OBITUARIES

Bob Merrill

The man who wrote the 1950s hits How Much is That Doggie in the Window? and If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd've Baked a Cake

BOB MERRILL, who has died aged 76, wrote *How Much is That Doggie in the Window?* and *If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd've Baked a Cake*, among other novelty hit songs of the 1950s, before turning his talents to the theatre, with mixed results.

If I Knew You Were Comin' I'd've Baked a Cake was his first hit, in 1950; he wrote the words and Al Hoffman the music. It was recorded by Eileen Barton and sold more than a million. It later became a hit for Bing Crosby.

There followed a string of chart-toppers for which Merrill usually provided both music and words. *How Much is that Doggie in the Window?* (1953) was a children's favourite which became a British chart topper for Lita Roza.

In 1951 Merrill had had hits with *Sparrow in the Treetop*, *My Truly, Truly Fair* and *Belle Belle, my Liberty Belle*. Later hits included *Walkin' to Missouri* (1952), *She Wears Red Feathers* (1953), *Mambo Italiano* (1954), *Where Will the Baby's Dimple Be?* (1955) and *A Sweet Old Fashioned Girl* (1956).

Despite the success of these songs, Merrill had ambitions to write more serious music. In 1956 he composed the score for the play based on Eugene O'Neill's novel *Anna Christie*, about a former prostitute who goes in search of her father. It opened on Broadway in May 1957 under the title *New Girl in Town*.

Merrill wrote the show for Doris Day, who liked his songs, but the title role was taken by Gwen Verdun. The musical included a "dream ballet" sequence in which the heroine relived her past in the bordellos of St Louis; this was considered too shocking for Broadway audiences and was dropped.

He followed *New Girl in Town* with an adaptation of another O'Neill story, *Ah, Wilderness!* which came to the stage as *Take me Along*. Both shows were moderately successful, each running for more than 400 performances.

Merrill's next show was his best. *Carnival* was a charming and catchy musical version of Paul Gallico's *Lili*, which had already been made into a film with the theme song *Hi Lili, Hi Lili, Hi Lo*. At first, Merrill was determined to take a different approach from the film, basing the musical themes on French folk tunes; but his collaborators, Gower Champion and Michael Stewart, had other ideas.

They would turn up at Merrill's apartment every day, hoping for a hit song. One day, as he walked them back to the lift, Merrill suddenly exploded: "While you're waiting for this darned elevator, I can write you the song you want." He then hummed them a tune, which became the hit song of the show, *Love Makes the World Go Round*.

Carnival, which opened in 1961, not only had a run of 714 performances in New York, but an international appeal. *Love Makes the world Go Round* later became a hit for Perry Como.

In the mid 1960s, Merrill supplied the lyrics to Jule Styne's music for *Funny Girl*. The show, loosely based on the life of the Vaudeville comedienne Fanny Brice and produced by Ray Stark, Brice's son-in-law, made a star of Barbra Streisand.

Its hit song *People* with its refrain "People, people who need people, are the luckiest people in the world" became something of a signature tune for Streisand. In her later renditions, over the instrumental break, she was prone, one critic observed, to toss in a homily about world peace and how everybody, in America, in Bosnia, in the Middle East, young, old, black, white, gay, straight or transsexual could learn from the song. In fact the point of the lyrics was that an obsession with public identity can lead to a neglect of the personal, the "one very special person".

The show had another hit with *Don't Rain on My Parade*.

Bob Merrill was born Henry Robert Merrill Lavan on May 17 1921 in Atlantic City, New Jersey; he spent his childhood in Philadelphia. In his teens, he found a job at Bucks County playhouse. This sparked an ambition to work in the theatre.

In 1942, he moved to New York and began to sing in clubs and perform in variety shows. He also proved a convincing mimic. Later in the war, while serving with the American army, he started to write, and produced shows and sketches for the troops.

Afterwards he became a television writer for NBC, then wrote B-movie scripts for Columbia pictures. There he became a casting director and made a handful of appearances as an actor. While working on a film he was asked by the comedienne Dorothy Shay to write some songs for her. His success encouraged him to persevere as a songwriter.

After *Funny Girl*, Merrill had no more big hits. The stage musical of *Breakfast at Tiffany's* never opened and *Henry, Sweet Henry* saw only 80 performances. An adaptation of *Some Like it Hot*, under the title *Sugar*, for which Merrill supplied the lyrics to another Styne score, did better, with a year on Broadway in 1972. It was revived in London in 1992 by Tommy Steele under its film title, but only ran for 108 performances.

In later life, Merrill returned to writing screenplays. In 1975, he was involved in writing the screenplay for *Mahogany* with John Byrum which starred Diana Ross. He also wrote the screenplay for *W C Fields and Me* (1976).

Merrill is survived by his wife Suzanne.

Merrill puzzling out some difficult rhymes on the score of the Streisand musical Funny Girl

Lady Cusack-Smith

Fearless and colourful Master of Foxhounds in County Galway who stood no nonsense and loved to Tango

LADY CUSACK-SMITH, who has died aged 85, was one of the most colourful and senior figures in the world of Irish foxhunting; she was Master of the Bermingham and North Galway from 1946 to 1984, a term as MFH only exceeded in the British Isles by the late "Master", the 10th Duke of Beaufort.

She co-founded the hunt with her husband, Sir Dermot Cusack-Smith, Bt, in 1946. During the war, from 1939 to 1943, she had been sole Master — the three male Masters having gone off to fight — of the celebrated County Galway Hunt, "The Blazers". She was a great-great-niece of the founder of the Blazers, John Dennis, whose great hunting portrait hung in her dining room at Bermingham House.

North Galway country stretches from the north of Galway city, along Lough Corrib in the west and north, and extends northwards into Co Mayo and eastwards into parts of Co Roscommon. Stone walls, four or five feet high, are a common feature of the landscape, and Mollie Cusack-Smith was celebrated for her fearless jumping — though if her hunter Hippo did not like the look of a wall, he would turn his back on it and kick it down.

Her accomplished blowing of the horn was much admired, and she stood no nonsense out hunting; many people have had their vocabularies broadened by "Lady Mollie". The annual ball she held at Bermingham on the second Friday after Christmas was for decades an eagerly awaited date on the calendar. Dinner would be announced with a stirring blast of the hunting horn, and the party would end in the small hours, after wild dancing, with Irish folk music — and with the hostess warbling *The West Awake* in her rich contralto.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Mollie Cusack-Smith was someone to whom stories frequently became attached. A local farmer, observing her heading home after a hard day's hunting, is said to have remarked to her: "The old horse is sweating up a bit Lady Mollie." She replied: "So would you be if you'd been between my legs for six hours." She did not exactly admit to the truth of the story, but was, she said, indignant when she heard it attributed to someone else.

She was born Adela Mary O'Rorke in Dublin in 1912, the daughter of Charles Trench O'Rorke, a scion of the O'Rorkes of Breffni. Young Mollie grew up at Bermingham House and aged 10 was hunting her father's hounds. "He used to go into Tuam," she recalled, "to do some steady drinking — good for his asthma — and people would tell him that they had seen 'Miss Mollie cursing horrid'."

After an unsuccessful spell at Sherborne School for Girls — "They gave me two out of a 100 for 'trying' in mathematics, but I told them I *wasn't* trying" — she was sent to be finished in Paris, where she learned to sing. At home she had had a governess who taught her sewing and dressmaking, and so after Paris — and after a row with her father over a horse — she moved to London and set up a dressmaking business in Mayfair. Her customers included Princess Marina, Duchess of Kent.

The sound of Mollie O'Rorke's hunting horn was occasionally heard in Berkeley Square, and away from the shop her boyfriend ("married, thank God!") taught her to ride with greater skill. When she had patched things up with her father he lent her two horses and she joined the Pytchley, where some of the stuffier elements looked askance at her not riding side-saddle, and at her untidiness.

She much enjoyed hunt balls — "I used to turn backward somersaults for miles down the passages — revealing *nothing*, I may say" — and in London she went dancing, which she liked even better than hunting, most nights. She was a regular at the Four Hundred, and a friend of the Savoy bandleader Caryl Gibbons. The Tango and Latin American dances were her favourites.

When her father fell ill in 1937, Mollie returned to Bermingham to look after him. After an uncle had said of her "Mollie will never be any good, she is a jack of all trades and master of none", she decided to become a Master of Foxhounds. "My operatic contralto," she said, "which I knew how to *project*, came in very useful when controlling the field."

After numerous spills and fractures cheerfully borne, Mollie Cusack-Smith gave up hunting at 71; she had hoped to do 40 seasons, "but my old horse, Willy, could do no more". She was pleased though, that her beloved hounds continued to be kenneled at Bermingham; "I'd go anywhere and do anything for them," she confessed.

"I've had a gorgeous, wonderful life," she said in 1994, "but I have no money. I've got nothing left. And the roof — she moved to London and occasionally blows off, which is very awkward."

She married Sir Dermot Cusack-Smith, 6th Bt, as his second wife, in 1946; they had a daughter, Sir Dermot died in 1970.

Picture: SEAMUS MURPHY

Mollie Cusack-Smith at Bermingham with huntsman John Pickering and hounds

Prince Abdallah ibn Saud

Governor of Mecca who fell from favour

PRINCE ABDALLAH IBN SAUD IBN ABD AL-AZIZ AL-SAUD, who has died aged 65, was governor of the Saudi Arabian province of Mecca during the reign of his father, King Saud.

Prince Abdallah was the fifth son of this extravagant and ineffectual ruler. Abdallah's place in the hierarchy of the king's sons, rather than any ability, entitled him to posts in his father's court.

Abdallah had literally countless brothers and sisters. King Saud, emulating his father, King Abd al-Aziz, the founder of the modern Saudi state, fathered perhaps 50 sons and 50 daughters.

From his accession in 1953, Saud sought to consolidate power by advancing the careers of his sons, at first in the royal household, later in government. At 20, Abdallah became keeper of the royal gardens, a titular post in a court of great vulgarity.

In 1960 Abdallah was made governor of Mecca, another largely ceremonial position. He held the post for little more than a year, as by this time the political forces in the country were ranged against King Saud, and behind his half-brother Faisal ibn Abd al-Aziz, who forced Saud into relinquishing active political power.

In December 1964, a month after Saud went into exile, Abdallah was among 11 of the ex-king's sons to abandon Saud's struggle to regain power and pledge allegiance on the Koran to Faisal. Those who refused remained in exile.

Abdallah took no part in government or public affairs after his father's demise.

He was the father of eight sons and four daughters.

The Rt Rev William Franklin

Former curate in the Blitz who became Anglican Bishop in Bogota during a decade of kidnappings and urban violence

THE RIGHT REVEREND WILLIAM FRANKLIN, who has died aged 81, was the Anglican Bishop of Colombia from 1972 to 1978, at a time when Bogota was known as the most dangerous city in the world.

In the Colombian capital, where he ministered for a total of 13 years, Franklin found most of the people in poverty, while a small minority were conspicuously rich. Political extremism and violent crime led to urban lawlessness; the police reported 10,000 kidnappings in 1975 alone.

Anti-American feeling was also rife; the diocese of Colombia was part of the Episcopal Church of the United States, and in 1978 it was deemed expedient to replace Franklin with a Colombian national. It had not been his intention to retire, but his life had already been threatened a number of times, and he recognised the need for the Church in Latin America to have indigenous leadership.

Franklin was unusual among Anglican clergy in that region in being a High Churchman, rather than an Evangelical. Evangelicals had pioneered much missionary work and continued to predominate. Franklin enjoyed close relations with Roman Catholic leaders. The Papal Nuncio and the Cardinal Archbishop of Bogota had been present at his enthronement as Bishop of Colombia.

William Alfred Franklin was born in London on July 16 1916. He attended local schools then went to the monastic theological college at Kelham, Nottinghamshire, to prepare for Holy Orders. He developed a love of scholarship that never left him.

In 1941, undaunted by the blitz, he became a curate at St John's, Bethnal Green, in the East End of London. From 1943 to 1945 he was a curate at St John's, Palmers Green, in north London. He had hoped to become a Royal Navy chaplain, but the end of the war and his marriage in 1945 turned him in another direction.

It seemed at first that he would go to South Africa, but instead he went to Argentina, and arrived in time to witness the landslide victory of the Right-wing Juan Peron, who, with his wife Eva, had appealed to the aspirations of the *descamisados*.

Franklin began as assistant chaplain of St Saviour's Church, Belgrano, in Buenos Aires, where he also taught theology and mathematics at the English School. In 1948 he was appointed Rector of Holy Trinity, Lomas de Zamora, also in Buenos Aires, where he remained for 10 years. He was also domestic chaplain to the Bishop of Argentina, secretary of the Diocesan Board of Missions and chaplain of St Alban's College.

His next move was to Chile, where, from 1958 to 1965, he was Rector, Canon and Sub-Dean of the Anglican Cathedral in Santiago. The Bishop was officially the Dean too, but since he was involved in pastoral work in his huge diocese, it was left to Franklin to develop the cathedral's ministry.

He found time also for the chaplaincy of the English School and was the founder of an ecumenical group which included Roman Catholics. In 1964 he was appointed OBE.

A year later Franklin was appointed Rector of St Alban's, Bogota, which became the cathedral of the new diocese of Colombia. He was also Archdeacon and, in 1972, succeeded an American as bishop. A tall man, he looked every inch a bishop and always insisted on the rites of the Church being carried out according to tradition.

Yet he was essentially a humble, gentle man from whom peace and tranquillity seemed to emanate. His pastoral care of the clergy and their large parishes was exemplary, and he and his wife were generous in their hospitality.

Franklin was the founder and editor of *Revista Anglicana*, the official magazine of the Anglican dioceses in the north of South America, and he wrote a great deal, encouraging the churches to renew their life to meet the challenges they faced.

When Franklin returned to England in 1978, the diocese of Peterborough lacked a suffragan bishop. Franklin responded gladly to an invitation from Bishop Douglas Feaver to join him as a full-time bishop. Feaver was by no means an easy man with whom to work, but the two bishops got on well. When Feaver was succeeded by Bishop William Westwood the partnership continued happily until Franklin retired aged 70 and became an Honorary Assistant Bishop in the diocese of Canterbury.

He is survived by his wife Winifred and by a son and a daughter.

Franklin: humble bishop

Clifford Longley

SACRED AND PROFANE

Free to 'conspire' and do good work

A GOOD trick for writers and politicians is the Jewish substitution test. Take a passage which criticises a particular group in the community, and mentally insert the word "Jew" wherever the name of the group appears.

We have been sensitised against anti-Semitism, but we have other prejudices just as irrational and nasty. I tried the trick this week with an editorial in the *Guardian* attacking Freemasonry. The result was to make the article look like an appalling piece of Nazi propaganda, resembling the standard Jewish conspiracy theory from the pages of *Der Stürmer*.

The same is true of Labour MP Chris Mullin's demand yesterday that the masons prove themselves innocent of subverting the West Midlands police force. Anyone saying "If there turns out to be more than an ordinary number of Jews in the force, then we may begin to suspect a Jewish conspiracy" would be hounded out of public life as a bigot.

The notion of an "enemy within" is one of the most pervasive — and pernicious — in human history. Often the reason for suspecting the existence of such an enemy is religious nonconformity — these people believe mysterious things we do not understand, and are, therefore, deemed capable of anything. The Jews know all about it. In the Middle Ages they were widely believed to sacrifice Christian children, the so-called blood-libel. The medieval Church required them to wear yellow stars in public, so they could be identified. More recently, far too many intelligent people were prepared to believe in the genuineness of the notorious Protocols of the Elders of Zion, before they were completely discredited as a Tsarist secret police forgery in the 1920s. In 16th-century Spain, the Marranos, Jewish converts many of whom continued to practise Judaism in secret, were the target of the Spanish Inquisition.

In Protestant Europe, this scapegoat role was variously filled by Catholics and by alleged witches (which tends to show that if there is no good candidate to be an actual "enemy within", we will invent one). In 17th- and 18th-century England, there was a widespread fear of the so-called "church papists". Catholics who secretly retained their faith but outwardly conformed to the Church of England. The era was awash with Catholic conspiracy theories, some of which ended in appalling miscarriages of justice.

"Church papists" were thought to be far more sinister than the publicly visible Catholic recusants. It was to weed out such people that the Test Act was introduced. This required candidates for a commission in the Army or Navy, a place at Oxford or Cambridge, or a career in one of the learned professions, to deny on oath the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation.

The notion of an 'enemy within' is one of the most pervasive in human history

The justification was much the same as that applied (by Catholics themselves, this time) to "secret" Jews and Muslims in 16th-century Spain. "Tests" were put to them, too. In each case, not believing what the majority believed was assumed to make one's loyalty to the system suspect, doubly so if one's non-compliance was concealed.

Meanwhile, social discrimination and stigma against those who openly admitted to the deviant behaviour or belief merely encouraged its concealment. The right word for all this is persecution.

All of which comes too close to comfort to Jack Straw's new measures against Freemasons in the police, judiciary, and other branches of the criminal justice system. Masonry is not strictly speaking a religion, though its rules do require belief in God and its ceremonies are similar to public worship.

In the 1970s and 1980s masons were strongly criticised in both the Methodist Church and the Church of England, largely because their beliefs seemed to contradict, or at least fall short of, what Christians believed. As a result of these criticisms, the English Grand Lodge has been assiduous in removing from its formulae and rites those elements which made it look like an alternative religion.

The Catholic Church had a long-standing quarrel with masonry, largely because on the Continent it was associated with anti-clericalism. It is ironic that, as Catholic antagonism has declined, Protestant antagonism has grown stronger. For masonry's basic ethos is not so far removed from good old-fashioned low-church Anglicanism, with much emphasis on an unintellectual kind of piety, duty to one's neighbour and service to the community. In so far as it is designed like a conspiracy, it is a conspiracy to do good works and to cultivate in its members the more important of the personal and civic virtues.

But even this is becoming deviant behaviour, contrary to the norms of secular society. I am a Catholic — to apply to myself Jack Straw's new Test Act — but not a Freemason. I see no sign that masons are more likely to conspire with each other for their mutual benefit than are Catholics, Scotsmen, homosexuals, Old Etonians or members of the Territorial Army. That is to say they all may do so a little bit, now and again. But that is no good reason to pillory any of them, and certainly not to drive them from public life.

CHESS

Kasparov challenge

By Malcolm Pein

NEGOTIATIONS are under way between the Kasparov camp, Vladimir Kramnik and Vishy Anand to organise a match to decide who should play Garry Kasparov for the title of world champion.

An announcement is expected on February 21 at the opening ceremony of the Linares tournament, where the sponsor, Mr Luis Rentero, is to formally announce his backing.

Mr Rentero is expected to say that he will back a match between the winner of the Anand-Kramnik match and Garry Kasparov. That match would last 18 games and have a prize fund of $2 million (£1,250,000).

In an interview with the Russian newspaper *Sport Express*, Kramnik said that in principle he was interested in such a title eliminator but added that he had received no official communication.

But official communication seems unlikely in view of the terrible split in the chess world, which sees FIDE holding its own championship without the world's top two rated players, Kasparov and Kramnik, while the world No1 is still trying to organise a rival contest on his own.

Kramnik said that he believed that he and Anand were clearly the pretenders to the throne and pointed out that in the past two years they had shared the top prizes in many major events. Kramnik predicted that this would be borne out at the Linares tournament, which starts next week where he, Anand and Kasparov play.

The **Petrov Memorial** in St Petersburg was won by Alexander Volzhin, a regular visitor to Britain. Volzhin shared first place with four others, but had the best tie-break score. The veteran Mark Taimanov scored 6/9, half a point behind the winners.

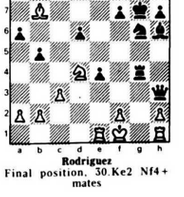
Chess activity in Andalusia reaches its peak with the Linares tournament but before the main event, there are two open events back to back, one in Linares and then one in Ubeda. Tony Miles played in Linares but preferred to holiday in Bermuda rather than play the second tournament.

This meant there were no English GMs although Bogdan Lalic, the Croatian who lives in Sutton, south London, played but finished 16th. The tournament was won by Georgi Timoschenko, of Ukraine, who found a nice finish to the following game:

A Rodriguez — G Timoschenko
Ubeda Open (6)
Sicilian Sveshnikov

1 e4	c5	2 Nf3	Nc6	
3 d4	cxd4	4 Nxd4	Nf6	
5 Nc3	e6	6 Ndb5	d6	
7 Bf4	e5	8 Bg5	a6	
9 Na3	b5	10 Bxf6	gxf6	
11 Nd5	f5	12 Bd3	Be6	
13 Qh5	Rg8	14 c3	Rxg2	
15 Qf3	Rg4	16 exf5	Bxd5	
17 Qxd5	Ne7	18 Qb7	Bh6	
19 f6	Rg8	20 Be4	Rb8	
21 Qc6+	Kf8	22 Rd1	Qd6	
23 Kf1	Rd8	24 Nc2	Ne7	
25 Qc7	Ng6	26 Bb7	e4	
27 Re1	Qf3!!	28 Qxd8+	Kg7	
29 Nd4	Qh3+	0-1		

Timoschenko



Rodriguez
Final position. 30.Ke2 Nf4+ mates

"Prince Abdallah ibn Saud." Daily Telegraph, 20 Feb. 1998, p. 29. The Telegraph Historical Archive, link.gale.com/apps/doc/IO0700941725/TGRH?u=tou&sid=bookmark-TGRH. Accessed 9 July 2024.