

Some notes by Manfred concerning

“The Ray Conniff Collection 1938-62”:

Soon after I had learned about this forthcoming release, I felt I had to write to Trapeze Music not only to thank them for the 4 CD box devoted to Ray Conniff, but also to let them know that the list of tracks and artists contained some mistakes. I wrote, *if not too late, I would like you to make a couple of corrections before the artwork is printed. E.g., most of the tracks by The Ray Conniff Singers were denoted as by “Ray Conniff and His Orchestra”, and vice versa. The title of track No. 4 on CD 1 should read “Little Gate’s Special”, not “Little Fates” and so on...*

Besides, I thought that two tracks (Am I Blue / Please Take a Letter, Miss Brown) by Teddy Powell and his Orchestra have nothing to do with Ray and should not be on this set. Anyway, to my surprise I received an instant reply, saying *“Dear Mr Thönicke, Many thanks for your e-mail, and also, of course, for communicating the news about the release to fellow Ray Conniff enthusiasts. We will check all the details you mentioned and make any appropriate corrections on the final version of the packaging. As far as the two tracks you mention are concerned, it is hard for me to comment immediately as this collection was compiled by one of our third-party associates, but I will pass your comments to him and see what he comes back with. In reality, since we have now communicated the information to our distributors and it has been widely published, it would be very difficult for us to make changes at this stage, but I will pass on whatever thoughts the compiler comes back with. Thanks again for your positive comments about the release and I share your hope that it will be well received by Mr. Conniff’s devotees.”*

A couple of days later, I received this message:

“Thanks again for your input on our Ray Conniff set. I have discussed your points with Geoff Wilding, who compiled it, and he in turn has discussed it with his associates in the USA. Geoff is a former showbiz journalist and photographer from the national press, who was especially friendly with Jo Stafford and Paul Weston, and retains a number of knowledgeable contacts in the US. His associate who provided input on the Ray Conniff has some interesting background on Teddy Powell, who, it appears, was quite a sharp operator (he was imprisoned for trying to bribe an official to avoid being drafted in WWII and became a music publisher in the 50s) and apparently was keen to retain an interest in works even where he was not involved, whether that was composing or arranging. As a result, it seems that the information he supplied to record companies, publishers etc. was not always totally accurate, and our contributor is fairly confident, for a number of reasons, that Ray Conniff arranged these titles, despite what appears in discographical information. Given this, and the considerable problems involved in getting the information changed in the database of all our distributors around the world, I am inclined to leave the tracks in, and Geoff will add a short piece to the booklet notes to cover off the issue of there being an element of doubt involved. I trust this will be an acceptable way of dealing with the issue. As far as “Little Gates Special” and “Feather Merchants Ball” being the same composition, Geoff was indeed aware of this, but thought that having two different versions would provide an interesting comparison – interestingly, in the music publishing database, while Ray Conniff is credited as the composer on the Berigan version, on “Feather Merchants Ball” Teddy Powell has a writing credit alongside Ray – an example of Powell getting himself a piece of the action, no doubt!”

It's nice to find a record company that takes comments seriously, does something about it and then sends you such a detailed response. A quick Google shows that Geoff Wilding has written booklet notes for many albums and he obviously takes some care and does research to try to get his facts right. The fact that the record company is willing to put a note in the booklet regarding the points I raised is also a big plus.

The set has already been advertised by a couple of internet record dealers at the price of € 19.99.