

HEAVEN LOCATED...AND IT HAS A WEBSITE

BY JIM LINZ

Sorry about the title. Guess I've spent a bit too much time surveying the *Midnight Sun* and *Weekly World News* headlines while waiting in the check out line at the supermarket. A recent discovery on the Internet did, however, provide countless hours of heavenly musical entertainment.

In the last issue of *Trans-Lux*, I wrote about the efforts of the Vitaphone Project to locate and facilitate the restoration of hundreds of musical and comedy shorts produced by Warner Brothers. Sadly, even the restored shorts are generally unavailable commercially except in special film festivals and vintage Laserdisc collections.

Several months ago friend and novelty pianist Alex Hassan brought over a CD-Rom with video clips a friend in England had downloaded from the Internet. On it were dozens of clips of pianists from the 1930s and 1940s all playing syncopated music. While the clips were all low resolution, the sound quality was generally quite tolerable.

To find out what other gems might be available, I decided to do just what Mr. Ed would have done. I went right to the source—www.britishpathe.com. To my amazement, I found a searchable database of over 90,000 film clips comprising over 3,500 hours of newsreels, musical programs, and other film history recorded between 1910 and 1970.

I was quickly able to find an astonishing clip of South African crooner Al Bowlly plus multiple clips of bandleaders Roy Fox and Harry Roy. There are clips of Josephine Baker, Jack Hylton, Gerardo, and so much more.

In addition to musical and comedy clips, there are numerous fashion shorts, shorts about Art Deco homes, and news and social events. I even found a short about Art Deco clocks.

Preview copies of all the clips can be downloaded free. While they are low resolution, and the quality varies, they provide an opportunity to view performers long ignored. For a fee, high resolution copies are available with a 1-year license.

As Al Bowlly would sing...Isn't It Heavenly!