings.

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