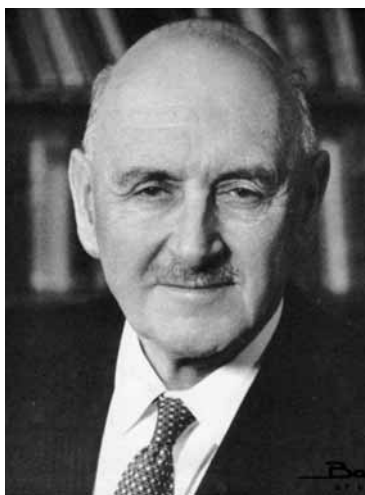


It was never a love match: Leslie Boosey, the very model of a Victorian gentleman, dignified, inscrutable, with a strong sense of family duty, the heir to a rich and venerable music business that owned half of upper Regent Street; and the dashing Ralph Hawkes, 11 years his junior, an ocean-racing yachtsman, a champion of the Cresta Run, an instinctive entrepreneur of vast ambition and steely determination, a man who belonged to the future. Legend has it that Ralph Hawkes assisted with the evacuation of Dunkirk. For Leslie Boosey a game of chess was 'too exciting'. For Hawkes, though he laughed to admit it, after the blitz he missed 'the howling banshee and sweet symphony of gunfire'. And while he was throwing lavish parties in his Knightsbridge penthouse, Boosey, famously frugal, reportedly brought apples from his Hertfordshire orchard to sell to the staff. Ralph lived at large and at break-neck speed, burning out suddenly in his early fifties, mourned by an international coterie of admirers. Boosey was the survivor, nursing the company through painful transition, living to see his family ousted from the business he had built up, and dying at 92 without even a *Times* obituary. More significantly, Boosey had four children, while Hawkes had two wives but no heirs, a fact that would one day bring the company to the brink of destruction. And yet, despite all their differences, the twenty-year partnership of Boosey and Hawkes created one of the world's great music companies, whose legacy shines with artistic vision and commercial acumen 75 years on.



Leslie Boosey (1887-1979)  
Ralph Hawkes (1898-1950)