



Sigh Kobayashi's  
"Modernaires"  
An Era  
1940-1975

SIGH KOBAYASHI'S MODERNAIRES

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As related by SIGH KOBAYASHI -- August 22nd, 1996

One of my first recollections of hearing a live band in Lake Country was when I attended a Packing House Dance in the Okanagan Centre Hall in the early 1930's. Not as a dancer, but a volunteer in the kitchen, where I recall putting large chunks of bologna and dill pickles into the meat grinder to make sandwich filling. The live band playing intrigued me. There was Gladys Shanks on piano, Jimmy Shanks on sax, Maurice McCarthy on banjo, Justin McCarthy on drums and Bryan Cooney on violin. Of that group, I believe the only musician alive today is Bryan Cooney.

Then in the mid 1930's a very talented musical family moved to Oyama. Alex Beaten Smith who played a mean sax, his wife Myrtle a fantastic piano player, and her brother Roy Endersby a drummer extra-ordinaire. They were experienced musicians, who had among other feats, played in circus bands in the United States. Roy at one time played drums in the pit in the Orpheum Theatre, along with Mart Kenney. The Smith family formed two orchestras. The Roy Endersby Orchestra had Jessie Dugdale on piano, Herbie Graves on alto sax, Gene Clarke on Tenor Sax, while Roy played drums, xylophone and Boozaphone (an instrument formed of a dozen whiskey bottles strung on a string and filled with water and properly tuned). This band provided top notch dance music and was highly in demand throughout the Okanagan.

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In 1940 Roy decided to retire and his fellow musicians continued with their family orchestras in the North Okanagan, the Graves and Dugdale bands respectively.

Roy had two very musically talented sons, Roy Jr. a drummer and Robert a pianist. He wanted to turn the drums over to Roy Jr. so he called a budding group of musicians to form a dance band. He recruited pianist Fyfe Somerville (12th St. Rag), Bert Hoffman, guitar and accordion player and myself on alto and tenor sax. We practiced rigorously for several months under Roy's direction. He was a tough demanding coach and he instilled into us the rudiments of dance music and rhythm that made crowds want to dance as soon as the band started to play. I'll never forget how much jump he wanted us to put into "Jersey Bounce", "Darktown Strutter's Ball" and the "Beer Barrel Polka", and how dreamily and romantically we had to play "The West a Nest and You", "Sleepy Lagoon", "Deep Purple", "Waltz you Saved for Me" and "Memories". The aim was to stir the dancers' emotions to want to get up and dance. This could be done by putting that Roy Endersby touch into our performances.

By November 1940 he judged us as being capable of playing a full dance so he promised to turn over to us his future bookings. Our first date (the only date we ever played for FREE) was at the Winfield Women's Institute's Christmas Concert in the old Winfield Community Hall. Roy had advised us NEVER to play for FREE, or for any Benefit Dances without charge. He advised us to always charge our regular price - never cut prices. If any individual players wished to contribute to the charity that was their choice. In our 35 year career this has always worked well for us. In some cases all our musicians donated their wages if it was a worthy cause.

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on the programme. As the curtains were drawn, we were presented as a new band "The King's Men" (a popular wartime designation.) We opened with a dreamy rendition of "The West a Nest and You" in Roy's smooth romantic style and the audience went crazy. They all took to the dance floor, and at midnite they would not let us stop. As we had only twenty pieces in our repertoire, we had to repeat the program until 2.30 in the morning. That night some dancers from Lumby were in the crowd, and they asked us to play for their New Year's Eve Dance. Roy told us "Charge them a hundred bucks", the same as he would have done. Lumby was agreeable and we had no problems. After the Lumby dance, we got calls from all over the Okanagan, and we were on our way.

In 1941 and 1942 the war took its toll. Fyfe Sommerville joined the Canadian Army and Roy Jr. enlisted in the U. S. Marines. We regrouped with my sister Sachiyo on piano and Bob Endersby on drums. When Roy Jr. joined the U. S. Marines he was assigned to the Marine dance bands and played under the baton of such leaders as Artie Shaw and Henry King. He eventually went professional, playing with Henry King His Piano and His Orchestra for many years.

In an era of amplifiers and microphones, we did not use any, relying entirely on our acoustical ability to play louder when necessary. The mikes were only used for announcements and vocals. In this period, vocals were the vogue (as with the big name bands). We featured a male trio composed of fruit workers from Calgary consisting of Joe Brown, Ned Chambers and Herb Patterson (now one of the principal owners of Predator Ridge Golf Course in Vernon). We also had a girl's quartet from Lumby with Muriel Treen, Ivy Hanson, Molly and Audrey Grisdale. We also had highly talented soloists like Afreda Tetz of Winfield and Betty Drinkall (Calgary).

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Also, as with the big bands, we had our theme song with which we opened all our dances. It was "Drifting and Dreaming". This was particularly effective when trumpeters like Don Farr, Gary Gelhorn and Tommy Muir played lead and I played harmony on B flat Tenor Sax. Sometimes we would switch positions for effect.

We always closed our dances with the message: "Comes now the end of a perfect day. Till we meet again next \_\_\_\_\_ night at the \_\_\_\_\_ Community Hall, we bid you one and all a very pleasant evening. Sweet dreams and may God bless you all and see you safely home -- get your partners now for the home waltz". We would then play "Till We Meet Again" and "Home Sweet Home". During wartime, we would brighten up after the home waltz with a snappy rendition of "We Must All Pull Together" and "There'll Always Be an England". If we had Americans in the crowd, we would play the "Marine's Hymn" and "Caissons Go Rolling Along".

We always had a varied programme consisting of popular hits of the day, as well as old standbys from days gone by. To add variety we always played polkas, old time waltzes, 2, 3 and 7 Steps, French Minuet, Heel and Toe Polka, Schottisches, Waltz Quadrille and we even played square dances. Playing "Crooked Stovepipe" and "Turkey in the Straw" on the saxophone was a mean feat, but it could be done. We also had help from talented fiddlers like Al Porter and Len Lines, which saved my breath considerably, as I only had to play counter bass on tenor sax. George Edmunds and George Reeve Sr. usually called square dances for us, and they really kept the dancers moving.

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Armentieres", "Waltzing Matilda" and of course "There'll Always be an England" and "White Cliffs of Dover".

In 1944 Sachiyo and I were invited to join Pete Stoltz and his Okanagan Wanderers, who featured at the time the famous Holitzki Sisters - Dora and Madeline - two singing guitar players already famous as radio artists on CFCQ Saskatoon before they moved to Winfield. Pete was also a well known accordionist on CKOV Kelowna. The Holitzki Sisters' uncle, Jake Mann was our drummer and often their father Ron Holitzki joined us on accordion.

Pete was well known as an orchestra leader and was an excellent manager. Under his leadership we played two or three nights weekly. (I worked ten hours a day in the packing house at that time!). There isn't a community hall, school-house or community celebration that we haven't played in throughout the Okanagan, Shuswap and West Kootenays. We played in such places like Barnhartvale, Celista, Tappen, Rock Creek and all the major towns around. The Holitzki Sisters were famous and we always drew a huge crowd. We played the Falkland Stampede Dance three times, and the Saturday night dances in the Aquatic Club in Osoyoos where for the first time in our musical careers, American dancers would tip us five to ten dollars to play request numbers. The return trip home from Osoyoos was often traumatic as invariably we would hit the 3.00 A.M. Gas Ferry and we could not board and had to wait until 4.00 A.M. for the next ferry, as we snoozed.

With the Holitzki Sisters, as well as my sister getting married, I played with several groups at this time. One of the most exciting times were the weekly dances in Finn Volk's Baloney Hall on Finn's Road. You haven't seen a dance until you went to one of Finn's parties.

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Around this time the Haber Brothers in Oyama formed a well orchestrated band called the "Kalamalkans". The leader was Joe Haber, a very talented musician, arranger and choir leader. He wrote all the arrangements for the band and we were all given our parts to play. As long as we followed the script accurately, the band sounded wonderful with a big band sound. The dancers were crazy about us, but being such a big band most organizations could not afford to hire us. I believe it cost \$200. to hire us for New Year's Eve which was big money in those days. Joe Haber played lead alto sax, Nick Klim, second alto, myself Tenor Sax, Lloyd Haber played drums, Tony Haber Trumpet and Bob Morrison on piano.

In my musical career I had the privilege of playing with many Okanagan musicians who were always willing to pitch in when someone was sick or absent. We also formed special groups for special functions valleywide. Pianists: Mary Kerchove, Hilda Maundrell, Bob Morrison and I also played with the Bob Hayman Trio, also Lael Hollander at Okanagan Centre dances. Drummers: Bill Guerard, Bob Casey, Ken MacKaskill and Spud Lodge. Trumpeters: Don Farr, Tommy Muir, and Gary Gelhorn. Sax players: Gerry Sanbrooks, Don Farr and Bob Matte. Banjoists: Earl Bilquist and Wayne Hilstob.

In the early 1950's Winfield had a Teen Town organization. Paul Holitzki was Mayor and Gary Gelhorn was one of the Adult Advisers, both excellent musicians. They held weekly dances and asked volunteer musicians to assist. Among them were violinists Henry Redecopp, Len Lines and Paul Holitzki. Drummers Jake Mann and Spud Lodge. Accordionists Ron Holitzki and Ethel Urich. Bert Hoffman and Len Lines played guitar. Bob Matte and I played sax. Since then I have met many adults all over the Province who claimed to have learned to dance at Winfield Teen Town dances.

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To understand our sound one should listen to the recordings of the Moms and Dads - a four piece band from Spokane who used the same instrumentation as we did, and a similar program.

Our dates continued to decline in the 1970's as Rock and Roll took over and our music was considered not hep. But it is coming back in the 1990's as we pay high prices for the same instrumentation and programmes we used for many years. Some of the musicians who played with us are still playing and making big money.

I played my last dance at the Winfield Lions Club New Year's Eve dance on December 31, 1975 with a pick-up band. Since then, all I play is a musette in the Gizeh Temple Arabian Band (Shriners)

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I bought my first sax a Buescher C Melody from Rev. H. Catrano, a Pentecostal preacher. I then bought a Buescher Eb Alto. Both these instruments were silver and had to be polished! I finally graduated to a brand new Selmer Eb Alto and Conn Bb Tenor. In my 35 years I also owned and played a Buescher Eb Baritone, a Conn Straight Eb Soprano and a Buescher Eb Curved Soprano.

My first sax teacher was Bill Allan in 1938 who taught me until he joined the Air Force in 1939. I occasionally see him at Shrine ceremonials today. My next coach was Jessie Dugdale (Roy Endersby's pianist) who taught me the rudiments of dance music.

Many of my fellow musicians are now playing harps in that Orchestra in the Sky:

- Pauline Senger
- Peter Stoltz
- Jake Mann
- Finn Volk
- Joe Baumgartner
- Joe Haber
- Lloyd Haber
- Tony Haber
- Nick Klim
- Bob Hayman
- Bill Guerard
- Bob Casey
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- Tommy Muir
- Earl Bilquist
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They were the greatest musicians and memories will ever be sweet. Also today, Fyfe Sommerville, Louis Senger and Henry Redecopp are patients in Cottonwoods Hospital. Some others are not in perfect health, like Elin Porter in Windsor Manor, while others are still playing for dances, or at Senior Citizen Homes. And so it goes, an era is closely approaching an end. I am 81 and still writing!

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THE MODERNAIRES PLAYING AT SALMON ARM APPLE BLOSSOM DANCE - 1945  
Fyfe Sommerville - Bert Hoffman - Sigh Kobayashi - Sachiyo  
Kobaya shi



THE "ORIGINAL" MODERNAIRES - 1940  
Roy Endersby Jr. - Bert Hoffman - Sigh Kobayashi - Fyfe Sommerville



THE OKANAGAN WANDERERS  
Jake Mann - Dora Holitzki - Madeline Holitzki - Pete Stoltz  
Sigh Kobayashi - Sachiyo Kobayashi



PETER STOLTZ  
Band Leader &  
Accordionist

Be Sure to listen to "PETE STOLTZ" Mondays at 3 p. m. over CKOV



A TYPICAL JAM SESSION  
Bert Hoffman - Ron Holitzki - Fyfe Sommerville  
Dora Holitzki - Madeline Holitzki - Bob Endersby



THE "WARTIME " MODERNAIRES  
Bob Endersby - Bert Hoffman - Sigh Kobayashi - Fyfe Sommerville

VOCALISTS



THE CALGARY TRIO  
Ned Chambers - Joe Brown - Herb Patterson



THE LUMBY QUARTETTE  
Muriel Treen - Molly Grisdale - Ivy Hanson - Audrey GRISDALE



Vocalist - Betty Drinkall



Pianist - Lael Hollander

SLOW WALTZES

1950's PROGRAM

OLD TIME WALTZES

- F Memories AA 5'
- G West a Nest and You AA 7 - TB 14
- G Drifting and Dreaming T 10 - 22
- C I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles AB 8
- Eb If You Were the Only Girl in the World AB 11
- Eb Little Street Where Old Friends Meet TB 13
- Eb Beautiful Ohio TB 11'
- C I'll Always Be in Love with You AA 14 TB 16
- Eb That Naughty Waltz TB 17
- Bb You Tell Me Your Dream TB 49
- G I Wonder Who's Kissing Her Now TB 20
- F Melody of Love AB 40
- Bb Edelwiess AB 41
- C Around the World AB 43
- Eb Tammy AB 42
- Bb I Love you Truly TB 41'
- G My Best to You AB 67 AB 67
- Bb Daddy's Little Girl T-CC-35 AB 57
- F Always A-A1 T-1364
- C My Wild Irish Rose AB 66
- C Since You Called Me Sweetheart AB 71
- Bb Let Me Call you Sweetheart AB 71
- Eb Ramona AB 73
- G After the ball AB 71'
- Ab Let the Rest of the World Go By AB 77
- F Sweetheart of Sigma Chi AA 3
- Eb Waltz You Saved For Me AA 5'
- Eb Sometimes AA 15'
- F Shanty in Old Shanty Town A-BB-54
- C Girl of My Dreams AA 22
- Eb What'll I Do? AA 28

- G Over the Waves T-A-10
- C Merry Widow TB 52
- G Life in the Finland Woods TB 34
- Eb Let's All Sing Like the Birdies - TB 4
- F Cruising Down the River A-BB-3 AB 69 -
- B Du Du Liegst Mir Im Hirzen AB 70
- Bb Blue Skirt Waltz AB 70

POLKAS

- C Beer Barrel Polka T-9-10
- F More Beer T-9-10-A
- F Pennsylvania Polka T-10-31
- Bb Just Because A-6-28
- C Julyda T-8-31  
LICHENSTELNEN POLKA

SCHOTTISCHE

- C Can You Whistle Joanna T-9-1
- G Happy Boys T-9-4

BUTTERFLY

- C My Bonnie Lies Over the Ocean T-1-2
- C Little Brown Jug T-1-2

LATIN AMERICAN

- C Jealousy A-1-6
- C Lady of Spain A-8-19

TWO STEP

- C Redwing A 10 - 24
- G Put On your Old Grey Bonnet A 10 -

MISCELL.

- F Auld Lang Syne A-1-34
- F Till Wee Meet Again A-1-34
- F God Save the Queen A-1-34
- Bb When Day is Done A-1-33
- C ANNIVERSARY WALTZ - T-A-29

SLOW FOX TROTS

- T-2-23
- C / Sentimental Hourney T-DD-89
- F Lazy River A-1-16 ~~T-1-16~~
- B<sup>2</sup> Somewhere My Love ~~T-1-29~~ T-1-29
- B<sup>b</sup> Hello Dolly T-DD-41
- F Won't You Come Home Bill Bailey
- Eb My Melancholy Baby A-1-16
- F / Honey A-7-14
- F { Cuddle Up a Little Closer A-3-28
- G { Just a Little Fond Affection A-7-18
- G I Can't Give You Anything But Love A-7-11
- C<sup>2</sup> I'm in the Mood For Love A-1-24
- G For Me and My Gal A-5-46
- Eb Why Don't You Fall in Love with Me A-5-54
- Eb As Time Goes By A-5-59
- C On the Sunny Side of the Street A-3-3
- F I Get the Blues When it Rains T-3-27
- B<sup>b</sup> I Don't Know Why A-3-28
- F Vilia T-3-34
- G Heartaches T-3-37
- Eb Blueberry Hill A-1-36
- F Louise A-1-7
- Eb White Silver Sands A-1-3
- F Release Me T-EE-124  
T-1-14
- G Shine on Harvest Moon T-10-30
- C<sup>2</sup> Rambling Rose A-BB-71
- G Wait For Me Mary T-10-30
- G Honey Song T-10-37
- B I'll Walk Alone T-10-39
- Eb Once in Awhile T-1-15'
- Bb When You're Smiling T-1-15'
- Bb San Antonio Rose A-1-17
- Bb Somebody Else is Taking My Place
- G Anytime A-8-14 A-8-5
- C Maybe A-8-49
- Eb Walking My Baby Back Home A-8-15'
- C Glow Worm A-8-17
- G Heart of My Heart T-8-28
- G Some of These Days T-2-18
- Bb Dream A-2-29
- C I Dream of You A-2-31
- C My Happiness T-CC-84
- Bb Smiles A-6-21
- C Red Roses for a Blue Lady A-6-22
- Bb Side by Side T-4-13
- Bb Simple Melody T-4-12
- G Rain or Shine A-4-14
- Eb Harbor Lights A-4-16
- Eb Home T-4-34
- F Just Let a Smile Be your Umbrella T-4-3
- B<sup>b</sup> Waiting for the Train to Come In A-7-13
- ~~Just a Little Fond Affection~~
- C I'll See you in my Dreams T-7-27
- ~~Dinah~~
- F You're Nobody Till <sup>Somebody</sup> Loves You T-FF-2
- F YOU ARE MY SUNSHINE T-FF-18  
A-BB-93
- C I LEFT MY HEART IN SF A-BB-50
- B<sup>b</sup> IN THE MOOD T-1-5'
- B<sup>b</sup> DREAMER'S HOLIDAY A-4-4
- F YELLOW BIRD - T-1-31

FAST FOXES & ONE STEPS

MARCH TYPES

- Eb Five Foot Two Eyes of Blue <sup>A-AA-22</sup>
- Eb Whispering A-7-26 | A-1-19
- C Margie TENCOR - AA-91' <sup>or 7-26</sup>
- F My Gal Sal T-3-14
- Bb Who's Sorry Now { T-9-9  
A-1-23
- Ab Oh you Beautiful Doll A-5-52
- C Darktown Strutters Ball A-1-19
- Bb When You Wore a Tulip A-1-14
- Bb Shiek of Araby A-1-22
- C Bye Bye Bluws A-1-23
- G Good Luck & the Same to You T-5-49
- G When My Baby Smiles at Me A-5-51
- G Johnson Rag A-5-62
- C Mack the Knife A-1-10
- Eb Put Your Arms Around Me Honey A10-4
- Bb Tipperary A10-33
- G Pack Up Your Troubles A10-33
- F I'm Sitting on Top of the World A-BB-52
- C I'm Looking Over a Four Leaf Clover T-1-1
- Bb Somebody Stole My Girl T-6-11
- C World is Waiting for the Sunrise A-3-13
- F ALEXANDER RAGTIME BAND A-5-50
- G Good Luck and the Same To You TENCOR <sup>5-49</sup>
- F<sup>oo</sup> Whenthe Saints Come Marching In TENCOR <sup>C</sup>
- F Anchors Aweigh TENCOR <sup>A-BB-90</sup> T10-8
- Bb Notre Dame March TENCOR-4-33
- C Our Director TENCOR 10-26
- Bb Marines Hymn T-A-33



MODERNAIRES ORCHESTRA PROGRAMME:      NOVEMBER 10th. 1947

- |                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| 1. WALTZ               | DRIFTING AND DREAMING<br>CHARMAINE  |
| 2. FAST FOX TROT       | WHISPERING<br>FIVE FOOT TWO   |
| 3. SLOW FOX TROT       | STORMY WEATHER<br>LAZY RIVER  |
| 4. ONE STEP            | ANCHORS AWEIGH<br>GOOD LUCK   |
| 5. WALTZ               | IF YOU WERE THE ONLY GIRL IN THE WORLD<br>SWEETHEART OF SIGMA CHI               |
| 6. FAST FOX TROT       | WHO'S SORRY NOW<br>MY GAL SAL   |
| 7. FRENCH MINUET       |   |
| 8. MEDIUM FOX TROT     | HEARTACHES<br>MY ADOBE HACIENDA   |
| 9. OLD TIME WALTZ      | ANNIVERSARY SONG<br>To be left to Len to pick out                               |
| 10. MEDIUM FOX TROT    | ASK ANYONE WHO KNOWS<br>SUNNY SIDE OF THE STREET                                |
| 11. HEEL AND TOE POLKA |   |
| 12. WALTZ              | I WONDER WHO'S KISSING HER NOW<br>SOMETIME                                      |
| 13. FAST FOX TROT      | I CAN'T GIVE YOU ANYTHING BUT LOVE<br>SHIRK OF ARABY                            |
| 14. MEDIUM FOX TROT    | ACROSS THE ALLEY FROM THE ALAMO<br>I WONDER I WONDER I WONDER                   |
| 15. MOONLIGHT WALTZ    | HAUGHTY WALTZ<br>SHANTY IN OLD SHANTY TOWN                                      |
| 16. SCHOTTISCHE        | Fyfe and Len to pick out numbers  |
| 17. FAST FOX TROT      | WHEN MY BABY SMILES AT ME<br>BYE BYE BLUES                                      |
| 18. MEDIUM FOX TROT    | MONEY SONG<br>HONRY   |
| 19. ONE STEP           | LONG WAY TO TIPPERARY<br>MADEMOISELLE FROM ARMENTIERES<br>PACK UP YOUR TROUBLES |
| 20. FAST FOX TROT      | DARKTOWN STRUTTERS BALL<br>JOHNSON RAG  |