

Extract From Chapter Three: Why Did She Fall For The Leader Of The Band?



She used to love me until I took her to a dance -
She used to love me, but now I've lost my big romance.
She was a good girl and I can never understand:
Why did she fall for the leader of the band?

She fell completely, she had to have his autograph,
And very sweetly she handed me the horse's laugh.
She was a good girl and I can never understand:
Why did she fall for the leader of the band?

She said, "Wait for me", I lit a cigarette:
If I'd waited there, I'd have been waiting yet.

I'm broken-hearted, now music only makes me wince:
We never parted because I've never seen her since.
She was a good girl and I can never understand:
Why did she fall for the leader of the band?
(words and music by Jimmy Kennedy & Michael Carr)

Joyce Newman held her 21st birthday party in the Monseigneur Restaurant on November 11th 1933. She'd been there before, having gate-crashed the gala opening in the previous year. Joyce came from Gloucestershire. Her father, Charles Percy Newman, was a successful engineer and businessman. He had a brass foundry near Stroud, making brass valves and stop-cocks and oil-well equipment. He employed all the men in the surrounding villages. In both wars, the factory was speedily converted to making shell casings and munitions. His grandfather had built the Sebastopol docks, and come back to England with a Russian wife at the time of the Crimean War.

Joyce went to prep school in Malvern, and then came to London, to study piano at the Royal College of Music. She was a gifted pianist, who'd already won two LRAM gold medals. She lived in digs off Kensington Church Street, sharing with eight other students, but she was the only one who had a grand piano in her bedroom.

In 1933, Joyce's boyfriend was the nephew of Jack Upson, owner of the Monseigneur, which had become very popular with the bright young things, as well as being the 'in' place for royalty, society, movie stars and wealthy Indian princes. So the owner's nephew was able to organise the best table in the house for Joyce and her friends. On her 21st birthday, Lew Stone came over to the table during the evening and asked the birthday girl whether there was anything she would like the band to play for her. She asked that Al Bowlly should sing 'We're Having a Heat-wave', and he obliged. Joyce remembers dancing round with a cigarette tucked behind each ear: 'because I'd been promised £21 by my parents, if I didn't smoke until I was 21. The next morning, the first thing I did when I woke up was to light a cigarette!'