

IVOR NOVELLO MAKES SPIRIT RETURNS

In this intriguing feature, medium Ronald Hearn tells how subjects as diverse as white lilac, guardsmen, Chinese connections and milk bottles all figured in evidence supplied by Ivor Novello.

If there is such a thing as life after death, and I firmly believe there is, then it becomes obvious that we all survive regardless of race, colour or creed. I cannot believe that there is any separation or segregation since it is a world of the Spirit. Regardless of our status in life, we will all find our way to that other dimension, and be equal. Sceptics will say, therefore, that when mediums claim to be in contact with famous people, it is all in the mind, and easy to make up stories, but if celebrities can and do communicate, they need to provide evidence as much as anyone else.

My story concerns a man who presented to this world some very beautiful music - and the name of Ivor Novello will be long remembered. One often wonders what people are doing after they pass on. No doubt many will catch up on things they would have liked to have done whilst others may well continue their interest in what they did before. It would be most natural for Novello to watch what is happening to his music. Since he was also reported to have helped many young people, there is no reason why he should not try to influence and help further still.

I consider myself one of the lucky ones to have received this help, though at the time I neither requested nor thought I needed it. Whilst I found his music pleasant, in no way could I say I was a fan of his. I saw his last show, "King's Rhapsody," in which he appeared and thought it most enjoyable, but did not particularly like Novello. I did not then know he was ill, and a week later he passed on. Perhaps it was then I was meant to become aware of this person, as he would in a way become a great help and inspiration, thus providing some very fine evidence.

One day, whilst giving a sitting to Betty Lawrence, who was then working at the Players Theatre in London, and a very fine accompanist, I became aware of Novello's presence and immediately assumed that she must have known him. By then, Betty and I had formed a song writing partnership. I was having a go at lyric writing, also at the idea of writing a musical together. Novello made me feel very much at ease and I felt happy with him. Betty did not know him personally, but wished she had. There could not be a

greater admirer of his music; she was always playing it. This pleased Novello very much. He gave her personal evidence about a show she had written and been staged already, one he felt would be again. This happened later.

From then on, Novello became a frequent communicator. Often he would pass his messages through my guide Running Water whilst I was entranced. He promised to help Betty and me with the musical, which was based on a reincarnation idea. It seemed to me that it would be easy for him to inspire her as she had so much experience in and with music, but I was a novice lyric writer. One day, Novello told her to watch out for white lilac and guardsmen in red tunics and busbies for it would be very important.

Good to his promise, Novello must have helped me very much with the script in particular, as I had never written one before and hardly knew where to start. Yet it all seemed to fall into place. So often when I had ideas in my mind as to how I would do things, once I started writing, it all seemed to change, as if someone was guiding my hand. The end result was quite perfect. I could not help but feel how kind it was of him to do this, if indeed it was him.

The script took a long time to do for I could only work for a short period at a time, and sometimes not at all. Since the message to Betty about white lilac and guardsmen, quite some time had elapsed. One day whilst sitting in the garden writing, I had composed a lyric which somehow did not appeal to me. It just did not seem right or good enough for the show or the music that Betty would compose. I felt compelled to leave it alone and obeyed, though not happily. In any case, I was due to give a demonstration at the then College of Psychic Science, and realized I could be late. After that I had agreed to visit a young woman who lived nearby in order to give her a sitting so all thoughts of lyrics had to be left alone for a time. The sitting was very successful. Afterwards, the young woman and I were joined for supper by her mother Mabel Batkin, quite a well-known medium. We chatted about all sorts of things, but as I was preparing to leave, Mabel hesitated and said to me: "This may sound strange to you, but I have been aware of Ivor Novello's presence all the time you have been here. I do not know what it means, or if you will understand, but he insists I tell you that he wrote a song called 'Keep the home fires burning.'" "He did not particularly like it at the time, but it made him and was a great success. You have just done something that you do not like, but it is as well to remember what happened to him. He will help you all he can." Naturally, I was rather taken aback, but also delighted and encouraged by this, especially as the medium and her daughter had no knowledge of what I was doing. When I explained the correctness of this message, she laughed and said, "Well, you

know my daughter used to be in show business and was always singing his songs so perhaps it is an added incentive for him to come."

I could hardly wait to get home and telephone Betty to tell her of my experience. She was quite excited to hear my message and said: "Wait until you hear this then! This afternoon I was at a wedding in Mayfair, where they had the most beautiful floral decorations, amongst which were a lot of white lilac. "It seemed to draw me. In order to make sure it was real, I pulled some down to smell and feel. Then in the evening a friend and I had been given some tickets for an ice show. And what should we see in one scene but a lot of guardsmen in red tunics and busbies skating around!"

A little more than co-incidence, I think, that all this should happen in one day. How carefully can things be seen and prepared in advance, I wonder?

I will always think of Novello and the white lilac, for some time after that Mabel Batkin came to see me and provided further evidence for the case. There was no reason to tell her about the other message being right up to this point, but after we finished our business, she told me that she could see Ivor Novello and he was holding white lilac over my head. Mabel felt it could be for luck but also was his way of telling me something. As a singer, one of my least favourite songs used to be "We'll Gather Lilacs," but it soon became quite a sentimental favourite.

Novello still provided evidence of his being around. One day he told Betty via Running Water that he had something up his Chinese sleeve. It was explained that he liked dressing up in Chinese style, a fact which neither Betty nor I knew at the time. Betty was assured it would be proved to her at a later date. When she went to visit some friends in Worthing, she had hardly got into the house before they told her they had something of great interest to show her...and produced a book about Ivor Novello. On the first page was a picture of him dressed as a Chinaman. Apparently, one of his shows had Chinese connections. What nobody knew at the time, except Betty, of course, was that the Chinese part in our show had just been settled.

Novello also showed interest in other people. Whilst giving a sitting to Sally Miles, daughter of Sir Bernard Miles, I became aware of Novello and felt he knew and remembered Sally. It was a fact that she had met him; it was she who told me of his kindness and encouragement to younger people, and what a remarkable person he seemed to be. Sally was going to do a show in Worcester and felt apprehensive about it, but Novello assured her it would go down well. As a sign, she was to watch out for lots and lots of milk bottles. Then she would know all was well. It so happened that Betty was

going to accompany her in a one woman show. Incidentally, Sally had agreed to sing one of the songs we had written. One morning as they made their way to the theatre for rehearsals, a huge lorry stacked high with empty milk bottles passed them on the road. Suddenly, several of the crates fell off at their feet, depositing many milk bottles and just missing them by inches. Sally jumped in the air for joy...and the show was a huge success.

Margaret Burton was a very well-known singer who starred in many productions. One of her specialties was singing Novello songs, which she did so beautifully for she had a glorious voice. Margaret was a kind and warm hearted person who also had knowledge of the afterlife since her Grandfather had been President of a Spiritualist church. It made it so much easier for me to tune in when she came to me for a sitting. Almost immediately, Ivor seemed to take a great interest in her. It transpired she had never met him, but wished she had. Novello was pleased she sang his songs so well, and then asked her if she had ever played a French lady on stage. He showed me a picture of Margaret dressed in French style with a high neckline and Pompadour hairdo. She said she had not, but he seemed to think there was a possibility she would.

About a week later I was at Betty's home when Margaret phoned and asked to speak with me. She was so excited and said I must be a male witch as she had been asked to audition for the part of Marie Antoinette! Even more strange was that on a table near the telephone was a book Betty had been reading the previous evening - and it had been left open in the middle of a chapter about Marie Antoinette.

Margaret asked Betty to accompany her for an audition for a musical version of a "Tale of Two Cities." They agreed to meet at Margaret's flat and have a run through of the numbers she would sing. Margaret also asked me if she could have a talk with Running Water on the same day as it would give her confidence. Could I do it in her flat? When I arrived, I found her in a great state as the flat had been flooded. Apparently a tap had been left running whilst she was out so it seemed as if Running Water had already been there! Margaret had her talk with him and seemed greatly cheered by it. Then she asked me to stay and listen to her going through the numbers with Betty, which pleased me as it was always a joy to hear her sing. Margaret tried two or three numbers, but did not seem at all happy about them. I became aware of Novello in the room. He was listening intently, smiling as he watched Margaret struggling. Then he said to me: "Tell her to sing 'Starlight' and all will go well. She will make a wonderful Queen." When I passed the message to Margaret she seemed uncertain, but I winked at Betty and told her to start playing the song. As she did, it was like a magnet to Margaret. She burst into glorious voice and did full justice to one of his numbers. When

she did the audition, looking every inch a Queen, she walked the part. In fact, it was decided to enlarge her part and build a special scene around her. How thrilled Novello must have been to be able to influence and help her.

From these stories there can be no doubt that Ivor Novello was taking a great interest in lots of people and carrying on much as he did in this earthly life. It would be hard to believe such things are the product of one's own mind; there is no reason why the famous should not communicate and do something useful. There is much evidence for this. And although my stories happened some while ago, I have no doubt Novello is still a great inspiration.