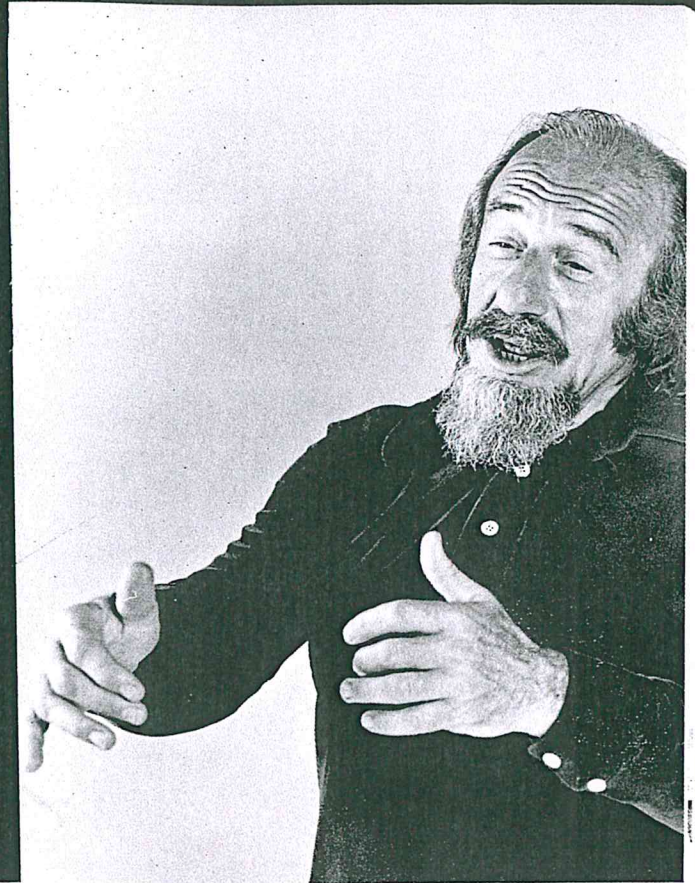


# Mitch Miller

by Margaret Daniels



Mitch Miller

Among the well-known people who have created second homes for themselves in the Cayman Islands, not the least distinguished is the famous musician Mitchell Miller, whose radio and television programme 'Sing Along With Mitch' has been one of the biggest and most popular shows in America for many years.

"It is perhaps not too unusual for a well trained musician to have abilities in both classical and popular music, but it becomes phenomenal when the same man can reach to top in both fields." These are words found on the sleeve of a record made by Mitchell Miller of some of Bach's and Mozart's oboe music. It was in the field of classical music that 'Mitch' Miller first excelled.

Born on 4th July, 1911 in Rochester, New York, he first became interested in music at the age of 6 years when he began having piano lessons. He took up the oboe at the age of 11 years and soon afterwards won a scholarship to the Eastman School of Music. His first professional appearance as a soloist was made with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. During this period he played under such famous conductors as Sir Hamilton Harty, Eugene Goossens, Fritz Reiner and Sir Thomas Beecham.

But when the name 'Mitch' Miller is mentioned one thinks of him not as a classical musician but as the man behind such radio programmes as 'Sing Along With Mitch' — as the man whose chorus backed Guy Mitchell's records, and made such records as 'Yellow Rose of Texas,' 'Children's Marching Song' and 'March from 'Bridge over the River Fwai'".

His chorus numbers 25 singers, all male, and he also has a permanent band, all of whom appear on his shows.

A typical day in his life at the television studio may be

anything up to 18 hours long. He will be preparing for three shows — rehearsing the music for one, taping music for a second and making musical arrangements for a third, as well as planning costumes, scenery, etc.

Asked whether he prefers classical music to pop music, or vice versa, Mr. Miller says that he is happy in both media. To him music is music and he strives to do both as well as he can.

According to Mr. Miller there are many more good young classical musicians today than there were in his day. They know that their future is limited, financially speaking, especially in the United States where there is no Government support for the Arts. There are many more young people studying music, there are better teachers, but there are also more good players than there are good opportunities — which makes a career in classical music today a tough one.

Mr. Miller came to Cayman eight years ago and has watched with great interest the changes in the Island during that time. He is concerned lest sound planning for the future does not accompany the rapid growth taking place at present and is especially alarmed at the amount of littering on the Island, resulting in a generally untidy appearance. He also expresses misgivings about the danger of not passing the enabling legislation to protect the Seven-Mile Beach from the ever-present possibilities of pollution, oil spillage from tankers, etc. As he expresses it, if that stretch of peerless beach is lost then the Cayman Islands has little to offer the vacationer. In common with expatriates who have built homes in Cayman, he has a genuine affection for the Island and is concerned about the direction in which it moves.

In conclusion, some advice from a man who has made a success of his own musical career — "work as hard as you can, strive to be as excellent as you can."