

VICTOR ARDEN AND ADAM CARROLL, THE PREEMINENT PIANO DUO

Written by Barry Leedy

The first Arden and Carroll roll I heard was *Lullaby of Broadway*, played on the Ampico. It was a fascinating roll containing a complex four hand arrangement that was superbly played. I was quite surprised to find this roll was also made for the Duo-Art, although rarely seen. It seemed odd that the same artist played for both Ampico and Duo-Art, as they appeared to be competing systems. Over the years, I have accumulated many rolls and much information on my favorite dynamic recording duo.

Victor Arden was born Lewis J. Fuiks on March 8, 1893 in Wenona, Illinois. He received a degree in music from the University of Chicago and continued his studies at the American Conservatory of Music. In the early years he recorded for Ampico, but left for QRS in 1921. There, he teamed with Phil Ohman, and they recorded for Brunswick, Victor, Columbia and Gramophone among others as well as for QRS. Arden came back to Ampico in 1928. After the Ampico years, he went on to conduct orchestras for radio shows such as the *King of Melody* and *Broadway Varieties* among others. In the mid-1940s he did the *Manhattan Merry-Go Round* show on Sunday evenings. Late in his career, Arden directed the "All Stars Trio," a group he originally formed when he was arranging rolls for QRS. Victor Arden died on July 31, 1962 at the age of 69.

Adam Carroll was born on March 19, 1897 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Carroll studied with Professor Globe Von Stopped, formerly of Leipzig Conservatory. He left high school after his father's death and started to accompany silent pictures in the Philadelphia area. By 1917, Carroll was recording for Republic Playroll Company. The company went bust in 1922, so he followed Milton Delcamp to Ampico. Later, he teamed with Edgar Fairchild. They did many wonderful four hand arrangements for the Ampico as well as Broadway shows. With pseudonyms of Victor Lane and Harry Shipman, the recordings of Vincent Lopez, the duets with Victor Arden and others, plus rolls he "assisted" on, Carroll was responsible for nearly 500 recordings for the Ampico. Adam Carroll died on February 28, 1974 at the age of 76.

THE AMPICO RECORDINGS

The Duo's first recording was a 1928 story roll titled *Out of the Dawn*. The following description is featured on the leader of the roll: "If you have seen Richard Dix in the photoplay *Warming Up*, then you have heard this Walter Donaldson hit for it is the theme song of the engaging and popular production. With every repetition it gains in favor and wins for itself new admirers who acclaim it not only one of Walter's best, but one of the most definite of recent popular successes." No rolls were recorded by our duo during 1932 and 1933 although they did make individual recordings during these years. The boys' final recording was the 1935 hit *Tender is the Night*. Their final released recording of *Southern Melodies* is identical to *Southern Stars Overture* that was issued in 1929. After that, all four hand arrangements were done by Frank Milne under his various aliases or Adam Carroll with Edgar Fairchild. In all, Arden and Carroll did 62 unique recordings for the Ampico.

NUMERICAL LISTING OF AMPICO ARDEN AND CARROLL ROLLS, POPULAR NUMBER SERIES WITH THE MONTH AND YEAR OF RELEASE

| | |
|---|---|
| 210861 Out of the Dawn 11-28 | 211971 Singin' in the Rain 10-29 |
| 211101 I'm Sorry Sally 1-29 | 211981 Liza 10-29 |
| 211201 Don't Hold Everything 2-29 | 212031 Am I Blue? 10-29 |
| 211261 Come West, Little Girl, Come West 3-29 | 212071 Satisfied 11-29 |
| 211431 Sweethearts on Parade 4-29 | 212081 Bigger and Better than Ever 11-29 |
| 211521 Sweetheart of All My Dreams 5-29 | 212131 How Am I to Know? 11-29 |
| 211631 Honey 6-29 | 212271 Just You, Just Me 12-29 |
| 211711 Broadway Melody 7-29 | 212311 Here I Am 1-30 |
| 211721 The Wedding of the Painted Doll 7-29 | 212421 Why? 2-30 |
| 211801 I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling 8-29 | 212431 Look What You've Done To Me 2-30 |
| 211811 When My Dreams Come True 8-29 | 212471 What Is This Thing Called Love? 3-30 |
| 211891 S'posin' 9-29 | 212531 Chant of the Jungle 4-30 |
| 211901 Song of the Moonbeams 9-29 | 212581 Should I? 5-30 |

212621 Stein Song: University of Maine March 6-30
 212931 Around the Corner 10-30
 213001 Bye Bye Blues 11-30
 213201 I Got Rhythm 1-31
 213301 The Peanut Vendor 3-31
 213441 The King's Horses 5-31
 213491 When Your Lover Has Gone 5-31
 213541 Oh, Donna Clara 6-31
 213611 Do the New York 8-31
 213651 Help Yourself to Happiness 8-31
 213761 Good Night, Sweetheart 12-31
 214791 Alice in Wonderland 3-34

214971 I Wish I Were Twins 6-34
 215063 A New Moon Over My Shoulder &
 By the Taj Mahal 10-34
 215121 The Continental 12-34
 215211 If I Had a Million Dollars 1-35
 215221 You and the Night and the Music 2-35
 215281 I Get a Kick Out of You 3-35
 215361 Isle of Capri 4-35
 215381 Lullaby of Broadway 5-35
 215471 Life is a Song: Let's Sing it Together 8-35?
 215571 What a Wonderful World 11-35
 215631 Tender is the Night 12-35

NUMERICAL LISTING OF AMPICO ARDEN AND CARROLL ROLLS, CLASSICAL NUMBER SERIES

69513 Fox Trot Medley No. 1 1-29
 69883 Follow Thru' Selections 5-29
 69981 Semper Fidelis 6-29
 70213 Fox Movietone Follies Selections 9-29
 70223 Fox Trot Medley No. 2 10-29
 70293 Southern Stars Overture 10-29
 70323 Waltz Medley 11-29
 70411 Faust Rhythmic Paraphrase 12-29

70533 Down South 2-30
 70573 The Blue Danube Rhythmic Paraphrase 3-30
 70621 Melody In F Rhythmic Paraphrase 4-30
 70913 Fox Trot Medley No. 5 6-31
 71373 Sweet Adeline Selections¹ 3-35
 71403 Rumba Medley² 5-35
 71493 Dinner Music No. 15 Southern Melodies³ 2-36

¹ 71373 *Sweet Adeline Selections*: Selection No.3 on this roll is identical to roll 212311 *Here I Am*. The other songs on this roll are not played by Arden and Carroll.

² 71403 *Rumba Medley*: Selection No. 3 on this roll is identical to roll 213301 *The Peanut Vendor*. The other songs on this roll are not played by Arden and Carroll.

³ *Dinner Music No. 15 Southern Melodies* is a re-release of roll 70293 *Southern Stars Overture*.

THE DUO-ART RECORDINGS

By 1930, the piano industry was hit by numerous problems. Pressure from radio, improved disc recordings, and the start of the Great Depression drove many manufacturers out of business or into mergers. American Piano Company and Aeolian Corporation were driven into merger negotiations. By 1931, most popular rolls were performed by the same artists for the Ampico and Duo-Art, thus the beginning of Arden and Carroll recordings for the Duo-Art. Alas, only 19 rolls were coded for the Duo-Art. In January of 1931, Aeolian issued their first recording for the Duo-Art, *I Got Rhythm*, the fantastic George Gershwin tune. The final popular roll is *Tender is the Night* issued in December of 1935. These rolls were released at essentially the same time as the Ampico rolls.

NUMERICAL LISTING OF DUO-ART ARDEN AND CARROLL ROLLS, POPULAR AND CLASSICAL NUMBER SERIES¹

0786 I Got Rhythm
 0799 The Peanut Vendor
 0808 The King's Horses
 0811 When Your Lover Has Gone
 0815 Oh, Donna Clara
 0957 Alice in Wonderland
 0975 I Wish I Were Twins
 0984 A New Moon Over My Shoulder
 & By the Taj Mahal
 0990 The Continental

0999 If I Had a Million Dollars
 1000 You and the Night and the Music
 1006 I Get a Kick Out of You
 01014 Isle of Capri
 01016 Lullaby of Broadway
 01025 Life is a Song: Let's Sing it Together
 01035 What a Wonderful World
 01041 Tender is the Night
 74316 Popular Fox Trot Medley No.2²
 75056 Dinner Music No. 15 Southern Melodies

¹ The Catalog of Duo-Art Piano Rolls incorrectly lists roll 01017 *My Heart is an Open Book* as played by Arden and Carroll. This roll is a two hand arrangement played by Victor Arden.

² *Popular Fox Trot Medley No.2* is the same recording as *Popular Fox Trot Medley No.5* in the Ampico listing.

THE WELTE LICENSEE RECORDINGS

The Deluxe Reproducing Roll Corporation produced its last roll in May of 1930. By December, Aeolian started to produce rolls coded for the Welte Licensee. Starting in January of 1931 and going through July, recordings were produced with coding for all three systems; these rolls are known as the "triplet titles." The rolls feature both Duo-Art and Ampico artists. During this time, four Arden and Carroll rolls were issued with Welte coding. By July of 1932, Aeolian sold all the Welte equipment and back stock rolls to QRS thus ending all new roll production.

NUMERICAL LISTING OF WELTE LICENSEE ARDEN AND CARROLL ROLLS

Y-75515 The Peanut Vendor 3-31
Y-75522 The King's Horses 5-31

Y-75525 When Your Lover Has Gone 5-31
Y-75528 Oh, Donna Clara 6-31

Victor Arden and Adam Carroll have many fine individual recordings; however, their duet rolls are truly special. For me, these performances have a distinctive feeling about them mostly above and beyond what they did individually. Of the 62 Ampico performances by Arden and Carroll, all are very good recordings and many are outstanding. Here is a list of what I believe to be the best Arden and Carroll rolls in alphabetical order. Although others may have different favorites, there is little doubt that Arden and Carroll recordings are among the finest popular recordings ever made for the reproducing piano.

Am I Blue?

The Blue Danube Rhythmic Paraphrase

Do the New York

Faust Rhythmic Paraphrase

Fox Trot Medley No. 5

If I Had a Million Dollars

I Got Rhythm

Isle of Capri

I Wish I Were Twins

The King's Horses

Life is a Song: Let's Sing it Together

Lullaby of Broadway

Out of the Dawn

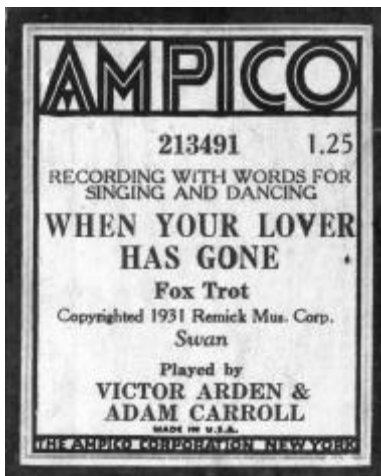
Song of the Moonbeams

Stein Song: University of Maine March

Tender is the Night

What Is This Thing Called Love?

When Your Lover Has Gone



SOURCES AND ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

[Ampico Reproducing Piano, The](#); Edited by Richard J. Howe.

[Catalog of Ampico Music 1925](#).

[Catalog of Duo-Art Piano Rolls](#); Written by Charles Davis Smith.

[Complete Catalog of Ampico Reproducing Piano Rolls, The](#); Written by Elaine Obenchain.

<http://nfo.net> The Great American Big Bands.

[Welte-Mignon Its Music and Musicians, The](#); Written by Charles Davis Smith and Richard James Howe.

<http://www.parabrisas.com> Victor Arden

Jerry Biasella

Bill Burkhardt

Bennet Leedy

Robin Pratt