

Side 1: ZLP 11288, Time: 6:36; Side 2: ZLP 11289, Time: 6:00; 7" 33 rpm single; promo record for radio stations, feat. only Ray's answers to questions by DJ's

Side 1:

[A SPOONFUL OF SUGAR]

Interviewer: (Copies beginning of record as he sings) "Oh, Ray Conniff is his name, oh, Ray Conniff is his name"... and he's here on our programme with his new Columbia album, "The Mary Poppies Album". Welcome, Ray.

Ray Conniff: Well, thank you very much ... good to be here. All artists always say it's good to be here... I wish I could think of something new to say, for an opener.

Interviewer: Well, you said plenty with that opener from "Mary Poppins" and when you drop in with a brand new album by the Ray Conniff Singers, that's a special occasion!

Ray Conniff: Well, I think it was sort of a special album... We had a lot of fun making it, we had some wonderful tunes, and we kind of call it "The Poppins Album", but really it has a longer title than that... it's "Ray Conniff Singers Sing Music From 'Mary Poppins', 'The Sound of Music', 'My Fair Lady' & Other Great Movie Themes".

Interviewer: Cha, cha, cha!

Ray Conniff: (Laughs) Well, we always call it the "Poppins Album", and it was a lot of fun making it, great tunes.

Interviewer: Ray, you've made so many great records thru the years ... how do you keep the quality as high as you do?

Ray Conniff: I don't know how great they are, but I've had a fair amount of success... Seems like we've built up a following now, and sales wise we've done very well, so I'm very grateful for the success we've had.

Interviewer: What are some of the other spoonful in this new LP?

Ray Conniff: Well, of course, the other tunes from the "Mary Poppins" show are "Chim Chim Cher-ee", the academy award winning song, "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious"...

Interviewer: That's lot a spoonful, that's a mouthful!

Ray Conniff: Yeah ... "Feed the Birds", and "Jolly Holiday", and then from "Sound of Music", we did the theme "Sound of Music", "My Favorite Things", and "Climb Every Mountain"... and from "Fair Lady" we have "Street Where You Live" & "I've Grown Accustomed to Her Face", and the other great movie themes, as it says on the cover, are only really two... one from "Mother Goose", which is "Pass Me By", and the theme from "Dear Heart".

Interviewer: Those movie songs and show tunes that you do... they always seem to lend themselves to the Ray Conniff style, which is so distinctive. Why is that?

Ray Conniff: I think probably that we adapt ourselves best to standards, because usually the standards and the movie and show tunes have good basic structure musically... good bass lines and good chord structure... I think a choral group that sings more or less the legitimate choral sound which I think we have, sounds best when they have good musical tunes to work with.

Interviewer: You think you can get them to feed us a tablespoonful from the new album, this time?

Ray Conniff: Okay... let's see, what do we have now. Why don't we do the theme from 'Sound of Music', How's that?

- Interviewer: Our ears are open!
[THE SOUND OF MUSIC]
- Ray Conniff: That, of course, was "The Sound of Music" from "The Mary Poppins Album", and this is Ray Conniff, and it's sure great being on the show. And we're gonna be back with you in a minute with more.
- Interviewer: One thing about your music, Ray Conniff, when you hear just two bars, you know it's you. Can you explain your style, how you developed it, where it came from?
- Ray Conniff: Well, I think basically there are only really two things that are very different about what we do. One is, we use a very exaggerated, predominant rhythm sound, and the other is the sound of the voices. Of course, in this particular album, the voices are singing the words, but on the instrumentals, for instance, we use the singers singing syllables, and I think those are the two basic things, the rhythm and the sound of the singers that are different.
- Interviewer: You've always used the voices as if they were a section of the orchestra, haven't you?
- Ray Conniff: I used them as a section of the orchestra for the first three or four albums I did, when we started back in about 1956, and after we had been recording a year or so, we did the first album, and we augmented the singing group. You know, we only used 8 singers on the orchestra and chorus albums; and the first time we had the singers sing the words, we augmented the singing group to 25 singers, and we used a much smaller orchestra, which basically is just a glorified rhythm section. And... so those are the two groups actually that I use. The one I call the instrumental albums, are with 18 musicians and 8 singers, and the singing albums, as I call them, which have the words... have 25 singers and 9 musicians.
- Interviewer: Well, what were the musical influences in your life that resulted in this style?
- Ray Conniff: Well, my background is with the so-called name bands of the late 30's and in the 40's... I started out with Bunny Berigan's Band in New York City and played trombone, and arranged for him, and then I went with Bob Crosby's band... I started with Bunny in 1938; I believe it was, at a place called The Paradise Restaurant in New York City, which was on 50th and Broadway. Then I left Bunny, went with Bob Crosby a year or so later, then went with Artie Shaw a year or so after that, and I was with two or three different bands that Artie had and in all of these bands I played trombone and arranged music, and then after that I did studio work in New York City and on the West Coast and during all this time I picked up a lot of, oh I wouldn't say gimmicks or tricks, but when you're in a business like the music business for as many years as I was you learn what's good and what isn't good musically for arranging. As far as picking up the style, for what I've been doing the last few years, it was just another one of those things that an arranger is always... he's always trying new things, and this voice... sound of voices and this rhythm sound that I use was just another new thing that I tried out that worked fine, and everybody seemed to like.

Interviewer: So many Jazz singers use their voices as instruments... Maybe that was part of your influence.

Ray Conniff: There is something that you make me think of. When I used to ride along in the bus, you know, with the fellows doing one nighters like in Bunny's band with Georgie Auld and Joe Bushkin and fellows like that, we all used to listen to the records of other bands... We'd memorize them... We listened to them so much, it wasn't intentional, but we just learned them from listening to them so many times when we'd be in the hotel rooms playing records.

Interviewer: You'd know every note.

Ray Conniff: That's right... And we would sing along with the band, you know, like "doot, um doddle, do de doddle de do"... and that sort of thing, and I think that's probably how I got started using those syllables with the voices.

Interviewer: And now, years later, we find the result of those early band days in your new album.

Ray Conniff: Let's do one of the tunes from "My Fair Lady"... And the title is "On the Street Where You Live".

Ray Conniff: [ON THE STREET WHERE YOU LIVE]

Ray Conniff: That of course was "On the Street Where You Live" from "My Fair Lady", and this is Ray Conniff, and once again I'd like to say it's great being on the show.

Side 2:

Interviewer: Ray Conniff, how do you like the music business these days? Is it satisfying, perplexing... What is it?

Ray Conniff: Well, I enjoy it very much. The music business has been very kind to me. I graduated from high school in 1934, and I started playing professionally in 1933, and things really didn't start happening for me until about 1955... There were a lot of years, and a lot of panics, and a lot of hard times, with very little of the green stuff, and it took a long time before I clicked on something that proved successful with the record buyers, and became successful financially for me. And fortunately it's a kind of style of music and writing that I enjoy doing so I'm very happy about the whole thing and very grateful.

Interviewer: You seem to be above the general run of music today... You've carved out a big niche for yourself with the albums and singles as well, and that takes a very special gift.

Ray Conniff: Well, I think that probably one of the big reasons for that is that I married a girl from Sweden... My wife, Ann, is not at all showbiz... We live a very quiet life out in Encino, California, and she has been very much instrumental and behind me all the way in my success and has been a wonderful encouragement to me... Matter of fact, this Poppins album was her idea... she saw the show before I did, and she said "Ray, you've got to go see this show"... So she dragged me out to see it again, and she has been very instrumental in the type of material, and I think probably the reason that you say I'm aloof from the whole thing, is that it's because of her... We have just led that kind of a life and brought out that kind of a product.

- Interviewer: What a perfect introduction that is for another goodie from the new "Mary Poppins" album!
- Ray Conniff: Oh, yeah..."Dear Heart"... that's really apropos, isn't it? From the picture of the same name.
[DEAR HEART]
- Interviewer: "Dear Heart", one of the gems from the new Ray Conniff album, which we call "The Poppins Album". That's just its short name. How's the full title again, Ray?
- Ray Conniff: The title on the album cover says: "Ray Conniff with.. and the Singers with Music from "Mary Poppins", "The Sound of Music", "My Fair Lady" and Other Great Movie Themes", and this "Dear Heart" was one of the other great movie themes. Incidentally, speaking of... You asked before if I had any favorites in the music business, and this is written by one of my... I'm in I guess, number one in the fan club of Hank Mancini. I think he's one of the greatest talents of our time, and has written some wonderful music, and he's a very good friend of mine, too.
- Interviewer: There'll be more from Ray Conniff before you can say "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious". Ray, as one of today's top conductors and arrangers, and all around superior musician... Can we get an authentic appraisal of today's music scene, the Rock'n'Roll, the Beatles, and so forth?
- Ray Conniff: Oh well, I feel that all of this sort of thing that is currently going on now, has been going on ever since I've been associated with the music business, in varying degrees, and I think that it is all something that is necessary, to the music business, whether it's necessary or not... Maybe that isn't the right word, but it always is happening... When I was a kid, the swing band era, so called, wasn't really looked upon by our parents as being the greatest thing that had happened in the music business, and the Frank Sinatra era, when all the girls started screaming, was kinda looked down upon... Yet you see Frank has become an established artist, and the Elvis Presley era was kinda looked down on by parents and older people, but he has become an established singer and he sings well... He sings very, very well. And I think all of these things that happened, like Rock'n'Roll and Bop and the Beatles, and the whole thing that we go through from time to time... Although they don't stay in themselves, I think certain elements of them rub off, but I know that I don't copy these trends... but I use certain things that I hear in them that I like and, I think that's the way music business is, the popular music business anyway. It, uh... all these different things have little elements in them that... a portion of it is good and is retained or elaborated, or modified upon, and... kept.
- Interviewer: The songs seem to come out like buckshot... They're like cigarettes, they're smoked, or played for a bit, and then thrown away and forgotten. Do you like the kind of songs that are being written?

Ray Conniff: Of course, you know that's another thing that I think isn't anything... isn't really too different. I can remember when I was a little kid, my mother and father came home from a minstrel show one night, and they were talking about a song called "Yes, We Have No Bananas", and this type of thing is nothing that's particularly new... novelty songs and everything. And I think, ever since I've been associated with the music business, the number of good songs that come out are very, very small, compared with the number of songs that actually are written. The number of, you know, real evergreens that stand through the years is always very low, but yet look at what we've picked out of just the last few years here on... on this show... We've picked so far four tunes that are very good... "Spoonful of Sugar", "Sound of Music", "On the Street Where You Live" is certainly a standard, and I think "Dear Heart" will live... So there is good music being written, but most of it is coming out of the shows, I think. It seems to be the way the trend is now, don't you think?

Interviewer: Yes, it looks that way. But the Beatles seem to be writing some good songs.

Ray Conniff: Do you know that I have gotten many letters from people that have wanted to know if I would do an album of the Beatles' songs, so there must... you know if people who buy my albums can see me doing their songs, there must be some good songs in there that they can hear me doing.

Interviewer: Ray, you were talking about novelty songs like "Yes, We Have No Bananas"... You've got one along that line in this album.

Ray Conniff: Yeah, let's look at - for instance - this tune out of "Mary Poppins". Let's do it now... "Supercalifragilisticexpialidocious".

Interviewer: Wow! You said that better than Julie Andrews! Thanks for being with us Ray, and congrats on another supercalifragilisticexpialidocious album. Hey! I said it!

Ray Conniff: Thank you very much. I really enjoyed being with you on the show.
[SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS]

[...] = songs to be played before and during the interview

Produced by Fred Robbins for Columbia Records in 1965