

Down Peacock Alley

The Palm Court Theatre Orchestra
Anthony Godwin

collect

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	J. Gilbert & Horatio Nichols	
2	Say a Little Prayer for Me (Foxtrot, 1930)	4:42
	Linda Murray vocal refrain	
	Franz Lehár, orch. Debroy Somers	
3	Gigolette (Foxtrot, 1922)	4:14
	Julius Lenzberg	
4	Haunting Rag (1912)	2:57
	Jacob Gade	
5	Jealousy (Tango, 1926)	3:50
	Stelios Elia violin solo • Philip Sibthorp vocal refrain	
	Will Donaldson	
6	Tell Her at Twilight (Foxtrot, 1921)	3:29
	Roger Eckersley	
7	Fire-flies (Two-Step, 1911)	3:30
	Jack Glogau & Robert King	
8	Fashionette (Novelty Foxtrot, 1928)	4:39
	Anthony Godwin alto & soprano saxophone solos	
	Arthur Pryor	
9	A Coon Band Contest (Jazz Foxtrot)	3:06

	Cole Porter	
10	Love for Sale (1930)	3:12
	Linda Murray vocal refrain	
	David Comer	
11	Yankyana (Foxtrot, 1919)	3:58
	Zdeněk Fibich, arr. Debroy Somers	
12	Poëm (Waltz)	4:20
	arr. Alwyn Green	
13	Charleston (Foxtrot, 1923)	2:16
	W.H. Middleton	
14	Down South – American Sketch	4:16
	(Cake Walk – Sand Dance – Big Boot Dance, 1901)	
	arr. Debroy Somers	
15	The Savoy One-Step Medley (1925)	4:50
	Montague Ewing	
16	The Policeman's Holiday (1911)	2:52
	Alwyn Green vocal refrain	
	Alwyn Green, arr. Godwin & Green	
17	Vintage Galop	2:31
	Scotto & Christiné	
18	La Petite Tonkinoise	2:42
		TT 66:30
	The Palm Court Theatre Orchestra	
	directed by Anthony Godwin	

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Down Peacock Alley is a selection of delightful original arrangements of popular music from the early years of the twentieth century, when new and daring dance crazes began to sweep across the Atlantic from America to challenge the old-style waltzes and polkas of the Victorian ballroom.

The Cake Walk was a strutting, jaunty walk with elements of the Two-Step, danced to a syncopated melody which usually developed through three or four sections. *Down South – American Sketch* from 1901 incorporates a Cake Walk, a Sand Dance and a Boot Dance. The synopsis on the music reads:

The sketch opens with a quaint dance. The first two movements depict the restless Southern Darkey! The trio introduces a tuneful melody, which is hummed by a majority of the orchestra; and the audience, carried away with the drowsy strain, finds itself unconsciously humming with the band. N.B. – to effectively render this piece, the accessories marked in the drum part should not be omitted in the absence of a drummer. These can be done by any intelligent player using two pieces of sandpaper on a cigar box for the Sand Dance, marking time well and crisply. For the Big Boot Dance use two sticks on a chair, or

in default, two coconut shells. In the second part of the Cake Walk the melody should be sung or hummed softly by the whole of the band, harmonised if possible. A few laughs judiciously introduced have been found most amusing.

Ragtime had similar musical elements to the Cake Walk, at first confined to formal syncopation, then developing into a more commercial, popular version and taking America by storm. When Ragtime arrived in England in 1912 with the Review *Hello Rag Time* at the Hippodrome, the *Times* passed judgement:

There is surely nothing unhealthy in the music itself. Indeed its very vigour must have a stimulating effect on the popular musical mind.

The sensational Tango, though rather *risqué*, was considered slightly more genteel than the robust Rag. Tango clubs opened. Tango Tea-dances were held at the Waldorf. Books on the etiquette of giving Tango 'At Home' parties were published with such advice as:

Dancers should walk, glide and sway with no movement of the shoulders: legs are straightened or relaxed but rarely bent and the woman should move with the sinuous grace of a tiger.

The Charleston, a dance which epitomised the 'Roaring Twenties', had a surprisingly brief life-span. The first piece of music to use the distinctive Charleston rhythm – *Charleston, South Carolina* – was composed in 1923 by James P. Johnson. Soon afterwards he wrote *The Charleston* itself, a hit number in the 'Coloured Review' *Running Wild* in 1925. It became the new ballroom craze – an energetic and wild dance with side kicks and intricate syncopated footwork. At the peak of its popularity, a Grand Charleston Ball and Competition was held at the Royal Albert Hall in 1926, judged by Fred Astaire and Jack Hylton amongst others, but only a few months later, tamed and civilised into the Quickstep, the Charleston disappeared until its rediscovery by later generations.

The dance which outlasted them all, however, was the ever popular Foxtrot. Many other dances of the time featured a series of quick running steps known as the 'Trot' – the Horse Trot, the Turkey Trot, the Fish Walk, all a development of the One-Step and the Rag. The Foxtrot, as such, was known to have been played at the 400 Club in Bond Street in 1914. It was a bright, lively dance requiring lots of floor space. The dance became very much simplified during the First World War – soldiers on home leave had little time to learn a complicated dance routine, and gradually the Trot variation

disappeared. The dance became a smooth gliding walk, the music more sophisticated and the lyrics reflected the more sombre mood of the Thirties.

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The internationally acclaimed **Palm Court Theatre Orchestra** specialises in performing authentic arrangements of salon, theatre and dance orchestra music from 1900–1945.

The Orchestra was formed in 1978 when its Director, the late Anthony Godwin, at that time principal bass clarinetist with the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra, inherited an extraordinary library of vintage music from his father, whose extensive family had all been musicians during the early years of the twentieth century. Fascinated by the music, he determined to re-create the sound of those earlier years.

The musicians, all from prestigious orchestras, delight in the music of this period. One minute relaxing amidst the Tiffany lamps and potted palms of an Edwardian drawing-room, the next hoofing and crooning in the best Hollywood tradition, they conjure up a golden age of musical entertainment with superb skill, perfect style and infectious good humour.

The Palm Court Theatre Orchestra has

performed at prestigious concert venues and brilliant society occasions throughout the world. It won the 'Grand Prix du Disque' award for the first of its many albums, has appeared on television, broadcast on radio and can be

seen playing on-screen in the Oscar-nominated film *Tom & Viv*.

The Palm Court Theatre Orchestra is now recognised as 'possibly the best orchestra of its kind in the world'.

This recording is dedicated to the memory of Anthony Godwin.

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Recording venue Town Hall, Watford; 16 May 1983 (Tracks 1–14); Regent Centre, Christchurch, Dorset; 19 February 1984 (Tracks 15–17); Guildhall, Portsmouth; 25 July 1980 (Track 18)

Design Tim Feeley

Booklet typeset by Michael White-Robinson

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