

Jerome Flynn in Badger



TV Themes of Nigel Hess

1	Hetty Wainthropp Investigates (BBC) Phillip McCann cornet	2:47
2	premiere recording Badger (Feelgood Fiction/BBC) Pauline Cato Northumbrian pipes	2:31
3	The One Game* (Central TV)	3:08
4	Wycliffe (HTV) Anthony Pleeth cello	2:52
5	A Woman of Substance (Portman/Channel 4)	2:56
6	Summer's Lease* (BBC)	3:10
7	Dangerfield (BBC) Anthony Pleeth cello	3:00
8	Just William (Talisman/BBC)	2:29
9	premiere recording Every Woman Knows a Secret (Carnival/ITV) Mary Carewe vocal	2:50

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10	Chris Laurence bass	2:41	20	An Affair in Mind (BBC) Olive Simpson vocal	3:18
11	Anna of the Five Towns (BBC) Phillip McCann cornet	2:54	21	The London Embassy (Thames TV) Maurice Murphy trumpet · Nigel Hess piano	2:47
12	Campion (BBC) John Bradbury violin	2:29	22	Atlantis (BBC) Phillip McCann cornet · Nigel Hess piano	3:35
13	Maigret (Granada TV) Olive Simpson vocal	2:53	23	A Hundred Acres (Antelope West/Channel 4) Christopher Lacey flute	2:32
14	Vidal in Venice (Antelope/Channel 4) Gareth Hulse oboe • Jane Lister harp	3:35	24	Growing Pains (BBC) Nick Curtis vocal	3:07
15	Classic Adventure (Mosaic/BBC)	2:42	25	Us Girls (BBC)	2:44
16	All Passion Spent (BBC) David Firman piano	3:31	26	Titmuss Regained (New Penny/Thames TV) Christopher Lacey recorder • Peter Willison cello	2:46
17	Chimera (Zenith/Anglia TV) Olive Simpson vocal	3:27	27	premiere recording An Ideal Husband (Wilde Films)	2:59
18	Testament (Antelope/Channel 4) Jeremy West cornett	3:22		Rolf Wilson violin	TT 79:39
19	Vanity Fair (BBC) James Watson trumpet	2:34		Chameleon* The London Film Orchestra	

Oliver Rokison in Just William



Party Questions

Composers, as a breed, tend not to be gregarious. Other people disrupt the muse, and it is better to spend days on end in the garret with the guttering candle, alone with those little black dots, than risk being unreceptive when that glittering theme arrives from nowhere. But occasionally – very occasionally – the television composer will be inveigled to a social gathering of the great and the good. Within five minutes of arriving the composer is reminded just why it would have been better to stay in the garret. Almost every conversation runs along the following lines:

Q: And what do you do?

A: Well, I'm in the music business. (The composer quickly learns that *anything* is preferable to this answer. Say you're a button-crusher in a Chinese laundry, say you polish the knob on the great front door, say *anything* rather than 'the music business'.)

Q: Oh, really!! What, exactly?

A: Well, I write music. (Now wait for the pause. Your questioner is thrown somewhat off-guard. Anybody he's heard of who writes music is either Andrew Lloyd Webber or dead, so you *must* be telling porkies.)

Q: (warily) Oh, how interesting. What kind of music?

A: Mainly for television. (Your questioner is now seriously out of his depth, as the next question inevitably shows.)

Q: Oh, you mean adverts and stuff.

A: No, more like dramas and that sort of thing. (Your questioner now feels he's on a firmer footing. Now he knows you *must* be in fantasyland. Dramas on TV don't *have* any music, except maybe those short catchy tunes at the beginning and end – and nobody actually *writes* those... they get them off records.)

Q: (trying to catch you out) Oh, how fascinating!

Have you done anything well known?

A: Well... (and at this point all the things you've

A: Well... (and at this point all the things you ve written for the last five years go completely out of your head, even though you're the recipient of ten BAFTAs, fifteen Novello Awards, and an Honorary Oscar for being The Most Brilliant Composer Who Ever Scored Anything Since The Beginning Of Time)... I once played the piano on 'Playschool'.

Q: (silence)

A: And I wrote an arrangement once for Basil Brush.

Q: (silence)

A: (brightening) And I copied out a bass part once for John Barry.

Q: (silence that seems to last for about five minutes)

Q: (after a very long, embarrassed pause) So, tell me, what do you actually do for a *living*? A: (throwing in the towel) I'm glad you asked. I'm a button-crusher in a Chinese laundry. Gosh, is that the time? Goodnight...

Composing For Television

From Anna of the Five Towns to Badger, the TV themes on this album span fifteen years of composing music for that small screen in the corner of the living room. The brief from each producer is nearly always the same: music is needed to give the programme an identity, a feel, to tell us where we are and who we are with - a tune that will bring us in from making tea in the kitchen, a sound that tells us our favourite programme has just started. Sometimes the location sparks ideas: the brass band cornet for Hetty Wainthropp Investigates, the Northumbrian pipes for Badger and, inevitably, the piano accordion for Maigret, whose producer stressed the importance of music that was quintessentially Parisian. The series had actually been shot in Budapest, and, I quote, 'if the audience don't think we're in Paris we're dead'. Sometimes the period of the drama is a springboard to a certain style, inspiring the jauntiness of Campion or the dance band for Just William.

The route to this television work came via the Footlights Revue Company at Cambridge, conducting musicals in the West End and composing twenty scores for the Royal Shakespeare Company. Techniques learnt in the theatre are invaluable when applied to scoring music for film. On this CD you are hearing twenty-seven title themes, but for every one of these about twenty minutes of incidental music for each individual episode of a series will have been composed in addition to the opening and closing music. In other words, music specially written for a six-part drama series, if played continuously, would last as long as a couple of Mahler symphonies. This 'incidental' scoring is the music you do not notice, but it is often telling you how to feel or how to react to a dramatic scene - in other words, it is pure theatre, and the composer has to respond to the images in a way which enhances the drama.

Sometimes the music can take on a life of its own away from the programme for which it was originally written. The theme from *The One Game*, which was issued as a single, became a popular radio hit. The session singers who sang on the original soundtrack called themselves *Chameleon*. Due to their success I wrote an album for them, and a new group was formed! They can also be heard on

Summer's Lease, and their lead vocalist Olive Simpson sings solo on Maigret, Chimera and An Affair in Mind. The BBC family drama series Growing Pains featured a lead character who was mad about old film musicals, so I created a theme song that could have been sung by Fred Astaire in his RKO days. We even go as far as to make the start of the track sound like an old 78 rpm record – courtesy of 'eggs and bacon' recorded from a blank shellac disc, then mixed on to the track via digital tape!

Talking of chameleons, that is exactly what today's television composers need to be. With the best will in the world you cannot score a romantic historical drama like A Woman of Substance in the same way you would compose a theme song for comedy duo Cannon and Ball (one of my earliest efforts which somehow did not find its way into this collection). From Mozart pastiche to rock and roll, from a pub band to a full symphony orchestra (with choir), the TV composer has to switch styles, instruments, and even centuries, effortlessly and convincingly. And if the music works well - if it blends seamlessly into the drama - it will largely go unnoticed and unsung. The reward, of course, is being part of a team which brings all the creative elements of a production together into one complete entertainment.

The Television Programmes

Hetty Wainthropp Investigates

Comedy drama set in Lancashire: an OAP turns detective! Starring Patricia Routledge/cornet solo by Phillip McCann (Ivor Novello Award for Best TV Theme)

Badger

Northumbrian drama about the work of a wildlife police officer, starring Jerome Flynn/Northumbrian pipes by Pauline Cato

The One Game

A contemporary saga with medieval themes starring Stephen Dillane and Patrick Malahide/sung by Chameleon

Wycliffe

Cornish detective series starring Jack Shepherd / cello solo by Anthony Pleeth (Best ITV Theme. 'Music from the Movies' magazine)

A Woman of Substance

Barbara Taylor Bradford's first blockbuster, starring Jenny Seagrove, Deborah Kerr, Sir John Mills. Miranda Richardson and Liam Neeson

Summer's Lease

Based on John Mortimer's best-seller, starring Sir John Gielgud, Susan Fleetwood, Michael Pennington and Rosemary Leach/sung by Chameleon (Best TV Theme, Television & Radio Industries Club Award)

Dangerfield

Drama series featuring a Warwickshire police surgeon, starring Nigel le Vaillant/cello solo by Anthony Pleeth

Just William

Featuring Richmal Crompton's classic creation, starring Oliver Rokison, David Horovitch and Polly Adams

Every Woman Knows a Secret

Based on the steamy novel by Rosie Thomas, starring Siobhan Redmond, Paul Bettany and Miles Anderson/vocal by Mary Carewe

Perfect Scoundrels

The adventures of two scheming con-men, starring Peter Bowles and Bryan Murray/bass solo by Chris Laurence

Anna of the Five Towns

Dramatisation of Arnold Bennett's novel set in the Potteries at the turn of the century, starring Peter Davison and Lynsey Beauchamp/cornet solo by Phillip McCann

Campion

Margery Allingham's mild-mannered 1920s sleuth, starring Peter Davison and Brian Glover/violin solo by John Bradbury

Maigret

The French detective's latest TV reincarnation, starring Michael Gambon/vocal by Olive Simpson

Vidal in Venice

Gore Vidal's search for his family roots in the city of water/oboe solo by Gareth Hulse; harp solo by Jane Lister

Classic Adventure

Award-winning documentary series featuring worldwide exploration (Best BBC Theme, 'Music from the Movies' magazine)

All Passion Spent

Dramatisation of the 1930's novel by Vita Sackville-West, starring Dame Wendy Hiller/piano solo by David Firman

Chimera

Thriller by Stephen Gallagher starring John Lynch, Christine Kavanagh and Kenneth Cranham/vocal by Olive Simpson

Testament

Documentary series tracing the history of the Bible, presented by John Romer/cornett solo by Jeremy West (*Ivor Novello Award for Best TV Theme*)

Vanity Fair

Thackeray's classic novel dramatised by Alexander Baron, starring Eve Matheson/ trumpet solo by James Watson

An Affair In Mind

Psychological thriller starring Stephen Dillane and Amanda Donohoe/vocal by Olive Simpson

The London Embassy

Comedy drama series based on the book by Paul Theroux, starring Kristoffer Tabori/trumpet solo by Maurice Murphy; piano solo by Nigel Hess

Atlantis

Gentle comedy by Peter Terson set on England's inland waterways, starring Bruce Purchase, Colin Jeavons and Frank Middlemass/cornet solo by Phillip McCann; piano solo by Nigel Hess

A Hundred Acres

Natural history series depicting the changing seasons within a small area of English countryside/flute solo by Christopher Lacey

Growing Pains

Comedy drama series about a couple who become foster parents, starring Ray Brooks and Sharon Duce/vocal by Nick Curtis

Us Girls

Sitcom that drew laughter from the cultural clashes across three generations of British-domiciled West Indian women

Titmuss Regained

Adapted from John Mortimer's best-seller, starring David Threlfall/recorder solo by Christopher Lacey; cello solo by Peter Willison

An Ideal Husband

From the feature film based on Oscar Wilde's stage play, starring James Wilby, Sadie Frost, Jonathan Firth, Robert Hardy and Prunella Scales/violin solo by Rolf Wilson

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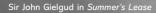


Born in 1953, **Nigel Hess** studied music at Cambridge University, where he was Music Director of the famous Footlights Revue Company. He has since worked extensively as a composer and conductor in television, theatre and film

Nigel has composed numerous scores for both American and British television productions, the best-known of which are presented on this collection. From 1981 to 1985 he was Company Music Director and House Composer for the Royal Shakespeare Company, and has contributed twenty scores for RSC productions. He received the New York Drama Desk Award for 'Outstanding Music in a Play' for the productions of *Much Ado about Nothing* and *Cyrano de Bergerac* on Broadway. His most recent theatre score was for John Mortimer's adaptation of *A Christmas Carol* at the Barbican Theatre, London.

The debut album of Nigel's vocal group *Chameleon* (featured twice on the present compilation) won the Music Retailers Association Award for Best MOR Vocal Album.

Nigel has also composed much concert music, particularly for symphonic wind band, with commissions from the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Great Britain and the Royal Air Force. *The Way of Light*, a large work for actors, choir and orchestra, was performed in St Paul's Cathedral in the presence of Her Majesty the Queen and HRH the Prince of Wales.





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