In our second volume of vintage children's recordings, we present more selections from what can arguably be called the "golden age" for this genre. Ever since the advent of phonograph records, catering to the younger set has been a big moneymaker for record companies, and in creating a "kiddie catalogue," the majors trotted out their most popular performers, who performed songs and stories while adding in a dollop of their own personalities and trade-marks. It was almost a badge of honour for these artists and in many cases, you can tell that they were having the time of their lives at the sessions.

What might have been a tough session for the average recording artist was the proverbial piece of cake for Spike Jones and his City Slickers, who were accustomed to synchronized sound effects and assorted noises. The Slickers, with Del Porter leading the way, coast through Old MacDonald Had a Farm.

Western film and recording star Maurice "Tex" Ritter (1905-1974) is nearly upstaged by the vocal antics of fellow cowboy actor Max Terhune. Terhune (1891-1973), an accomplished ventriloquist, provided the animal impressions on Capitol's imaginative Animal Fair, with the help of Capitol's extensive sound effects library.

Some of Warner Brothers' most enduring Looney Tunes' cartoon shorts were lampoons of classical music, most notably The Rabbit of Seville and What's Opera, Doc? Daffy Duck's Rhapsody targets Liszt's Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2, in which the mime maddened complaints about being a target himself of banimals. Warner Brothers voice genius Mel Blanc is at the top of his game in this track, accompanied by Capitol stalwart Billy May's orchestra.

Danny Kaye (né David Kaminsky) (1913-1987) spent a lifetime as a film star, entertainer, and recording artist, but it was his uncanny way with children that endeared him to countless kids of all ages. The Little Fiddle, first called "Symphony for Unstrung Tongue," was featured in the 1947 film The Secret Life of Walter Mitty and was easily adapted for a Decca children's 78 later that year. No doubt some of the gags and musical puns went straight over the heads of most children, but the result shows the facile-tongued Kaye at his best, using his talent for dialects and voices. The song was written by Kaye's wife and Svengali, Sylvia Fine, who wrote all of his zany material.

Although Jack Mercer became the most famous voice of Popeye, he wasn't the first to breathe life into Max and Dave Fleischer's spinach-addicted sailor. The credit belongs to Billy Connello (aka "Red Pepper Sam"), who provided the voice for Popeye for the first two years of its run (1933-35).
and was fired from the role shortly after recording Sammy Lerner's identifying theme song, "I'm Popeye the Sailor Man", written to sound like a traditional sea shanty. The New York-born Mae Questel (1908-1998) provided the voice for two of early cartoons' most celebrated females: Popeye's "goil friend" Olive Oyl, and the '20s flapper icon, Betty Boop. "On the Good Ship Lollipop" was featured in the Shirley Temple feature "Bright Eyes" (1934), winning an honorary Oscar for its six-year-old star. The song quickly became a popular bedtime song for parents to sing to their children. Mae makes sure to add a perky "boop-boop-be-doop" to the tag.

Civil War songwriter Henry Clay Work (1832-1884) wrote "My Grandfather's Clock" in 1876, inspired by a story he had heard about two elderly brothers who died within a short time of each other, their grandfather's clock running out simultaneously. The stentorian oh-so-veddy proper reading by Australian Harold Williams could only have been performed standing up with his hands behind his back.

Little Man You've Had a Busy Day is a wonderful lullaby performed most effectively by Paul Robeson (1898-1976), who in 1934 was hugely popular in England from his stage performance in "Othello". The innocence of the recording, tastefully accompanied by Ray Noble's orchestra, was in direct contrast to the storm of controversy that would follow when Robeson made his first fateful trip to the Soviet Union later that year. British child star Ann Stephens (1931-1959) was ten years old and on the verge of a successful career in film when she recorded the charming "Christopher Robin's Dance (The Worry Song)", a song based on A. A. Milne's poem, "Poems for People". The poem, as well as Buckingham Palace, first appeared in Milne's book, "When We Were Very Young" (1924), a collection of children's verses written for Milne's real life four-year-old son, Christopher Robin Milne, who became the inspiration for the boy in the Winnie-the-Pooh stories beginning two years later. The real Christopher Robin died in 1996 at the age of 76. The poem was featured in the 1945 film "Anchors Aweigh", starring Gene Kelly and Frank Sinatra. The sequence in the movie featured the famous dance routine with Jerry the Mouse matching Kelly step for step.

In 1946, Capitol Records decided to make an entrance into the children's market with a series of recordings by prominent music and film stars. The head of the new children's division, Alan Livingston ("Rusty in Orchestraville"), came up with an idea for a book that would have a record included. This resulted in the first "read-along" book, which was narrated by a clown named Bozo, featuring the voice of Vance "Pinto" Colvig (1892-1967). Bozo became so popular, that the character made the transition to television in 1949 on KTTV, Channel 11 in Los Angeles. Colvig, who also provided the voice for Walt Disney's Goofy, became a television institution, thanks in part to the infectious "Bozo's Laughing Song.

Suzy Snowflake is a seasonal song that
somehow lost favour in the half-century since it was recorded by Rosemary Clooney (1928-2002). Written by Tin Pan Alley stalwarts Sid Tepper and Roy Brodsky, the song had the misfortune of coming out when "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer" and "Frosty the Snowman" were also fresh entries into the secular Christmas derby. Thus, Suzy was relegated to the dustbin of forgotten holiday songs. Brodsky changed his name to Roy C. Bennett and had better luck, becoming a writer of music material in Elvis Presley's early films. He also wrote the hit "Red Roses for a Blue Lady."

As lead trumpet player for Spike Jones' City Slickers, George Rock (1919-1988) was better known for his falsetto gap-toothed vocals, most famously on "All I Want for Christmas (Is My Two Front Teeth)." Rock had been playing with the pre-Jonesian music butcher Freddie Fisher when he joined Jones in the mid-1940s. One of the first children's shows to hit television was "The Howdy Doody Show," which made its TV debut on 27 December 1947. The creation of "Buffalo" Bob Smith, the idea was germinated from a Saturday morning radio quiz show for children, featuring a bumpkin character named Elmer. This soon evolved into Howdy Doody (voiced by Smith), personified by a wooden marionette when the show made its transition to television. The Popcorn Song was co-written by Smith and the show's longtime co-producer and songwriter Eddie Kean.

Along with "Rusty in Orchestraville," the story of Tubby the Tuba was one of the best primers for youngsters on the makeup of the symphony orchestra. "Tubby" was a collaborative effort between Paul Tripp, aka Mr. 1 Magnification (1911-2002) who wrote the story, and George Kleinsinger (1914-1982), who supplied the music. Tripp thought up the story of the lonely tuba who couldn't get a solo while serving in the Army in China during World War II. When it was released in 1945, it became an immediate hit, eventually selling over eight million copies. Critics gave the recording, narrated by actor Victor Jory (1902-1982), universal praise (despite Jory’s mispronunciation of "xylophone"), even comparing it to Prokofiev's Peter and the Wolf, in which characters also had specific musical motifs. A ten-minute cartoon short by Pal Puppetoons was produced in 1947. The story was later narrated by Dick Van Dyke, Danny Kaye, and Carol Channing, among others.

Puffin' Billy, more commonly known as the theme song for the long-running Captain Kangaroo children's television program starring Bob Keeshan, was originally a track from the British-based Chappell Recorded Music Library, which supplied production music for broadcast programs. The song, which was first published in 1954, referred to a British steam locomotive, and became so popular that in 1957, lyrics were added by Mary Rodgers.

– Cary Ginell (folklorist, radio broadcaster and award-winning author of four books on American music. He lives in Thousand Oaks, California)
1. Old MacDonald Had A Farm 1:07
   (Del Porter–Spike Jones)
   Spike Jones & His City Slickers; Del Porter, vocal
   Victor 20-1836, mx D6/VB-207
   Recorded 11 February 1940, Hollywood

2. Animal Fair 2:44
   (Country Washburne–Foster Carling)
   Tex Ritter with Calliope & Sound Effects;
   Animal effects by Max Touche
   Capitol 29012, mx 1012-A
   Recorded December 1947, Hollywood

3. Daffy Duck's Rhapsody 3:05
   (Mike Maltese–Warren Foster)
   Mel Blanc with Billy May's Music
   Capitol 32518, mx 6023
   Recorded 1 May 1950, Hollywood

4. The Little Fiddles 6:22
   (Syria Dist)
   Danny Kaye, with orchestra conducted by
   Johnny Green
   Decca DE-18006, mx DL-5667-A
   Recorded 28 November 1947, Los Angeles

5. I'm Popeye The Sailor Man 2:24
   (Sammy Lerner)
   Billy Costello (Popeye) with orchestra
   Melotone M-13402, mx 17393
   Recorded 27 April 1935, New York

6. On The Good Ship Lullaby 2:35
   (Richard Whiting–Sidney Clare)
   Gene Kelly & supporting cast with orchestra
   conducted by Lehman Engel
   Columbia 56896, mX CL 25092-1, 25093-2
   Recorded 28 July 1945, New York

7. Grandfather's Clock 3:13
   (Henry Clay Work)
   Harold Williams with the BBC Male Voice
   Choir conducted by Joseph Lewis, piano
   Columbia DB 1284, mx CA 14135-A
   Recorded 31 October 1935, London

8. Little Man You've Had A Busy Day 3:11
   (Mabel Wayne–Maurice Sigler–Al Hoffman)
   Paul Robeson, with orchestra conducted by
   Ray Noble
   HMV B 8202, mx 08742-2
   Recorded 21 June 1954, London

9. Christopher Robin (Vespers) 2:24
   (A.A. Milne–H. Fraser-Simson)
   Ann Stephens, with orchestra conducted by
   Clifford Greenwood
   HMV BD 973, mx HA 8645-1
   Recorded 9 July 1941, London

10. Buckingham Palace 2:23
    (A.A. Milne–H. Fraser-Simson)
    Ann Stephens, with orchestra conducted by
    Clifford Greenwood
    HMV BD 973, mx HA 8645-1
    Recorded 9 July 1941, London

11. The King Who Couldn't Dance (The Worry Song) 6:54
    From: Anchors Aweigh
    (Arthur Freed–Sammy Fain–Lehman Engel)
    Gene Kelly & supporting cast with orchestra
    conducted by Lehman Engel
    Columbia 56896, mX CL 25092-1, 25093-2
    Recorded 28 July 1945, New York
8.1207776
Bozo's Laughing Song 3:01
(Pinto Colvig–Billy May)
Pinto Colvig (Bozo the Clown) with Billy May's Band
Capitol 30110, mx 3673-4
Recorded 25 February 1949, Hollywood
12.

13.358
Sneezy Snowflake 2:58
(Sid Tepper–Roy Brodsky)
Rosemary Clooney with Tony Mottola's Orchestra
Columbia 19612, mx CL 66255-1
Recorded 15 May 1951, New York (2:56)
14.

14.358
(All I Want For Christmas Is) My Two Front Teeth 3:08
(Don Gardner)
Spike Jones & His City Slickers; George Rock, vocal
RCA Victor 20-3177, mx D7-VB-2342
Recorded 4 December 1947, Los Angeles
15.

15.358
The Popcorn Song 1:58
(Ed Smith–Edward Keane)
The Fontane Sisters & Howdy Doody (Bob Smith) with orchestra conducted by Norman Leyden
RCA Victor 20-4322, mx E1-VB-3678
Recorded 2 October 1951, New York (1:56)
15.

Also available...

Original monochrome photo from Mary Evans Picture Library

NAXOS RADIO
Over 50 Channels of Classical Music • Jazz, Folk/World, Nostalgia
Accessible Anywhere, Anytime • Near-CD Quality
www.naxosradio.com
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Track</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Artist</th>
<th>Duration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Old MacDonald Had A Farm</td>
<td>Spike Jones &amp; His City Slickers</td>
<td>3:07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Animal Fair</td>
<td>Tex Ritter with Calliope</td>
<td>2:43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Daffy Duck’s Rhapsody</td>
<td>Mel Blanc</td>
<td>3:05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>The Little Fiddle</td>
<td>Danny Kaye</td>
<td>6:22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I’m Popeye The Sailor Man</td>
<td>Billy Costello (Popeye)</td>
<td>2:24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6.</td>
<td>On The Good Ship Lollipop</td>
<td>Mae Questel (The Betty Boop Girl)</td>
<td>2:35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>Grandfather’s Clock</td>
<td>Harold Williams</td>
<td>3:13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Little Man You’ve Had A Busy Day</td>
<td>Paul Robeson</td>
<td>3:11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.</td>
<td>Christopher Robin (Vespers)</td>
<td>Ann Stephens</td>
<td>2:14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.</td>
<td>The King Who Couldn’t Dance (The Worry Song)</td>
<td>Gene Kelly</td>
<td>6:54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.</td>
<td>Bozo’s Laughing Song</td>
<td>Pinto Colvig (Bozo the Clown)</td>
<td>3:01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.</td>
<td>Suzy Snowflake</td>
<td>Rosemary Clooney</td>
<td>2:58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.</td>
<td>(All I Want For Christmas is) My Two Front Teeth</td>
<td>Spike Jones &amp; His City Slickers</td>
<td>3:08</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.</td>
<td>The Popcorn Song</td>
<td>The Fontane Sisters &amp; Howdy Doody</td>
<td>1:58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16.</td>
<td>Tubby The Tuba</td>
<td>Victor Jory</td>
<td>11:46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.</td>
<td>Puffin’ Billy</td>
<td>The Melodi Light Orchestra</td>
<td>2:58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Time:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td><strong>65:08</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>