



L'illustration Musicale

Interview with Anne-Laure Warner on 13th May 2020

On the 13th May 2020 we had the honour and the extreme pleasure of interviewing Anne-Laure Warner, the widow of Eddie Warner, the founder of the mythical collection of L'illustration Musicale as we have just re-edited the twenty-six volumes Anne-Laure reflects on the history of the collection and her story is interspersed with precious anecdotes. Discover the interview below:

DJ: Anne-Laure can you tell us how the Illustration Musicale label was born?

ALW: The L'illustration Musicale editions were created in 1965 by my husband, Eddie Warner. L'illustration Musicale was the name of the publishing company and the brand name was Warner Music. Not to be confused with the major label which has the same name today.

The first vinyl produced by L'illustration Musicale was released in 1967 but the production really took off during the early seventies. We realised that the production music landscape was lacking a collection which celebrated or valued electronic keyboards: a more of a French addition to an already vast and excellent Anglo-Saxon repertoire, which was produced and distributed at the time by L'illustration Musicale. This is how the records for L'illustration Musicale were born and created.

L'illustration Musicale is considered to be the first label of electronic production music in the history of the library music. In fact, across the different possibilities that electronic instruments can offer, the search for new acoustics and sound effects, sometimes strange, sometimes more irritating or amusing, was very passionate and completed, in a very efficient manner, the more traditional Anglo-Saxon music collections that one could find during those years.

Could you remind us of the environment surrounding production music in France at the time of the creation of L'illustration Musicale (forces in presence at the time, needs for the media, etc.)?

There were the editions Chappell France of whom one of the main composers was Paul Bonneau, the renowned conductor of large orchestra which one frequently heard on the radio. The Chappell music library offered orchestral music more in the English style and did not seem to be a competitor for L'illustration Musicale. The other production music companies (Télé Music, Sonimage, etc.) arrived later. As far as the media were concerned of course there was the French television with its three channels and the radio (RTF until 1964, then ORTF from 1964 to 1974, Europe 1, RTL), private audio-visual companies and the major industrial companies. We managed to follow the use of our music. The professionals needed additional music or shorter cues for publicity for example. Our musical library was very practical because the clients would re-work them, make cuts etc.



What was the economic model of library music in France at the time of L'illustration Musicale? What about SACEM (French copyright management society)?

The works and copyrights were registered at the SACEM. We were remunerated on the broadcasting rights and the copyrights but it was next to nothing. At this time we didn't yet have a tariff grid for the licensing rights. Then a group of professionals got together to develop a tariff grid for the use of the music and the recuperation of copyrights.

How did L'illustration Musicale make itself known to the media to whom the music label was destined?

We did the-tour of the sound engineers, directors, publicists and radio stations and TV channels carrying our records under our arms. We would hang around in the corridors. Initially my husband did the promotion himself to launch the records.

Can you let us know the name of the graphic designer who created the logo for L'illustration Musicale?

The logo was designed by my husband and technically produced by a graphic designer he chose. Production music records were not designed in the same manner as records presented in the shops: you saw the title and the name of the composer but the visual was very low key. L'illustration Musicale kept everything initially with the sleeves having a central hole (on the first five references). The coloured sleeves arrived later. My husband said in this respect "I make music for professionals, they don't have to have the same design as records sold in the shops. They should know enough about music to be able to listen to the record: know who the composers are , each with their own skills. They don't need us telling them a nice story.

Can we go back to Eddie Warner's career and in particular his débuts as a musician?

My husband was born in Germany. Of Jewish origin he had to flee his natal country in 1934 because of the racial persecutions. It was thanks to a Jewish organisation in Berlin that he was able to study music at the Conservatoire of Strasbourg (piano and trumpet). Then, after many adventures, he found a position in Paris as a Jazz pianist. He was ranked by the Hot Club de France in 1939 as being one of the best Jazz pianists at that time.

The situation at the end of 1939 meant he signed up as a voluntary person for the army during the war. He was assigned to the Foreign Legion. Very quickly he became the bugler. Music always saves you...

After the war he quickly returned to music and started a career as a conductor. Promoting South-American music in France with a series of successful songs such as "Samba-Samba", "Terre Tropicale" and many more. ("Samba-Samba" became a success outside of France) he was awarded Le Grand Prix du Disque in 1948, (the year the award was created). He built up and directed an orchestra of seventeen musicians playing variety music: *Eddie Warner and his tropical music*, best-seller in



dance music with numerous tours throughout Europe, North Africa, Middle-East etc. over fourteen years.

How did you meet your husband?

We met quite by chance in the sixties. We were both German. I had left Germany to do my literary studies in Paris. I was aiming to become a translator (German – French, French-German). He was travelling a lot, touring with his orchestra. It was a short story that lasted twenty years (*laughs*).

How did Eddie Warner become interested in production music?

Between tours he had to find work for the orchestra, either recording sessions, or live concerts, commissioned and transmitted on radio. Frequently the musical compositions were specifically composed for the programmes. The orchestras were selected by the RTF and my husband was one of the homologated conductors as were Roger Roger and Nino Nardini. That's how they all met and they mutually appreciated each other.

A meeting with the music publisher Jacques Plante gave a slightly different orientation to the musical activities of my husband. The Jacques Plante editions represented Berry Music in France which included the Conroy Library catalogue. This type of music didn't interest Jacques Plante very much and he asked Eddie to take over. My husband quickly realised the potential of this catalogue. We became the sub-publishers of Conroy, then KPM (EMI). KPM had a very avant-garde catalogue, very Jazz and very orchestral. This specific genre made it quite difficult to exploit in France, but Eddie succeeded in promoting it and KPM became very well-known amongst the professionals.

Eddie was also solicited as a composer by the English editors, as was Roger Roger, who had already been working since the fifties on catalogues such as Southern Music in England.

What was your role in the L'illustration Musicale adventure?

Having always worked alongside my husband since the creation of the editions, I became the head of the company from May 1982 until 1999.

Initially I looked after all the secretarial side, typing the titles out to deposit the works at the SACEM and looking after dispatching the records for the provinces. It also happened that I did musical research for clients. Here's a little anecdote : having worked, amongst others, with Air Liquide who was a partner with the European Space Agency who built the Ariane rockets, we prayed everytime a rocket was launched that it would take off without any problems and we hadn't worked for nothing!

At the beginning of the eighties, with the arrival of new technologies in the sound and music industries, the needs of the professionals came to light. French production music was becoming less and less attractive. I therefore started looking at catalogues from elsewhere to enable them to become known in France. I was looking for different and new sounds, and went as far as Australia. That's how our company started distributing FirstCom, Bruton Music, Music House, Cavendish, German and



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Italian labels. Eventually with L'illustration Musicale and all the foreign catalogues for whom we were the sub-publishers, we had to manage fifteen different labels. We were the first to offer classical music with the Forlane label. Then we introduced the sound effect collections which was new for France.

Thanks to this kaleidoscope of different music colours, I was able to grow the company and surround myself with a very efficient and friendly team who had a real sense of service and were music-lovers. We did turnkey musical research and translation of the sound effect catalogues into French, offering classical music (which was new) and created a system of musical research on diskettes to facilitate the use of our repertoires by the clients. In twenty years I have witnessed three technological revolutions: vinyl, CD and now downloading! For the images we went from diapositives to video. When the CD arrived I had to be able to offer the music on both supports (vinyl and CD), and even sometimes supply the CD player because not everyone was equipped. Since then, L'illustration Musicale hasn't stopped evolving and expanding its repertoire for the professionals in the sound and image industry with the constant objective of "quality and innovation".

My biggest satisfaction is that the L'illustration Musicale became a permanent shareholder of the SACEM during the time I managed the company. Afterwards, L'illustration Musicale became Zomba Production Music.

How was an album for L'illustration Musicale created?

The editorial line of the label was streamlined little-by-little with experience: with the new instruments arriving (electronic keyboards), everyone was having fun without necessarily realising right away that these had a certain utility. But it wasn't always improvisation: Roger, Nino and my husband did have ideas and themes, they knew they were going to make a record like this or like that, (for children, industries etc.) because the different music had to be classified by genre in order to create a library. I actually still have some of the scores.

In which studio did the recordings take place?

Roger Roger had set up a professional studio at his home in Jouy-en-Josas for all the sound takes with all the necessary instruments: the Studio Ganaro (acronym of Gaston, Nardini and Roger Roger).

Did Roger Roger, Nino Nardini and Eddie Warner have a specific ceremonial before and at the time they entered the studio?

They used to dine together before disappearing into the studio, where they lost all track of time. They generally played at night and into the early hours.

How was a recording session planned?

We didn't think about productivity: the first thing to do was to really get to know and to master the instruments and discover what they had to offer. I was sometimes present at these sessions, which wasn't quite the case for Eva, Roger's wife, as she was an opera singer and preferred to do other things.



Did the composers reply to orders?

Yes and no. I have enormous respect and I greatly admire all of these composers, because there is nothing more difficult than creating something whilst respecting all the technical constraints this type of music demands.

How did the members of the trio decide who did what?

They either co-composed or each one composed on their own. It was more or less Roger who was at the helm. Nino was First Prize of Rome on the piano. As far as my husband was concerned he had an absolute ear for music and easily managed to master new instruments. When we went on holiday in the camping-car, we always took his electric piano (a Kawai?), a long and heavy keyboard that we put on the seats (*laughs*). Once we arrived at our destination he installed himself on the beach whilst I paddled in the water. This piano ultimately stayed in the studio... Everyone got on very well until the end. Everything stopped when Eddie died in May 1982.

Was there an in-house band of musicians, as it existed in the commercial labels (Barclay, Motown, for example)?

No there were no group sessions. They did everything as a trio: Roger, Nino and Eddie.

We did bring out tracks of other independent musicians: John Randall, Bernard Fevre, Jacky Giordano and Yan Tregger. And Johnny Hawksworth, who composed mainly for KPM, also worked on some records for L'illustration Musicale.

Did Eddie Warner, Roger Roger and Nino Nardini have any pseudonyms?

My husband had several names he would use: Eddie Warner principally, which comes from his first name Werner Blumann. This pseudonym was indeed on his passport. He also used Peter Bonello, Archie Gum, Anthony Cadogan or even Terence Redcliff. As far as Roger Roger was concerned it was his real name. But sometimes he signed under the name of Eric Swan and Cecil Leuter. Georges Teperino was the pseudonym of Nino Nardini.

Why were there no songs, just instrumental titles?

It had to be almost anonymous music, it couldn't become music that one could memorise. The music had to exist without disturbing anything, it had to stay neutral. It couldn't be a melody that was too loud or too present. We called it "background music". The name "background" is very denigrating because in fact this type of music was not considered as a major art form. For a long time it was looked down upon by the majors before they understood its utility. The name "Production Music" seems to be more appropriate for me.

Lalo Schifrin took part in some of the recordings: what was the nature of his relationship with Eddie Warner?



Lalo was the pianist and arranger of my husband's orchestra for two years. During one of the tours he was picked-out by Dizzy Gillespie who took him to the States where he had the career we know about.

On which albums/titles did Lalo Schifrin work on?

Lalo took part in the album *Night Life* which came out at the time of the big fashion for disco. It was disco with a big orchestra. This album was not initially scheduled for the library. It was destined for the commercial circuit.

Why weren't we allowed to use his name when the reedition of the recordings from *Night Life* on the album *Disco Never Dies (GAL077)* came out?

Lalo didn't want to be reminded about his modest début: a young Argentinian musician with little money, who played in Parisian jazz clubs. He tended to deny his past, which takes nothing off the immense talent he had, the talent my husband discovered as soon as he heard him for the first time, one night in a club.

What place, according to you, has L'illustration Musicale left in the history of production music in France and how do you explain the increasing interest of amateurs for library catalogues such as these?

L'illustration Musicale made a date in history because it was the first label dedicated to electronic production music. Current generations don't know these instruments, which were new at the time, and today's new instruments have a completely different sound. It is blessed bread for the DJs who use this music to mix and sample. It's the miracle of music: it can be revive at any time, and we just don't know how or where.

What's your opinion on production music today?

There are things I really like and others which exasperate me a bit: each period has its demands about sound and image... There are also moments of nostalgia... The proof: we are now looking for seventies atmospheres and admire the pioneers, who traced the path and gave some noble titles to this "minor art".

How was the opening music for the famous French programme *Les Chiffres et les lettres* chosen?

"Western Patrol", which is on the album *Medium Orchestral Beat (IMPP-3)* was chosen by the sound illustrator and producer of the programme: Armand Jammot. The name was changed to "Alabama Trail" for the credits. The longevity of these opening music is crazy: the public has always wanted it to be kept, which didn't really please the channel who didn't get any royalties on it. They tried to modernise it several times by ordering new arrangements, which were more or less a success.

What has happened to the original tapes of L'illustration Musicale?

Nobody knows what has happened to these tapes, it is a bit sad for me. All the material was stored at Roger Roger's in the Ganaro studio because the room had the perfect temperature for conserving the tapes. When my husband died I had other preoccupations on my mind and I didn't think about them at the time. When the



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L'illustration Musicale session took place at Zomba Music, I tried to retrieve the tapes from Roger Roger's widow but it didn't happen.

Subsidiary question: to the best of your knowledge were there any female composers of production music at the time?

As far as I know, there was only one female composer who worked for the Burton label: the English lady Zoe Kronberger, who used the pseudonym Zoe de Sousa. She lives in France and is in fact a fantastic painter.

Interview by Delphine Joutard, Senior Production Manager at Universal Production Music.