

Lancaster University Special Collections and Archives  
Jack Hylton Collection  
Box List

Contents

Description .....	2
Contents .....	5
JH/1: Personal Materials [still to be listed] .....	5
JH/2: Administrative and Financial Papers [Still to be listed] .....	5
JH/3: Press Cutting Albums [Separate list] .....	5
JH/4: Music Arrangements and Scores [Separate Lists] .....	5
JH/5: Recordings [Separate lists] .....	6
JH/6: Promotional Materials [Separate List] .....	6
JH/7: Scripts [Separate List] .....	6
JH/8: Photographic Materials [Still to be listed] .....	6

## Description

This list is just a summary of the contents of the collection. Further details are available in list of sections of the collection.

**Accession Numbers:** ACC/1997/02; ACC/2010/02

**Extent:** 173 linear metres

**Dates:** 1910s-1970s

**Scope and Content:** Papers of Jack Hylton which were mostly held in the Adelphi Theatre until the late 1980s. Also includes materials donated by family members and materials collated by the Library after the collection was transferred.

The Collection covers various aspects of Jack Hylton's career including his work as a band leader; theatrical producer, TV producer and impresario. The collection is still being arranged before it is fully catalogued, but contains the following series of materials:

- Personal papers including appointment diaries, family photographs and personal objects.
- Administrative papers relating to various areas of his career.
- Press Cutting albums covering his entire career.
- Musical arrangements, scores and recordings
- Audio recordings, including Hylton copies of original audio recorded on reel-to reel tapes; 78 records; and later recordings.
- Publicity materials, including publicity materials relating to his band tours; programmes, flyers and posters from his own productions; programmes and flyers relating to other shows and events in the UK, USA and elsewhere which may have been attended by Jack Hylton or his team.
- Scripts, includes scripts related to shows produced by Hylton as well as other scripts which may have been sent to him for review.
- Photographic materials, including photo albums and loose photos relating to his band leading career; photo album and loose albums relating to his theatrical productions.

## History:

**Biography:** Jack Hylton was born in Great Lever, Bolton on 2nd July 1892. He came from a working-class background and, as a boy, would accompany his father on the piano when he sang in clubs. He also performed at an early age as the 'Singing-Mill-Boy'

In 1905 he joined a Pierrot troupe in Rhyl before becoming a conductor of an orchestra for a touring pantomime. He moved to London in 1913, first working as a cinema organist before becoming the pianist at the 400 Club and the Stroud Haxton Band. He became the musical director of the 20th Hussars band during World War I and later in the Army Entertainment Division (N.A.C.B.). At the end of the War, he formed a double act with Tommy Handley before moving to Blackpool in 1919 where he composed and sold songs to tourists.

He moved back to London shortly afterwards to play for the Queen's Dance Orchestra. Hylton wrote arrangements of popular songs for the Orchestra which were recorded for the HMV and Zonophone record companies under the label "Directed by Jack Hylton". After being dismissed by the band in 1922, Jack set up his own Orchestra under the company name Jack Hylton Ltd, the first of many companies set up by Hylton. Jack became a

respected bandleader and was in great demand, so much so that he had to provide bands simultaneously in various locations under his own name. In the 1920s the band developed into an orchestra and had a busy schedule. It toured America and Europe and continued until the 1940s when the orchestra disbanded due to members being called up for war service.

At this point Jack Hylton's career was already moving towards that of an impresario discovering new stars and managing radio, film and theatre productions from ballets to circuses. His productions dominated the London theatres with such productions as 'The Merry Widow', 'Kiss Me Kate' and 'Kismet'. He also controlled various theatres, most notably the Adelphi Theatre (c.1945-1965) and Princes Theatre, (1950-c.1961, now the Shaftesbury Theatre).

Some of the stars he managed, appeared in his productions or discovered were Shirley Bassey, Maurice Chevalier, Ernie Wise, Eric Morecambe, Arthur Askey, The Crazy Gang, George Formby, Diana Dors, Thora Hird, Noele Gordon and Sid James.

Jack Later went on to work in TV as the Advisor of Light Entertainment for the new ITV channel. He worked in this role until 1959 and was producing stage productions at the same time. Here he was able to promote his stage discoveries on the television as TV stars. He was instrumental in organising various Royal Command Performances and continued supporting theatre productions until his final stage production 'Camelot' in 1965.

After he died in 1965, it was decided to hold a benefit concert, Stars Shine For Jack, in his memory. The organiser chose to give the proceeds of the concert to the newly opened Lancaster University to build the Jack Hylton Music Rooms in his honour.

**Custodial History:** The bulk of Jack Hylton's paper were held at the Adelphi Theatre in London which acted as one of Hylton's offices. The materials had been arranged into 5 categories: materials related to the bands managed by Jack Hylton; materials related to Hylton's Theatrical productions; Jack Hylton's own recordings; Hylton's commercial recordings collection; materials related to Hylton's TV and film work. The musical arrangements relating to Jack Hylton's bands had been listed and were arranged into three series (1, 2 and B0). The arrangement from TV production were arranged by the name of the show. Before his death, Jack and his son had recorded all his original recordings onto reel-to-reel tape and disposed of the original discs.

The collection remained at the Adelphi Theatre, which was still managed by a successor of one of Jack's companies, until the 1980s when the Theatre was due to be sold. R K Hilton, Jack's executor who had managed Hylton's ongoing businesses, was responsible for finding a home for the archive collection. Materials relating to his TV and film career were gifted to the BFI Archive. In 1986 the music related materials were offered to the Lancaster University Music Department via Denis McCaldlin, Director of Music at the time. Hilton also planned to send materials relating to Hylton's wider career later once they had been cleaned and sorted, and Hylton's decedents had chosen the materials they wanted to retain.

Around 120 boxes of materials were transferred to the Music Library on the 11<sup>th</sup> March 1987. The first accession comprised: arrangements made by or for the Jack Hylton bands (band parts); stock published arrangements of music used by the band in various languages; sheet music and manuscripts relating to Hylton's productions; Bungalow Club Materials; Radio Luxembourg materials; miscellaneous Libretti; and some scripts. This accession was stored in a room near the Peter Scott Gallery. In 1990 a researcher using the collection started to sort the musical arrangements into alphabetical order and started to sort the published

arrangements. Some materials were disposed of at this point as they became unusable after a leak in room where they were stored.

The second accession of materials were transferred to Lancaster in 1991. This comprised 63 cartons of materials which contained: press cutting albums; press photographs; production photographs; UK Theatre programmes; posters and publicity re. Productions; personal photographs; et of New York Theatre Critics Review, 1950s-1970; Theatre production scripts; appointment diaries; published musical scores; tour accounts; light orchestral music tape recordings of JH original 78 records; and an oil portrait of Jack Hylton. These materials were stored in County College.

It is believed that Hilton wanted to transfer a third accession of material, but the Music Department didn't have space to take the remaining materials. This final accession was donated to the V&A Theatre Archive.

In 1997, the entire collection was transferred to the Special Collections and Archives in the Library. In the early 2000s, the Library secured funding to list and repackaging parts of the collection, including the creation of a database. Some materials were also made available on a website for the collection. Around this time, the Library purchased gramophone records relating to Jack Hylton and his Orchestra, which were added to the collection.

Around 2010, another accession was received from Jack Hylton's descendants. The majority of the materials appear to have been items which were held in the Adelphi Theatre but retained by the family.

In 2025, the collection was reviewed for the purposes of securing funding to catalogue the collection and this list was created. The materials from various accessions were merged when the items were part of the same sequence.

**Conditions on access:** The collection is generally available for research use by appointment. Access to some materials is restricted while they are being listed.

**Conditions on Use:** The Library has permission to grant reuse of materials which fall under Jack Hylton's intellectual property for reuse. Other materials can only be reuse for private personal study purposes without permission of the rights holders.

**Notes:** This list was completed in May 2026 by Katie Waring. The list is subject to change as the collection is processed and is only seen as a guide to the contents of the collection.

#### **Sources:**

- Pete Faint, (2014) Jack Hylton S.I. : Pete Faint
- 'Biography', <https://www.jackhylton.com/biography/> (accessed 2026/05/27)
- Pamela W. Logan (1995) Jack Hylton Presents. London: BFI

## Contents

This section provides an overview of the contents of the collection. Access is restricted to series which are still to be listed.

### **JH/1: Personal Materials [still to be listed]**

These materials are still to be fully list, includes Hylton's appointment diaries, personal photographs and other miscellaneous materials.

- Appointment Diaries
- Personal Photographs
- Misc. Items

### **JH/2: Administrative and Financial Papers [Separate list]**

This section is still being listed. The majority of administrative papers related to Jack Hylton's career are held in the materials held by the V&A Archive.

### **JH/3: Press Cutting Albums [Separate list]**

Over his entire career, Jack Hylton kept albums of press cuttings relating to his activities. Although these have been arranged into date order, some of the albums overlap as they contain cuttings relating to specific productions. Albums relating to Hylton's TV work are held by the BFI Archive.

### **JH/4: Music Arrangements and Scores [Separate Lists]**

Musical arrangements and scores related to Jack Hylton's career. Includes handwritten musical arrangements created by arrangers employed by Hylton during his band leading, theatrical and TV career, as well as printed scores.

**Content Note:** The song names within this list reflect the attitudes of people at the time and may contain language and terminology now considered offensive, outdated or upsetting for other reasons.

- **JH/4/1: Band Parts:** Band parts related to Orchestras managed by Jack Hylton. Parts comprise the musical instructions for each member of the band for a particular musical composition. Each 'part' contains arrangements for each instrument as well as the vocals. They were written by arrangers who worked for Jack Hylton and were performed by his orchestras. Some also include the original printed score. The band parts were in the first accession which came from the Adelphi Theatre.
- **JH/4/2: Radio Luxembourg:** Band parts related to Jack Hylton's involvement at Radio Luxembourg in the 1930s.
- **JH/4/5: Orchestral Arrangements:** Arrangements for music played during theatrical productions produced by or by arrangement of Jack Hylton. Also includes arrangements for productions which were not produced by Hylton.
- **JH4/6: TV Arrangements:** Arrangements from TV shows produced by Jack Hylton. The parts are arranged by show and still arranged in the order they were in the original list.
- **JH/4/7: Printed Scores:** Published scores of music collected by Jack Hylton.

## **JH/5: Recordings [Separate lists]**

Audio recordings relating to Jack Hylton and his career.

- **JH/5/1: Reel to Reel Recordings:** Recordings made by Jack Hylton and his son from original gramophone records featuring songs by Jack Hylton and his Orchestra.
- **JH/5/2: Gramophone Records:** Gramophone Records featuring songs by Jack Hylton and his Orchestra. Purchased by the Library after the collection was transferred.
- **JH/5/3: Later Recordings:** Audio recordings related to Jack Hylton's work.

## **JH/6: Promotional Materials [Separate List]**

Promotional materials relating to Jack Hylton's career and other promotional materials collected by him or his associates.

- JH/6/1: Jack Hylton and his Orchestra
- JH/6/2: Bound Publicity Materials
- JH/6/3: Jack Hylton loose publicity materials (A-Z)
- JH/6/4: Adelphi Theatre [1940]-1965
- JH/6/5: Princes Theatre Productions [1951]-1962
- JH/6/5: His Majesty's Theatre
- JH/6/6: The Playhouse Theatre Productions (1948-1950)
- JH/6/7: Winter Gardens Theatre Productions
- JH/6/8: Beniamino Gigli Tours (1948-1953)
- JH/6/9: Royal Command Performances
- JH/6/10: UK Productions Promotional Materials (A-Z)
- JH/6/11: Internation Productions Promotional Materials (A-Z)
- JH/6/12: Playbills (A-Z)

## **JH/7: Scripts [Separate List]**

Scripts from plays and other productions by Jack Hylton and other scripts he gathered during his career.

## **JH/8: Photographic Materials [Still to be listed]**

Photographic materials including:

- Loose Production photographs
- Set design photograph albums
- Production Photograph albums.