

# POP GO THE ROYALTIES

A FEW of my articles had been accepted for publication overseas, so I concluded I had some literary ability. I wrote a biographical book. That cost me £150 and I debited it to experience. Then I had a letter from a London literary agent asking if I'd write a biography for one of the best-known publishing houses.

Was this the beginning of fame?

I wrote and said "Yes." They wrote and gave me the terms. I wrote and wrote and wrote. Finally a bulky MS was airmailed.

My agents wrote in acknowledgment, while I began to plan my next best-seller.

Back came the MS for corrections. I wrote some more. Then I wrote and returned the corrected MS with some pictures. Some time went by. Then I

Written for "The Listener"  
by JOHN STANNAGE

wrote and asked when I could expect the first advanced royalty payment. The publishers wrote and said "pretty soon," and the book would be published in 1947. I wasn't particularly interested in the publishing date. I wanted some money. I was really interested in writing because I wanted to earn some money.

The publishers wrote me and enclosed a cheque. It was for £30. I expected £50 sterling as agreed. £50 sterling would be £62/10/- New Zealand money and to me that sounded like real money. But only £30. Why?

I wrote the agents to find out. They wrote and told me the sad reason. English income tax was nine shillings in the pound.

## "Air Pioneer"—Receipts and Payments Account

	Sterling:	N.Z. Currency:		Sterling:	N.Z. Currency:
	£ s d	£ s d		£ s d	£ s d
To Royalty	50 (E)	62 10 0	By Income Tax England 9/- in £1 Stg. Agent's Commission 20%	22 10 0	28 2 6
				10 0 0	12 10 0
				32 10 0	40 12 6
			Carried Down		21 17 6
		62 10 0			62 10 0
Brought Down		21 17 6	By Typing Fees		10 0 0
			5 Airmail letters		7 6
			Airmail 1st MS		4 5 0
			Airmail Corrected MS		4 5 0
			Reproduction fee for illustrations		4 0 0
Deficit		4 7 6	Reference Books		3 7 6
		£26 5 0			£26 5 0

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easy grace, provides an attractive introduction to the general pattern of music throughout the ages. There is also an appeal to more advanced students, for some of the essays are revaluations of many of our accepted views, such as those on Mendelssohn, Bruckner, and Mahler. One or two of the comments may raise a few critical eyebrows. For instance: "If (Richard Strauss) is still above ground, he is over 80, but, so far as music is concerned he died before he was 50. . . . Other cases there are in plenty of composers writing one or two first-rate works, and then producing nothing worth a pinch of salt for the rest of their lives—Humperdinck and Stravinsky spring to mind." Stimulating, certainly, and that adjective could be applied to almost everything written here. Typographically also the book is a pleasure to read, and a credit to the publishers.

I wrote to our income tax gentlemen. They wrote so nicely in reply explaining that I must apply for a rebate from the English commissioner of taxes; but they were a little sharp in pointing out that I was most remiss in not having paid social security tax upon the amount I had received from England. I'd like to do that really. I wish I had a lot of income tax to pay. But I asked a very clever accounting friend of mine to set out the exact position of my literary earnings for me. The table here shows what he did.

Now I don't want to sound discouraging to those who aspire to make money from writing; but see for yourself.

This is my final and truly inspired literary effort. If the editor of *The Listener* accepts this, my deficit will only be just over two pounds, so I can call it a day and return to my garden for relaxation and profit, perhaps!

But I forgot, I still owe social security payments on £30. Dear me.



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