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to

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SWING SESSIONS } pp. 116-121
JAM SESSIONS }

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Reviewing the Reviewers

By GUY SYKES

(EDITOR'S NOTE: Guy Sykes, satirist, herewith takes a pot shot at reviewers in general. These are his ideas of how various men in the trade would review *Hot Club Stomp* and *The Swing Session's Called to Order* by Mezz Mezzrow Orchestra—recorded under the supervision of Hot Clubs of America—Victor 25612.)

JOHN HAMMOND IN THE NEW MASSES

As president of the UHCA, I had nothing to do with this recording. I did this deliberately in order to avoid capitalistic commercialism, and incidentally, so that I could criticize it freely. Why this should worry Mezzrow, the UHCA, and the Victor Company, is more than I can understand. The fact that labor conditions at the Victor factory are lamentable, dooms this weak attempt at a poor record, for which I have nothing but praise. When I see the president of Victor next time, he may have some explanation to offer. Further, this is simply another case of Comrade Mezzrow being exploited again by the colored race. Of course, they in turn were exploited by the Victor people. We shall have to wait until the revolution to see people swing. By the way, the music on this record is quite good.

ABEL GREEN IN VARIETY

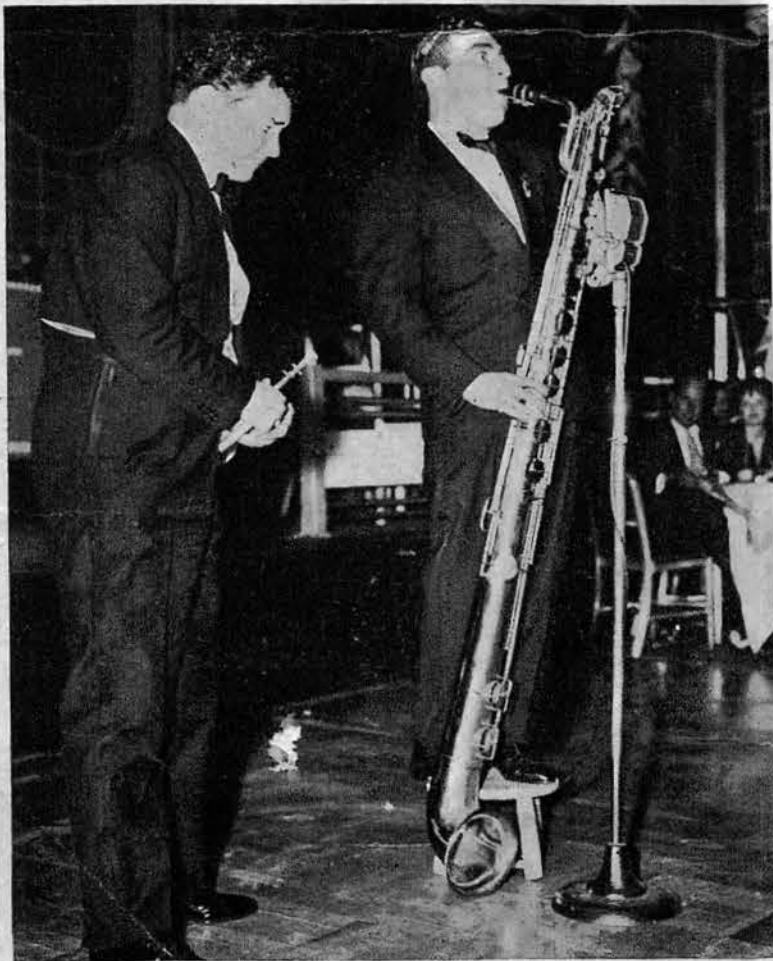
Heavy on the stomp and swing is *Hot Club Stomp* and *Swing Session Called to Order*, Victor 25612, which (as hard-headed newspaper mugs on the inside and our toes) we can divulge is played by Mezz Mezzrow's ork and recorded under the supervision of the Hot Clubs of America.

GEORGE SIMON IN METRONOME

Another prediction come true! Last April 1st we gave Mezz Mezzrow an E minus and told you to keep an eye on this new kid. And now he has made good. We predict everyone will be famous, in our various issues, and sometimes we hit a few of them right. Then we tell everybody about it because new talent should be encouraged. On *Club* listen to the clarinet, trumpet, trombone, tenor sax, alto, bass, drums, piano and zith. On *Call*, ditto. (Incidentally, we specialize in discovering drummers.)

REVIEWERS IN STAGE, ESQUIRE AND THE NEW YORKER

Mezz Mezzrow's *Hot Club Stomp* and *The Swing Session's Call to Order*, on Victor, we gather must be this new swing music—if you



Something even Guy Sykes doesn't review. Benny Meroff's playing the super-karundayshus basic-metabolistic sax, and watching a fly on the ceiling at the same time, while trombone-playing comedian Jack Marshall offers condolences (cf. Band Reviews)

happen to have the key to that esoteric cult. The melody seems rather not at all catchy, if you ask us, but nobody does. But then, we are is an American art form, and we wish we knew something about it. I buy this sort of music, we advise purchasing *Little Old Lady*, by Jan

PAUL EDOURD MILLER IN DOWN BEAT

The origins of jazz are so confused today that it is up to me to clear up. Why everybody else is so ignorant is a mystery to me. For instance, in the Orleans days there used to be an obscure musician named Louis Armstrong. I am informed upon reliable evidence that he played the trumpet. No will reveal other unknown old-timers, like Duke Ellington, whom myself has ever heard of. This Mezz Mezzrow band is just a studio arrangement by Victor for various new combinations such as the All-Star Trio Military Band, and Joseph C. Smith. It is very poor because the colored musicians in the band. Just as soon as I read what the other have to say, I'll have some new dope for you. Next time I will also much what I am trying to say this time.

MARSHALL STEARNS IN TEMPO

Dig the stomp-box, lunge-iron, and on this platter. It rates tops of this genuine jive. For the knocked-out ho with a barrel-house bottom, don't Than which there is nothing whither. Add the black-stick, horn, and Wotta band, wotta disc, wottahell.

MIKE (SPIKE HUGHES) IN MELODY MAKER

I'm so bored with being bored. The last pose I can figure out. I suppose have liked swing music once, but member when. Then classical music so dull, and now, even insulting my readers is beneath me. Their make good copy, though. The next step would be to quit writing, but do that. It's not on account of the money, however, because I am a gr I forgot that I dropped that artist pose some time ago. What worries the next pose. Maybe I could start all over again being enthusiastic. The being reviewed is Mezz Mezzrow's *Hot Club Stomp*. That's that.

ROPHONE (LEONARD FEATHER) IN MELODY MAKER

I shall be angry with you if you don't purchase every record I star in this review. How trip to America there been a few things that even I didn't know, but now you must listen very closely to my every word. When I played Mezz Mezzrow's record I was very happy. It reminded me of my trip to America, and the genuine swirl played at the Savoy, a dance-hall in Harlem. I have been there my intimate friend, Mezz Mezzrow, often spoke of it to me. It is wonder trip, I mean.

GEORGE FRAZIER IN MADEMOISELLE

Of course, if you go for sentimental songs can get Fred Astaire's *On Your Bottom* and Johnny Green's nauseating piano. But the lift of Mezz Mezzrow's *Hot Club Stomp* is unbeatable for guts. Here is a real guy who hasn't sold out at all, at that out-of-the-world drive of the good old days, when they played w gut although their heart was breaking, Mezzrow kills himself for the untive ickies. Take it or leave it, guts is best.

FRANK NORRIS IN TOWN AND COUNTRY

The boys at Gabler's warned me not to buy Mezz Mezzrow's latest, *Hot Club Stomp* and *The Swing Session's Called to Order* on Victor. Life will be pretty hectic at Commodore Music Shop if I don't say something, so here goes. Mezzrow's real name is, of course, Hiawatha, and he is a naturalized Ethiopian. Just arrived in this country, he is the current sensation among the swing gentry. The record sounds very fine to me, but then don't quote because I have been known to make mistakes. I hope the boys at Gabler's let me into the store.

HELEN OAKLEY IN MASTER-VARIETY PRESS RELEASES

Is my face red! Is it purple? Wait a minute until I get a mirror. Anytime I mean, is OUR face red. You see, although I just supervised this recording, I forgot to get the personnel. Maybe it was because I left the microphone inside the trombone accidentally. Is that trombone red! It made the trombone too loud, you see, and he was pretty awful, but I suggest that you wear out part first and play the rest of the record later. This band is an unknown newcomer to the recording field composed of musicians from Duke Ellington's band. That's part of our revolutionary new policy of unearthing new talent. the way, I just looked into the mirror and my face is indigo! Actually.

OTIS FERGUSON IN THE NEW REPUBLIC

Picture an electric circle of rhythm vibrating Mezz on the circumference electrocuted himself. Picture his clarinet like a boomerang in flight zooming back up his head. Picture the drummer trapped in his traps. Picture a picture. And sentimental sorrow of it all. Just too, too utterly utter. That, simply, is what

MUSIC



BENNY CARTER

He was a "biggest" capture

Swing

Swing music cultists who speak of swing with about as bated breaths as highbrows do of Arnold Schönberg are now up against the American Creative League of Music Students. The League is planning to introduce an anti-swing music Bill into all American State Legislatures.

Recently the League's president, Arthur Cremin, described a "Peeping Tom" experiment which they staged to prove that swing music is "highly dangerous to morality."

Said Cremin, "We placed a youth and a girl in a room where we could see them without being observed. First we arranged a radio programme of good music, classical pieces and popular songs, such as waltzes. They were friendly, but that was all. Later we arranged another meeting. This time we played swing music. They were both much bolder, and the result was shocking."

Apart from the Calvinistic Middle-Western States of America, there is little evidence that the League's campaign will be taken seriously. But in England it has given much pain to an alert young man named Leonard Feather.

At 22 he is self-appointed swing propagandist to Great Britain.

According to Feather, people have all the wrong ideas about swing, and think it is the lowest and most un-intellectual form of music. But pianist Paderewski, composer, conductor Constant Lambert, besides other orthodox pundits, have expressed considerable appreciation of it. Technically, Feather thinks swing far ahead of ordinary

jazz. Ten years hence, Feather says, people will be playing swing records of to-day, whereas ordinary present-day dance music will have been thankfully forgotten.

In a large room off Holborn, in London, where he operates, he has a collection of two thousand swing records, worth about £400. If he played them all straight off, it would take him six days and six nights.

Up in his second-storey room Feather keeps his finger on swing. He listens to 30 or more new records a week, all the radio relays, and occasionally direct to America on the short waves. He gets all the latest swing news from American friends. He writes swing columns under 15 different pseudonyms, reviews hot records for the *Melody Maker*. He is the only white correspondent of a Harlem paper. He answers queries from enthusiasts, and sometimes from angry conservatives. He arranges swing broadcasts. If a hot swing man comes within hail of Great Britain, he's after him. His biggest capture to date was Benny Carter for the B.B.C. to do some orchestrations for straight jazzman Henry Hall.

Now and then Feather hand-picks some of the very few British musicians who understand swing, and makes a record.

For no apparent reason Scotsmen so far have shown they are the best British swing players. Women, Feather thinks, cannot swing at all.

Swing originated from ragtime in the south American states about 1910. First well-known band to play swing was the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, which produced *Tiger Rag* in 1911. In the middle 'twenties Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong got going, and swing music has gradually progressed from then.

Early records are valuable now. Two of Earl Hines's piano solos, *Panther Rag* and *Just Too Soon*, cost £7 each, Louis ("Satchelmouth") Armstrong's *Gut Bucket Blues* or *Cornet Chop Suey* cannot be had for less than £5.

Though swing is a huge commercial success in America, Britain is still very un-swing-conscious. Probably less than 500 people over here really understand it.

People seem to label the most offensive types of jazz "swing," and let it go at that. Even propagandist Feather cannot describe it very easily. He says it is indefinable like red or beauty. The non-technical part of his description is that swing consists in improvisations based on a simple melody or even just on a simple sequence of chords incorporating a strong regular rhythm in unvarying tempo. . . ."

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

'MUSIC from the Movies', the title of Louis Levy's ambitious series of film-tune programmes, means something more to its conductor than a mere title of a broadcast. To him those four words sum up his entire musical career, for since his earliest days in the profession he has been identified with music for, by, with, and from the movies.

In the days when far-sighted *entrepreneurs* went round converting empty shops into 'picture palaces', Louis Levy toured one of these circuits playing his violin. He had studied under Guido Papini in London and in Italy. Then in 1912 he went to the New Gallery, one of the first of London's super-cinemas, and soon became musical director.

One of the first to realise that musical accompaniments could be adapted to the moods of the films, and strengthen their dramatic values, he acquired a library of over fifty thousand works.

His services were constantly in demand for trade shows. He once assembled a ninety-piece orchestra, a choir of the same dimensions, and a tableau involving a further 120, to put over *The Sea Hawk* at the Albert Hall.

Levy's connection with talkies began when he supplied recorded music as a background for a silent film. Since then he has had charge of the film music for two of the largest British film companies, dealing in everything from military and brass bands to symphony orchestras, dance bands and, as in the case of the picture *Tudor Rose*, research into musical history.

As a broadcaster he is no less a pioneer, having given a one-hour programme each week from a cinema fourteen years ago on 2LO. He has also broadcast to the U.S.A. for NBC and Columbia, with his band and Jessie Matthews. Which reminds me that the latter's new film hits from *Gangway* will be featured by Levy for the first time in this week's 'Music from the Movies' (Friday, National: 6.45).

* * * *

This week's connoisseur programme, in the hands of Leslie Perowne, will be a recital of Duke Ellington's recordings. Having recently mentioned that such composers as Constant Lambert had expressed an admiration for the work of this artist, I will use this topical opportunity of quoting Mr. Lambert's interesting and contentious opinion:—'Duke Ellington's band is by far the best that has come to this country. The ensemble of the players is as remarkable as their individual virtuosity. The orchestration of nearly all the numbers shows an intensely musical instinct, and after hearing what Ellington can do with fourteen players in pieces like "Jive Stomp" and "Mood Indigo", the average modern composer who splashes about with eighty players in the Respighi manner must feel a little chastened. Ellington is no mere band-leader and arranger, but a composer of uncommon merit, probably the first composer of real character to come out of America.'

* * * *

This week Carroll Gibbons takes his turn in John Burnaby's 'The Signature Is —' series. In this instance the signature is a composition of the band-leader himself, 'On The Air'. But the character of the band's handwriting, so to speak, is determined by Paul Fenoulhet, who writes most of the arrangements, and is preparing some special material for Monday's performance.

The SHAPE of SWINGS to COME

WILLIE SMITH ("THE LION") AND HIS CUBS. Recorded April and July, 1937, for Amer. Decca. FIRST SESSION:

"I Can See You All Over The Place."

"I'm All Out Of Breath."

"More Than That."

"Swampland."

SECOND SESSION:

"Get Acquainted With Yourself."

"Knock Wood."

"Old Stamping Ground."

"Peace, Brother, Peace."

FIRST SESSION: Dave Nelson (tpt.); Bob Carroll (tr.); Buster Bailey (clar.); Willie Smith (pno.); Jimmie McLin (guit.); Eric Henry (dr.); Ailsworth Reynolds (bass).

SECOND SESSION: Frank Newton (tpt.); Pete Brown (alto); Buster Bailey (clar.); Willie Smith (pno.); Jimmie McLin (guit.); O'Neil Spencer (dr.); John Kirby (bass). Vocals by O'Neil Spencer.

These all-coloured combinations were assembled by forty-year-old Willie The Lion, one of Duke Ellington's favourite pianists. The second session introduces a wonderful new alto star.

RED NORVO AND HIS ORCHESTRA. Recorded July, 1937 for American Brunswick.

"Everyone's Wrong But Me"

"Posin'"

"The Morning After"

"Do You Ever Think Of Me"

Louis Mucci, George Wendt, Stew Pletcher (tpts.); Al Mastren (tbn.); Leonard Goldstein, Charles Lamphere (altos); Hank D'Amico (clar.); Herbie Heymer (ten.); Bill Miller (piano); Arnold "Red" McGarvie (guit.); Pete Peterson (bass); Maurice Purtill (drums); Eddie Sauter (arr.); Mildred Bailey (vocal) in first three titles; Red Norvo (xylo, and director).

These were recorded just before Red's six weeks' engagement at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles. Note the changes in the band, particularly the return of Stew Pletcher after an absence of some months.

"MELODY MAKER" OCT. 23. 1937

A Runyonesque Feather Forecast and News explains that most of New York's top notch musickers are

MAKING RACKETS FOR RACKETEERS

THIS week I cannot talk of jazz without automatically switching to crime and the underworld. My mind has been so saturated with Damon Runyon stories night after night that I have reached a stage when I think and write in nothing but Runyonesque.

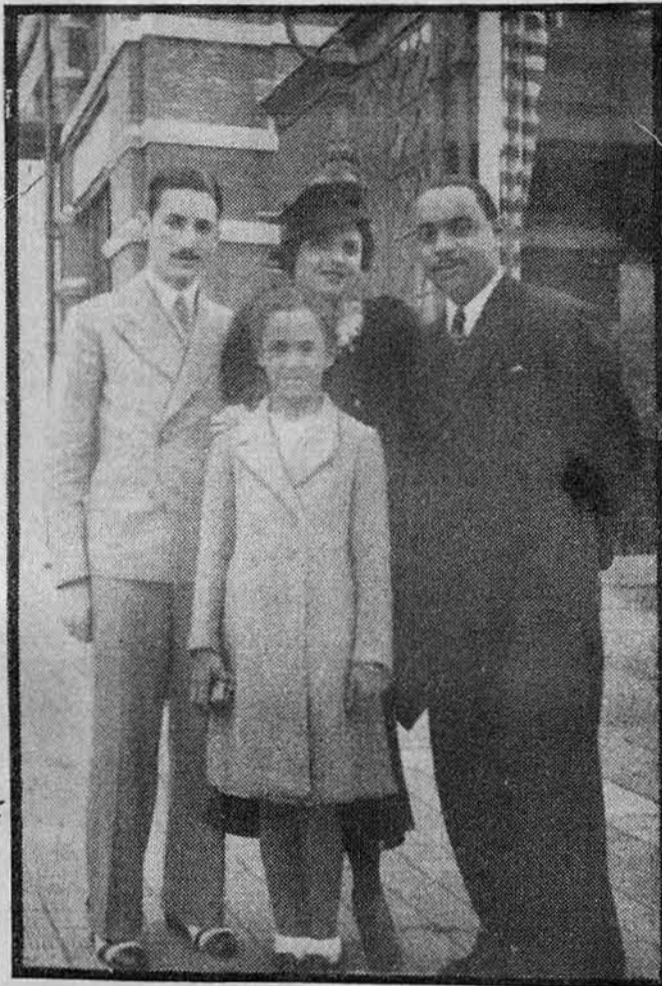
Perhaps even those of you have been reading the Runyon series in the *Evening Standard* do not see the link between jazz and crime. There is nothing very abstruse about it. The focal point of all the Runyon adventures, the meeting place for all the guys who mean more than somewhat around and about Broadway, is Mindy's Restaurant. Now it is known to one and all that this name is nothing but a disguise for Lindy's, which is a large Broadway restaurant, and is not only the meeting-up spot for the tough guys and the smart guys of Runyon's world but also for the guys of Tin Pan Alley.

I will give plenty of 6 to 4 that if you walk into Lindy's around two o'clock, a.m. or p.m., you will be greeted by not less than fifteen song publishers, eleven band leaders, and an unlimited number of song-pluggers, or maybe more. Furthermore, I wish to state that if you refer to these guys as song-pluggers instead of contact men, which is the polite name for them, you are such a guy as is not likely to be very popular around Broadway, especially around Lindy's.

When I am in New York in 1936, Bill Harty and Al Bowly take me to lunch at Lindy's, where they are known far and wide as a couple of popular Britishers. While we eat, plenty of Broadway guys are to be seen around and about, and Bill tells me all about them. Pretty soon I am amazed at the number of night-club owners and musicians' employers who are nothing less than racketeers. In fact it seems,

BUSINESS and PLEASURE.

Family snapshot of "M.M." Critic Leonard Feather with Benny, Mrs. Inez Carter, and daughter Barbara, taken at Scheveningen during Benny's highly successful Dutch visit.



if a guy wants a good job for his band around Broadway the chances are that he will be working for guys who are also in the wet merchandise racket, and who are influential citizens in the liquor importing trade until Prohibition comes to an end. I am even told that the personal manager of one of the world's most famous jazz stars is at one time a henchman of Al Capone.

No Ill Feeling

Naturally, I wish no part of such guys as these, but having no wish to cause trouble I give them all a huge hello.

To relapse into normal English for a minute, let me add that the recent hue and cry raised by Arthur Cremin, of the New York Schools of Music, has

received a very smart rebuff, credited to Duke Ellington.

Ellington ridicules Cremin's statement that a young couple, left alone in a room, behaved with decorum while symphonic recordings were played, but, on hearing a swing record, underwent mental and physical reactions which produced "shocking" results. Duke, who studied psychology during his collegiate courses at Howard University, points out that the two persons in this experiment were selected at random, and did not possess any mutual characteristics; and that furthermore (there I go again!) a body of people will respond to a given act in various manners, and

other people might be affected in many different ways.

In the Words of Duke

"Music invigorates the emotions," Duke is quoted as saying, "but so do baseball and football games. Stravinsky's *Le Sacré Du Printemps* is a great deal more exciting, emotionally, than a slow ride arrangement of *Body and Soul* or even a fast rendition of *Tiger Rag*." Moreover, he adds, far from rushing into orgies of sex crimes when they hear swing music, the audience nowadays tend to swarm round the bandstands, concentrate on the music and the soloists, and shush any rowdies who interfere.

Duke, by the way, has just recorded two swell discs called *Crescendo in Blue* and *Diminuendo in Blue*. The Gershwin touch again?

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

1937—ELLINGTON'S GREATEST YEAR

IVIE ANDERSON AND HER BOYS FROM DIXIE
(Variety Records, 35c.)

- 591 { All God's Chillun Got Rhythm X
Old Plantation
- 515 { Caravan X
Stompy Jones X } Bigard, Carney, Cootie, Tizol
Ellington, Guy, Greer, Taylor
- 525 { Clouds In My Heart 4
Frolie Sam 3 } Bigard, Carney, Cootie,
Hodges, Tizol
Ellington, Guy, Greer, Taylor
- 564 { Solace 4
Four and One Half Street X } Bigard, Carney, Cootie, Tizol
Ellington, Greer, Taylor
- 596 { Get It Southern Style X
If You're Ever In My Arms 3
Again 3 } Bigard, Carney, Stewart, Tizol
Ellington, Greer, Taylor
- 626 { Moonlight Fiesta 4
Sponge Cake and Spinach 3 } Bigard, Carney, Stewart, Tizol
Ellington, Greer, Taylor
- Each Day (Demi-Jazz) 4
Sauce For The Goose (Jazz) 3 } Bigard, Carney, Cootie, Tizol
Ellington, Greer, Taylor

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA
(Master Records, 75c.)

- 101 { New East St. Louis Toodle-O X
I've Got To Be A Rug-Cutter X }
- 117 { It's Swell Of You X
There's A Lull In My Life X }
- 123 { Scattin' At The Kit-Kat X
New Birmingham Breakdown X }
- 124 { You Can't Run Away From X
Love To-Night X } FULL
ORCHESTRA
- The Lady Who Couldn't Be
Kissed
- 131 { Caravan X
Azure X }
- 137 { Alabamy Home X
All God's Chillun Got Rhythm X }

GOTHAM STOMPERS, The (Variety).

- 541 { Where Are You? X
Did Anyone Ever Tell You? X }
- 629 { My Honey's Lovin' Arms X
Alabamy Home X } Bigard, Carney, Cootie, Hodges
Sandy Williams, trombone
Tommy Fulford, Bernard
Addison, Chick Webb, Taylor

JOHNNY HODGES AND HIS ORCHESTRA.

- 576 { Foolin' Myself
You'll Never Go To Heaven
Sailboat In The Moonlight } Bigard, Hodges,
Cootie, Stewart
- 586 { (Edgar Hayes' Orch.: Man-
hattan Jam) Carney, etc.

REX STEWART AND HIS FIFTY-SECOND STREET STOMPERS.

- 517 { Rexations 3
Lazy Man's Shuffle 4 } Bigard, Carney, Cootie, Tizol
Stewart,
Ellington, Guy, Greer, Taylor
- 618 { Tea and Trumpets 2
Back Room Romp 4 } Stewart, Jenkins, Hodges,
Carney
Ellington, Fleagle, Maisel
Alvis

COOTIE WILLIAMS AND HIS RUG-CUTTERS.

- 527 { Downtown Uproar 3
Blue Reverie 4 } Cootie, Carney, Hodges, Tricky
Ellington, Greer, Alvis
- 555 { Digga Digga Doo 3
I Can't Believe That You're in
Love With Me 4 }

DURING the eight years I have been reading the MELODY MAKER, I cannot recall having seen in all this time anything more unconsciously (not wantonly) misguided than the statements made by "Mike" in two recent issues concerning the "decline" of Duke Ellington.

"Since 1935," were his words, "there have been Ellington records which I have excluded from my shelves. I do not propose to make a collection of second-rate Ellington. Duke's contribution to present-day jazz . . . is almost nil. He is pursuing a different path of second-rateness."

Now remarks like these are a great power for evil. "Mike" made them in all sincerity, and one may well understand his attitude, for all he has heard of Ellington in the

past year has been an occasional caustic remark from John Hammond, and every now and then a release of some old or second-rate Ellington record, which is all the English companies have had left to issue since Ellington's transference to the Master and Variety labels, which are as yet unreleased in this country.

**Produced
Forty-one Sides**

But what "Mike" does not appreciate, and again one cannot blame him, is that on these new labels Duke has up to the moment of writing produced forty-one sides (and they will be doubled by New Year). And that these sides must establish in the mind of any unbiased critic, as they will in "Mike's" when he spends a day or two giving them a very careful

DEFENSE
DUKE

LEONARD FEATHER sets out to answer "Mike's" contention that Ellington has come to a standstill by retorting that "Mike" hasn't heard Duke's latest records

hearing, that 1937 has not merely maintained the Ellington standard of previous years, but has produced recorded evidence, unprecedented in both quality and quantity, that Ellington has never been greater.

**Not Yet Heard
In This Country**

It is more than lamentable that these records have yet to be heard by the English public. Fortunately, having received copies of each issue I can give a resumé of their qualities which may help to convince both "Mike" and his readers that the statements about "second-rateness" were a trifle hasty.

The only records in the appended list which can be dismissed as of minor importance are those by Ivie Anderson and Johnny Hodges. The former, featuring the full band, are just backgrounds for Ivie's singing, and the Hodges titles have commercial vocals to offset the excellent solos. But the rest of the list shows the real, live Ellington of to-day.

Let me take first the titles on the Master label under Duke's own name. The new arrangements of his two old compositions on 101 and 123 are apt demonstrations of the advance he has registered during a decade. They are infinitely cleaner, fuller, richer than the original versions, with far more swing in ensemble and rhythm section alike. *Scattin' At The Kit-Kat*, though no less reminiscent of *Stomping At The Savoy* than its title implies, is a fine piece of unassumingly abstract swing with none of the pretensions that made "Mike" so justly scornful of *Reminiscing In Tempo*.

**Dreamy Sixteen
Bar Chorus**

Azure is a delightfully dreamy sixteen-bar chorus, ranking with *Moon Indigo* as a masterpiece of quiet charm. The four sides of 117 and 124 are flawlessly handled commercial interpretations, infusing new blood into the tune with Ellington's most comprehensive palette of tones. *All God's Chillun* brings Tricky, Carney and others into the most favourable of lights, and is at no point over-arranged or gaudy.

Variety and novelty are the keynote of the titles under Rex Stewart's name (All these other names are just excuse

omp," it has all ingeniously interwoven and all individually attractive. The construction is not unlike that of Foresythe's jazz round, *Swing For Roundabout*, with the additional attractions of spirit and improvisation. Freddy Jenkins, who has just returned to Duke's band (yes, it's seven brass these days), does some magnificent growling. Two of Rex's white pals, Brick Fleagle and Jack Maisel, replace Guy and Greer, but Duke is still there himself and the honours go equally to him, to Rex, Carney and Jenkins. I would spill all my superlatives on *Back Room Romp* if I didn't have to save them for what is to follow.

Cootie Williams' titles are just simple unaffected swing of the type Duke's boys have been peerless at producing ever since the *Jungle Band* series on Brunswick. The blues transcends even the heights of the many blues records made by the Harlem Footwarmers contingent.

The Gotham Stompers, though Duke is not at the keyboard, are none the less essentially Ellingtonian in the front line. Helen Oakley supervised this session, of which the second couple is the better. Ivie sings on the first three sides. *Alabamy Home* ends with some of the same riffing to be heard in the Bigard version of *Caravan*.

And that brings me to the Bigard series, the greatest of all. To those who

For a new vocal discovery, a white kid named Sue Mitchell, obviously knows her Holiday, in two sides of 596. For a Tizol brain try the original *Caravan* (now, hackneyed, but still good in its form), or, better still, his rumba in *Moonlight Fiesta*, which is good Cuba and good Harlem.

**Given Lots
of Pleasure**

Altogether the Bigard series given me more pleasure than all the copious jazz effusions issued in England during the year—and that meant as no back-handed insult the standard of English releases been extraordinarily high.

Hearing is believing. Try to some of these records in their original B.B.C. airings on Wednesday 11.30 p.m., or from the Conté English-programme stations. You'll know why 1937 has been, in my writer's humble opinion, Ellington's greatest year.

Please don't write to me asking you can obtain the records. No English dealer imports them, and only hope is to contact The Commodore Music Shop, 144E, 42nd St. New York City.

AND
PETERS.

3842.—*Jazz A La Carter*
(previously listed as *Sauce
Goose; Each Day*).

3985.—*Drummer's Delight;*
Thought You Cared (Bigard, Carney,
Rex, Tizol, Duke, Guy, Greer, Taylor).

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS
FAMOUS ORCHESTRA.

*8004.—*Diminuendo and Crescendo
In Blue*.

8029.—*Chatterbox; Dusk In The
Desert*.

8044.—*Black Butterfly; Harmony In
Harlem*.

*8063.—*Stepping Into Swing Society;*
New Black And Tan Fantasy.

8083.—*Riding On A Blue Note; Lost
In Meditation*.

ALL above: Whetsel, Rex, Cootie,
Jenkins; Tizol, Tricky, Brown; Bigard,
Hodges, Hardwick, Carney; Ellington,
Guy, Greer, Alvis, Taylor.)

8093.—*The Skronch; If You Were
In My Place*.

8099.—*Carnival In Caroline; Brag-
gin' In Brass*.

8108.—*The Gal From Joe's; I Let A
Song Go Out Of My Heart*.

8131.—*Swingtime In Honolulu; I'm
Slappin' 7th Avenue With The Sole Of
My Shoe*.

(Wallace Jones replaces Whetsel;
one bass only, Taylor, used.)

JOHNNY HODGES AND HIS
ORCHESTRA.

3948.—*My Day; Silvery Moon And
Golden Sands*.

4046.—*If You Were In My Place; I
Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*.

*4115.—*Jeep's Blues; Rendezvous
With Rhythm*.

(Hodges, Carney, Cootie Brown,
Duke, Guy, Greer, Taylor; plus Hard-
wick on 3948.)

REX STEWART AND HIS FIFTY-
SECOND STREET STOMPERS.

*3844.—*Love In My Heart; Sugar
Hill Shim-Sham*.

(Stewart, Jenkins, Hodges, Carney,
Duke, Brick Fleagle, Jack Maisel,
Alvis.)

COOTIE WILLIAMS AND HIS RUG
CUTTERS.

3890.—*Watching; I Can't Give You
Anything But Love*.

3922.—*Jubilesta; Pigeons and Pep-
pers*.

(Cootie, Tizol, Hardwick, Carney,
Bigard, Duke, Guy, Greer, Alvis.)

3960.—*Echoes Of Harlem* (Cootie's
Concerto); *Have A Heart* (*Lost In
Meditation*).

(As for Hodges' Orch. on 3948.)

4061.—*Carnival In Caroline; Swing-
time In Honolulu*.

*4086.—*Ol' Man River; A Lesson In
C*.

(Cootie, Tricky, Hodges, Carney,
Bigard, Duke, Guy, Greer, Alvis.)

Space forbids me to say any more
now, but I'll try to squeeze in a few
advisory details next week. For the
present, suffice it that those marked
with an asterisk are quite indispens-
able to any self-respecting jazz library.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

HABERDASHERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Silk
 ★★★ Satin
 ★★ Cotton
 ★ Rags

Benny Carter and His Orchestra
 (Guest Star: Coleman Hawkins).
 "Mighty Like The Blues."
 Benny Carter and His Orchestra.
 "I Ain't Got Nobody."
 (**Vocalion S. 110.)

HOW big is an eight-piece band? All right, laugh. But unless you listen carefully, these jam sessions are apt to be deceptive. The question popped into my mind when Edgar Jackson, dealing with Benny's *Somebody Loves Me* last month, listed a personnel of thirteen pieces where only eight actually played. By way of contrast, the new Carter-Hawkins side, *Mighty Like The Blues*, might almost be taken for the work of a six-piecer. Except for the four-bar intro and coda, it consist of solos from start to finish.

Numbers Not for Effect

Personally, I prefer a band not to show off its quantity. It is sufficient reason for employing eight men if you can obtain an effect, even for a few bars, that could not be achieved with six, and even if that effect doesn't make it easy for

HOW MANY IN AN 8-PIECE BAND?

the average listener to realise the full size of the combination. *Mighty Like The Blues* is all the better for being quiet and lacking in splurges. Incidentally, it is not the first composition by Leonard Feather to be recorded by Benny, but it certainly marks his first worthwhile contribution to the Carter repertoire, for the previous effort, *I've Got Two Lips*, was just another commercial tune

Simple Blues Performance

The sixteen-bar chorus of *Mighty Like The Blues*, taken at first more or less straight by Benny on trumpet, and subsequently by Hawkins, George Chisholm, Benny on clarinet, and (for four bars only) Freddy Johnson on piano, is a simple blues performance in the mood that suits Hawkins best. Chisholm's solo is noteworthy, though slightly marred by Len Harrison's faulty pitch on bass. Behind Benny's clarinet comes some very worthy guitar work by Ray Webb.

I Ain't Got Nobody is played by the thirteen-piecer, with one of those four-saxophone choruses that only a Carter band can produce. The chorus split up between Bertie King on tenor, Benny on clarinet and Freddy Johnson, who again disappoints me, is rather a let-down after George Chisholm's chorus, not only because Chisholm is so admir-

Hot Records Reviewed. . . by "ROPHONE"

able but because he is accompanied by organ harmonies and the ensuing solos are not. Question of routine.

There are no ensemble faults such as I noticed last month in *Blues In My Heart*, and from the orchestral viewpoint this title is the best of the four Carter sides made in Holland so far.

Chick Webb and His Orchestra "Cryin' Mood." "Rusty Hinge."

(**Bruns. 02470.)

Is the blue seventh coming into its own again? After Howard Smith's coda in the Dorsey *Twilight In Turkey*, and now the final chord in Chick's *Rusty Hinge*, I am beginning to believe that this war-horse of the early twenties is dusting itself off thoroughly and effectively.

Thank Heaven for a couple of titles in which Chick's boys manage to shed the kid gloves that have lately been attached to them by feeble tunes and Broadwayish arrangements. The only artificial touch is that irksomely affected discord (second and flattened third) in the bridge after the vocal, and repeated in the coda, of *Cryin' Mood*.

Ella sings cheerfully on the first and slower side, while Louis Jordan is in-offensive on the reverse. The band rocks and rides from A to Z on both titles. A big brass bouquet goes to Taft Jordan.

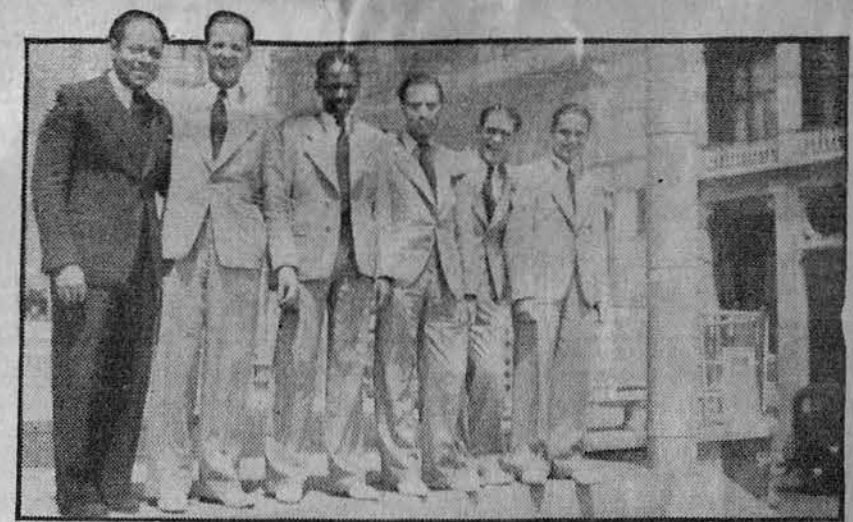
Sharkey and His Sharks Of Rhythm. "Old-Fashioned Swing." "Mr. Brown Goes To Town." (**Vocalion S. 112.)

Here is just such unpretentious, low-falutin' jazz as I prescribed last week for a tonic to cure the Raymond Scott trend in jazz. I like Bonano, because he makes no bones. He just goes ahead and swings like the devil. As well he might, with my ace clarinet man, Joe Marsala, and sundry other notables such as Eddie Condon and Joe Bushkin (both sides), Moe Zudecoff, Artie "Prize Bass" Shapiro, George Wettling (first side); and George Brunies, Fred Wayland, Al Sidell (second side).

The first is the better tune, but the latter the superior performance; that is, unless you go in for high-note endings.

Count Basie and His Orchestra. "John's Idea." "One O'Clock Jump." (**Bruns. 02466.)

I still just can't see the idea of lauding a band whose every orchestration is composed almost entirely of phrases that are strongly derivative, *John's Idea* (surely not Comrade Hammond's?) starts with a piano chorus that is much too much Waller, then goes immediately into cliché No. 4 (MELODY MAKER back page, Sept. 18).



Some of the boys from the Benny Carter sessions

The main phrase of the last chorus is, note for note, an old piece of cheese previously entitled *Hotcha Razz-Ma-Tazz*. *One O'Clock Jump*, which is a blues, pinches Fats' old tune *Six Or Seven Times*, and finally does a whole chorus on a corny riff that was out of date years ago after being done to death by Fletcher Henderson, and was even sarcastically gagged by Riley and Farley in *I Wish I Were Aladdin*.

It's a shame, for the band has unlimited vitality, and the solos by Hersal Evans and Lester Young on tenors and Buck Clayton on trumpet, are swell. Perhaps next time we can have some compositions that are compositions, not composites.

Artie Shaw and His Orchestra "Night And Day." "Blue Skies."

(**Vocalion S. 111.)

Maybe Artie is right and I am wrong about this new band of his. Certainly

his own clarinet work is quite touching in *Blue Skies*, and the modulation into the last half-chorus of *Night And Day* is good stuff. For the most part, though, I still find that he has a long way to go before attaining the standard of individuality and swing that marked *Sobbin' Blues* and its contemporaries. And how about the surface scratch on this disc, by the way?

Andy Kirk and His Orchestra. "I'll Get Along Somehow." "Skies Are Blue." (**Bruns. 02469.)

These are so "commercial" (sic) that I am beginning to wonder whether such obvious shogirl-fodder even belongs in a hot record review. Pha Terrell sings both the sloppy ballads in the required style, the band being wasted.

Bunny Berigan and His Orchestra. "One In A Million." "Who's Afraid Of Love?" (**Vocalion 568.)

Nice work by Bunny, but two commercial vocals and an aura of Tin Pan Alley.

Les Brown and His Duke University Blue Devils. "Feather Your Nest" "Lazy River." (**Bruns. 20467.)

Solos and ensemble not at all bad, but band never notably different from other bands. Hoagy Carmichael's *Lazy River* has only once been recorded in the soft, subtle style demanded by what is to me his greatest tune. I refer, of course, to Hoagy's own recording.

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra. "Cuban Pete." "She's The Daughter Of A Planter From Havana." (*Decca F.6493.)

Poor Louis! My heart bleeds for him when I think of the recording moguls sitting round a conference table, deciding which titles will be the hardest and most unsuitable for him to do on his next session, and then making him go ahead and do them.

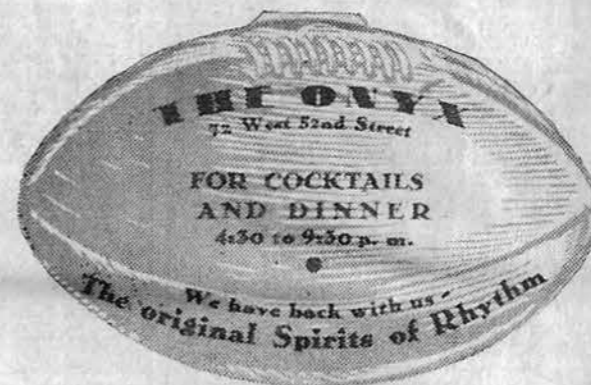
I can only imagine that that is the way they work it, though I can't see what good it does anyone.



THE SPIRITS OF RHYTHM—(back row) Wilbur Daniels, Leo Watson, Doug Daniels. (Front row) Teddy Bunn, Virgil Scoggins.

COCKTAILS AND SPIRITS

DICK C. LANDER describes,



apparently with some difficulty, where he collected the above odd-looking menu

RECORDS

- "My Old Man."
- "I'll Be Ready When The Great Day Comes." (Bruns. 01698.)
- "I Got Rhythm." "Rhythm." (Bruns. 01715.)
- "Junk Man."
- "Dr. Watson and Mr. Holmes." (Bruns. 01944.)
- "From Monday On."
- "As Long As I Live." (Bruns. 01891, with Red McKenzie.)
- "Way Down Yonder."
- "I've Got The World On A String." (Bruns. 01997, with Red McKenzie.)
- "That's What I Hate About Love."
- "Shoutin' In That Amen Corner." (Bruns. 02058.)

music with our drinks. Evening, boys! Swing out *Onyx Blues* for my little friend here, and I know you'll send her. Ah, waiter—two gin rickies, please.

Onyx Blues—that's Wellman Braud's composition, or rather his arrangement of the blues. Sure, the one that played bass with Duke—he used to run the Spirits until a few months ago. That's John Kirby, running them in his place now.

When Braud used to work here he told me the story of his life. Braud's got French blood in him, you know. Had a grandma who came from France when she was six. His pa was from Mexico, and his ma spoke nothing but French. When Braud was born they were living in New Orleans, which is the Frenchiest town in this country, so they carried on the tradition, and Braud himself spoke only French until he was eight years old.

Well, here's love in your eyes!

and all he'd like next is some first-class variety work, preferably in England.

Two more gin rickies, waiter.

Yes, aren't they terrific?

The whole tone is so appealing, and man, what a swing with it! This is one of Teddy Bunn's own compositions they're doing—*Walkin' This Town*. Teddy always sings the first choruses, and generally plays the next chorus on his guitar. As far as I'm concerned, you can keep all of 'em—Teddy's the swing guitar man.

Cheerio!

Look familiar? Of course they do. The one behind, with the clarinet, is Buster Bailey. Another old Hendersonian. And this boy in front is Frank Newton. He came in with this gang just after he left Teddy Hill's Orchestra when Teddy went across to Yurup. Swell trumpeter. Two more, waiter!

And the very dark guy, this end, is Leo. Leo Watson, the scat-singer. I honestly believe he's the only scat-singer since Armstrong who—ssh! he's going to sing.

Well, maybe it isn't singing, but hasn't he the most magnificent and tasteful scat style you ever heard? And the way he does it, with his uke

over his left shoulder like that, drawing his right hand in and out as if he's playing the trombone. You could swear he has an invisible trombone with him every time he takes a chorus.

Another two, waiter, please.

Man, that was MURDER! Waiter, two more gin rickies. Mmmm, isn't this just killing you? Makes you forget the room's so empty, doesn't it?

Sure, they've been going on for ten years or more; toured with Ellington and Ben Bernie and Henderson, and made records with Red McKenzie. They were at the Kit Kat, the Caliente, and all the clubs along this street, and they were on the stage in "At Home Abroad." Oh, PLAY IT, Teddy!

Prosit!

Yes, they used to have a different personnel: there was a guy named Virgil Scoggins, who did the percussion with a suitcase, and—TAKE ANOTHER, Teddy!—a pair of small whusk-brishes—whisk brishes—brushes. And there was an odd-looking guy called Ernest Myers who bowed the boss with a bay—I mean bussed the

bow with—man, i'n that a sender?

Whaddya say? What's happened to the bass and the brushes? Oh, they had a squirrel—a squibble—squirrel—they walked out and went with Willie The Lion Schmith. Willie the—two more, the same, waiter. GET OUT OF THE WAY WHILE THEY'RE PLAYING, WILL YOU? Sssshhh! They're going to do *World On A String*. SSSSHHHH!

Y'ever hear shuch and shenshational shcit-shanger—shcat-singer—oh, send me, Leo! Oi, you—two more double-choruses of—I mean—SSSHHHH!

Jesse lesh forget the theatre'n' stick around here sh'more. Lesh shtay till the finish. Man, they're swingin' so solid the floor's swaying' up'n' down—hones! Lookit!

Oh, PLAY IT, BOYS! KICK IT, KIRBY! DON'T STOP!!! TAKE ANOTHER!

Aw, hell, a couple people—jush c'min—and they're talkin', can't you hear 'em? Can't shtand people who talk while band'sh playing. Lesh get outa here. SH'LONG, boys! THANKSH FOR SHWELL TIME!

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THERE cannot be many band-leaders who can point to the Great War as the indirect cause of their entry into the dance-music world. One of the exceptional cases is that of Tommy Kinsman, whose band will be heard in 'Thé Dansant', a non-vocal programme, on Thursday.

Too young for military service during the war, he succeeded in entering the Mercantile Marine when only fourteen, spurred on by the knowledge that his elder brothers were at the Front. This gave him some very material contacts with the war on trips between England and the United States, as, for instance, when he was lying in the ship's hospital and a submarine made an attack on the boat. Ashore in America he spent all his time (and pay) listening to dance bands, and became so interested that after the Armistice he decided to have a band of his own. Liverpool, his native town, provided him with his chance, and later he successfully crashed the capital, playing at Ciro's, the Ritz, the Café de Paris, and Casani's.

* * * *

Billy Thorburn, as pianist-conductor, leads the 'BBC Ballroom' on Tuesday from 9.30 to 10.0 in the Regional programme. Here is the personnel of his orchestra:—Stan Osborne, Lionel Clapper, alto saxes; Laurie Earthrowl, Eddie Gurey, tenor saxes; Bob Lowe, Jack Rankin, Johnny Finneron, violins; Leslie Franks, viola; Arthur Watkins, cello; Alec Morris, guitar; Alec Clark, drums, and Vic Cook, bass. This will be a non-vocal programme, but normally the singers are Gurey and Morris.

* * * *

No more striking contrast to the non-vocal policy of Billy Thorburn's programme could be offered than the 'Dancing Through' show which takes place the following day. Seldom has such a remarkable assembly of vocalists been convoked; for in addition to Monte Rey, the Top Hatters and other 'regulars', Geraldo is presenting quite a galaxy of guest stars, including Wilfrid Thomas, Tessa Deane, Eve Becke, and Elsie Carlisle. The last named recently made a radio reappearance in the Ambrose 'Signature Is —' broadcast, thus renewing her association both with the band and with her former vaudeville partner, Sam Browne.

* * * *

Jay Wilbur is the next leader to sign his musical autograph for listeners. The signature is 'A Melody out of the Sky'. This attractive composition, by the way, was first published in 1928. The lyrics and music were written by Walter Donaldson.

The vocal side of Jay Wilbur's programmes is accounted for by the Mad Hatters, George Melachrino and Sam Costa. Melachrino is an accomplished musician who used to be heard on clarinet in Austen Croom-Johnson's presentations and others of this nature. In Wilbur's broadcasts he plays viola. Sam Costa is also an instrumentalist as well as a vocalist, having played piano with Maurice Winnick and others. Nowadays he limits his activities to singing.

* * * *

On Thursday evening, in the second of the series of talks devised by Leslie Perowne, the case for the 'old days' of swing music will be expounded. Spike Hughes, who will be the speaker this time, confesses to having lost almost all interest in dance music during the past few years, though whether it is a natural corollary that the music has declined is a point that he will no doubt clear up in the broadcast.

"MELODY MAKER"
OCT. 30th

BENNY CARTER IN PARIS

Small Band In Swing Spot

THOSE who have been wondering what has happened to Benny Carter since the conclusion of his long and successful engagement at the Palais de Danse in Scheveningen, Holland, will be interested to hear that the brilliant arranger and multi-instrumentalist has settled down in a new resident job which promises to keep him busy for some little while.

He opened on October 15 in the main dance room of the famous *Bœuf Sur Le Toit* in the Avenue Pierre I de Serbie, Paris.

This is the night resort which was recently reported in these pages as being one of Paris' main centres of interest to followers of swing music. In an upper room in the same establishment Garland Wilson and Una Mae Carlisle were working together for some time on pianos. Garland is still there, and Una Mae, who has been in Holland on a short series of concert engagements, is expected to rejoin him any day.

REINHARDT JAMS IN

Django Reinhardt, the French gypsy guitar wizard, is also playing "upstairs" at the *Bœuf Sur Le Toit*, but frequently comes down to the dance room, and, in Benny's own words, "Gives everyone a real treat by sitting in with the band."

The combination working with Benny here is at present only a seven-piecer, though there is a likelihood of its being augmented in a few weeks' time. With Benny are Louis Stephenson on alto sax, Bertie King on tenor, and Len Harrison on bass. All three were also members of the full-size band he had with him at Scheveningen.

Completing the group are Jean Luino on alto, Frank Etheridge on piano, and Jacques Bourgarel on drums. Benny hopes to have Freddy Johnson, the noted coloured pianist, joining him later. He may also bring over George Chisholm, the Scots trombone ace who has been creating such a sensation on the strength of his performances in Benny's Dutch-made discs.

NO BRITISH SWING

Our Reviewer of British Hot Records finds himself trying to make bricks not only with straw, but without a use for the bricks either.

by "SWING HIGH"

Eddie Carroll and His Swing Music.
"Ebony Shadows."
"Caravan."
(Parlophone R. 2395.)

A GRIM thought has been hovering in the recesses of my mind during the last few months concerning the purpose of this department. Officially, "Swing High" was appointed to review English hot records. But are there any English hot records? Month after month, since December, 1935, I have managed to find a quota of recordings with some sort of excuse,

legitimate or not so legitimate, for inclusion in this review. Yet, by a magnificent process of elimination, you will find that a ridiculously small proportion of these records can really qualify in the way one would like them to.

Some have been Continental recordings; some have been English recordings under American leaders, like Benny Carter; others have been alleged hot numbers by English commercial bands like Ambrose's. A number have been vocal semi-swing records like Valaida's and Val Rosing's.

Nat Natlie, Lloyd Williams and Mickey Bloom (trumpets) and Russ Genner and Joe Vargos (trombones) get together for C.B.S.' "Saturday Night Swing Club."

And far too many have been records with no pretension to hot rhythm at all, such as the Six Swingers.

It certainly is a pregnant thought that such things as all-British swing orchestras (but I mean *swing* orchestras) still don't exist, even in the transient world of the recording studio, far less in the restaurants and on the variety stage.

Eddie Carroll, however, must be taken as an exception to this rule. He does not go in for commercial vocals, or titles like *Sammy Saxophone*, or any other of the tricks which disqualify most of the other self-styled swing bands in the



English music halls. Moreover, the Parlophone Company sees fit to issue his records in a "New Swing Style Series" with a beautiful light blue and dark blue label picked out in gold, for which you must pay three shillings. And his special compositions, as far as one can gather, purport to be nothing less than swing numbers. So we can take it that Mr. Carroll provides us with an example of that *rara avis*, a British swing band playing British swing tunes.

Heaven help us!

The eight-bar phrase that provides the basis of *Ebony Shadows* is nothing more nor less than the phrase used for the last chorus of Carroll's *Honeysuckle Rose* on R. 2326. So, if you want to hear the same thing played again, slightly faster and with a completely different title, all you have to do is to pay your 3s.

I am quite aware that I have outlined this story once before when Teddy Foster's version of *Ebony Shadows* was released. But I feel so strongly about this that only editorial force can stop me from drawing attention to it again. After all, it is not often that the same band does the same thing on the same label twice within a few months and gets away with it.

Before I find myself devoting the entire review to this unfortunate record I had better just close with the comments that the band produces no semblance of a four-in-a-bar swing, and that *Caravan*



No British Swing

continued



Mary Livingstone, airing on N.B.C. with Phil Harris' Orchestra.

continues to impress me as an inexcusably tiresome and monotonous tune. Yah!

Benny Carter and His Orchestra.

"I Ain't Got Nobody."

Benny Carter and His Orchestra—Guest

Star: Coleman Hawkins.

"Mighty Like the Blues."

(Vocalion S. 110.)

The honour of the country may be considered partially saved by the presence in *I Ain't Got Nobody* of no less than seven (count 'em) British subjects who subscribe generously towards the success of the record. Names: Bertie King, tenor; Louis Stephenson and Jimmy Williams, altos; Cliff Woodridge, trumpet; Ray Webb, guitar; Len Harrison, bass; and George Chisholm, trombone—the first two being coloured.

Chisholm's work will be discussed in a moment. As for the other "Britishers" (vile word), though their individual contributions cannot be observed (except King's, who takes a brief but satisfying solo), I don't think I am twisting justice in saying that they mean as much as the foreigners in this disc. After all, an arrangement calling for so much sectional and ensemble work stands or falls on the unity and strength of the entire band, which can be made or marred by any one bloke. See what I mean?

Benny has turned in a lovely orchestration of the old Spencer Williams' opus (what a weakness he seems to have for Williams's tunes, by the way), not the least delightful feature of which is the chorus for saxophones, led by himself in the manner that makes every Carter reed section a treat for the ear.

Now for Chisholm, who takes a whole chorus. In previous recordings we have watched this young Scotsman emerging slowly from the chrysalis of limited technique and sheltered experience (e.g., Teddy Joyce's Orchestra), and now, with the new confidence born of his appreciation of Carter's leadership and enjoyment of playing his music, he, at last, spreads his wings, and, in the language of Harlem, "takes off," shedding all inhibitions.

Chisholm's chorus in *I Ain't Got Nobody* is something for every aspiring British swing man to study. It shows very distinctly how, without the benefit of American birth, upbringing and environment, it is possible for you to absorb the rhythmic and harmonic fundamentals of swing improvisation. The transition over the chords of C7, F7 and B flat 7 by means of three simple groups of ascending thirds in bars 23-24-25 is either an extraordinarily lucky accident or a piece of swell harmonic ingenuity, and I prefer to believe the latter theory.

There are lots of other things here that may eventually turn the scales in Chisholm's favour with the few discriminating swing fans in this country. And aside from Chisholm there are other things galore in the record altogether.

Hawkins appears in a blue, but emphatic, chorus on *Mighty Like the Blues*, getting successfully under the skin of Leonard Feather's sixteen-bar chorus tune, which also provides opportunities for Benny on trumpet and clarinet, and

for some nice Ray Webb accompaniments. But again Chisholm takes such a fine chorus that I'm not sure he doesn't even steal the honours from under Hawkins's very mouthpiece. At all events, it's a near thing.

Ambrose and His Orchestra.

"Power House."

"Toy Trumpet."

(Decca F. 6468.)

For those who like their music "too, too clever" you can't beat Raymond Scott. Ambrose plays *Power House* very fast indeed. It contains a very large number of notes. It must have been very hard to play. For further comments see my review of last month's Ambrose records.

Valaida.

"Swing is the Thing."

"I Wonder Who Made Rhythm?"

(Parlophone F. 891.)

I wonder who made Valaida record these in such a hurry? I wonder why the band could not have taken a little extra time rehearsing? I wonder whether the arrangements were worth pressing, anyway? I wonder whether the reason why Valaida sounds slightly off form, and even occasionally out of tune, is that the band is holding her back?

I think so.

Gerry Moore.

(Piano Solos.)

"Jamin'."

"Sweet Heartache."

(Parlophone F. 884.)

Gerry striving with the strict tempi again, but not with too much effect.



THE RAYMOND SCOTT QUINTET. Dave Wade (trumpet), Johnny Williams (drums), Pete Pumiglio (clarinet), Dave Harris (sax), Lou Schoobe (bass) and Raymond Scott at the piano.



THE FOUR MILINIERI

Found by "ROPHONE"
Our Hot Record Critic



Interlude for Greek to meet Greek

THIS week I ought really to be replying to Leonard Feather's article about "1937 — Ellington's Greatest Year" and telling you whether I agree or not.

Unfortunately the situation is rather ridiculous. As a one-time record critic of records released to the British public I have formed a firm opinion of Ellington and his place in jazz. My opinion of Ellington's output in the last four years is too well known to need repetition at this stage.

Now I am suddenly, if Leonard Feather is to be believed, faced with an Ellington renaissance almost without parallel in music.

The tag "They Never Come Back" applies equally to music as to boxing. Four years of bad composition is not long in a "straight" composer's life—it may take him five years to produce one thoroughly bad work. But in a jazz musician's life it is a relatively long time.

Now along comes Leonard Feather with an article full of amazing contentions which I can neither dispute nor endorse, because his examples of the New Ellington are not available except to those who can procure them from New York or catch a couple late at night on Wednesdays by way of the B.B.C.

As far as I am concerned, therefore, Mr. Feather is writing Greek. He is in the position of having, figuratively, made the acquaintance of an unknown composer, and since he alone has access to his work, he is able to write convincingly of him. Ernest Newman once spoofed his public with a Great Unknown called Krsmaly; he devoted a whole article to Krsmaly's life and work, and more than one eminent Doctor of Music wanted to know more,

so that he could include some of the Unknown Master's music in his lectures

However, I am prepared to keep an open mind in the matter until such time as these Masterpieces are made available in this country. I recall, as a matter of fact, that the obliging Al Brackman kindly sent me some examples of Master and Variety recordings, and that there

were one or two Ellington or Ellington - connected sides among them. They impressed me so little, however, that I cannot even recognise the titles among Mr. Feather's list, and I gave the discs away.

Lest I be accused of prejudice, I will leave things as they are. Already, even without hearing the records, I have found many doubtful and debatable points in Leonard Feather's article, but they are

points which I will not discuss until I have my own ears to stand on. Instinct and experience lead me to believe I am quite right in supposing that when I hear the records—if ever—my suspicions will be confirmed.

It's a pity Leonard Feather's subject is so indiscussable as it stands; his assertions suggest a lively article or two. But there you are; you can't argue with people when you don't know what they're talking about, can you?

**BELIEVE IT
OR NOT—**
but "Mike's" first
review of records for
many years is not only
written but on the
presses as you read
this. You will find it
in "Rhythm" on
November 1st.

Feather Forecast and News

NEW:—Garland Wilson is coming back from Paris, will be here any week now, and will open at Ciro's Club on November 22. . . . Eddie South, whom I mentioned not long ago as the greatest of all jazz violinists, may have his first real chance to prove it to British citizens if his present negotiations for a BBC relay from Paris are successfully concluded. . . . Teddy Wilson has made some quartet records under his own name, with Red Norvo, Harry James and Harry Goodman.

The bald statement that Bessie Smith was killed in a car crash, and "Mike's" no more hirsute request that Parlophone should issue some of her records, seem to call for some amplification. So, for the past month, I have hired a remote country shed five miles

from any human habitation, in order to study Bessie Smith's records without complaints or interruptions.

Coming out of my hermitage, I can now disclose to the waiting world that my favourites, which I strongly recommend to Parlophone, include the following:—*Soft Pedal, Yellow Dog; Downhearted and Gulf Coast*, with Clarence Williams at the piano; the two-part *Empty Bed Blues; Yodling and Lady Luck*, with Fletcher Henderson; *Reckless and Sobbin' Hearted*, with Louis Armstrong; and four sides with faded gold labels and red, white and blue banners and all the earmarks of

antiquity. *Jail-House, Eavesdroppers, Graveyard Dream and Haunted House* (all titles end with *Blues*).

There may be dozens of greater ones which I have been unable to hear or obtain, for Bessie, who was 43 when she died, sold about four million records between 1924 and 1929. It has been revealed that Frank Walker, her discoverer, took her away in 1923 from a minute café in an Alabama hick town, and after a period of schooling in New York, sent her on a variety tour, when she earned from 1,500 to 2,500 dollars a week. Walker's powers of persuasion induced her to let him amass 75,000 dollars for her, but one day she pestered him to let her have

it back, and within a few weeks it was all squandered.

Married A Policeman

The last I heard of her was in another exiguous joint in Philadelphia, where many years before she had married Jack Tee, a police sergeant; a union that did not endure for long. Occasionally she would hit a good job such as Connie's Inn or the Harlem Apollo, at both of which I saw her, but her mode of living was exclusively hand-to-mouth.

My last glimpse of her remains with me vividly. She was at the Apollo, in a gleaming white dress, singing Duke's *Oh, Babe Maybe Someday* and bouncing up and down in the second chorus in the nearest approximation to a dance that her massive figure could assimilate. In the light of her death it is easy to construe something fey in her tragi-comic demeanour.

Insufficient Recordings

"Mike's" point about Panassié's neglect of her can now be cleared up. The English version extends the article on Bessie to a full page, and a list of records jumps from six to thirty-six. The reason for the neglect in the French edition was the same reason that accounts for Panassié's ignorance of many artists: insufficient recorded evidence and no first-hand evidence at all.



Buck Barnet Rides Again—Charlie Barnet, snapped in the recording studio during his session of "Surrealism" and "Overheard in a Cocktail Lounge." Barnet is at present in California where he was recently screen tested for cowboy pictures.

Benny Goodman Makes His Peace With The Song-pluggers

BENNY GOODMAN, who has a knack of doing the unexpected, created what is believed to be a precedent by calling together a representative assembly of contact men (song-pluggers to you) from the leading music publishers, to whom, the other day, he offered a luncheon at the Pennsylvania Hotel in New York City.

While the event was at its height, Benny took the opportunity of offering an apology to all these boys for his treatment of them during his two years as a big-time band leader. (In other words, his rejection of the commercial tunes which the pluggers would hang around the bandstand trying to sell him night after night.)

NOBLE . . . DORSEY

He explained that his behaviour was not due to a swollen head or to any motives of animosity, but merely to the fact that he has followed a policy of playing as many standard and special numbers as possible, because he believes that the ordinary commercial stuff is not suitable to his particular style.

Ray Noble and his Orchestra seem to be doing pretty nicely for themselves in Hollywood, judging by some records which have just been released, on which Ray provides the accompaniment to Fred Astaire in the four numbers from the latter's new film, *Damsel in Distress*.

The tunes, which are the work of Ira Gershwin and the late George Gershwin, are: *A Foggy Day*; *I Can't Be Bothered Now*; *Nice Work If You Can Get It*; and *Things Are Looking Up*. This last instance proves the old adage that there is no copyright on song titles, since a British number of the same title by Noel Gay was featured in a Cicely Courtneidge film not so long ago.

Tommy Dorsey was slated to go into the Paramount Theatre, New York, for the week beginning November 3 at \$6,000. The payoff is that a year ago he turned down an offer

for \$2,500 from the same theatre, asking for \$3,500, which was refused.

Later the Paramount offered him the latter amount, but it was Tommy's turn to decline. The fact that he is now going there at more than twice the original stake is an indication of how his star has risen during the past twelve months.

Count Basie and his Orchestra are playing at the Apollo, New York, this week (November 5), before starting a new tour of theatres and college dances. The hits of Basie's stage act at present appear to be his own piano playing and the singing of rotund James Rushing, who gets a big hand for his three numbers: *Dream Boat*, *Boogie-Woogie* and *Rhythm In My Nursery Rhymes*. Billie Holiday, on the other hand, does not seem to be appreciated by white audiences on her appearances with Basie, though she does a fine job on *I Must Have That Man*.

Fats Waller opens at the Famous Door in Los Angeles on November 11 with a reorganised combination similar to the small band he has used on his records.

U.S. FLASHES

Chick Webb leaves the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem this week, to be replaced by Teddy Hill's Orchestra until Chick returns in December from a three weeks' theatre tour. . . . Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra, who are touring successfully, are due in town at the Paramount on November 24. . . . Don Albert's Orchestra, the coloured band which has been attracting some attention on records, is back in the deep South at the Top Hat Club, which is in the heart of the coloured district in Atlanta, Georgia. A curious but typically Southern innovation is the reservation of the club exclusively for white visitors on Saturday nights only. . . .

Pioneer record fans who remember McKinney's Cotton Pickers will be interested to know that William McKinney, the original leader of this great band, is now managing a little spot called the Cozy Corner Café in Detroit. . . . Norma Teagarden, sister of the better-known Messrs. T., is playing some nice piano at a club in Oklahoma City.

Shape of Swings to Come

FATS WALLER AND HIS RHYTHM. Recorded August and September, 1937, for American Victor.

"A Hopeless Love Affair."

"Beat It Out."

"I'd Rather Call You Baby."

"I'm Always In The Mood For You."

"The Joint Is Jumpin'."

"More Power To You."

"Our Love Was Meant To Be."

"She's Tall, She's Tan, She's Terrific."

"You're My Dish."

"You've Got Me Under Your Thumb."

Thomas Fats Waller (piano); Herman Autrey (trpt.); Eugene Sedric (tenor); Albert Casey (guit.); Wilmore Slick Jones (drums); Charlie Turner (bass).

Fats Waller continues to use a small contingent from Charlie Turner's Arcadians for his recording sessions. Turner's is the band that accompanies Waller on his vaudeville tours. The most interesting of the above re-

leases are two original compositions by Razaf and Waller, *The Joint Is Jumpin'* and *A Hopeless Love Affair*.

LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA. Recorded August, 1937, for American Victor.

"After You've Gone."

"Baby Won't You Please Come Home?"

"Everybody Loves My Baby."

"I Just Couldn't Take It, Baby."

Lionel Hampton (vib. and vocals); Ziggy Elman (trpt.); Vido Musso (clar.); Arthur Rollini (tenor); Jess Stacy (piano); Cozy Cole (drums); John Miller (bass).

This new Hampton session was made in Hollywood. The second title is a revival of an old tune by Clarence Williams; the third is a Spencer Williams number, and the last is a song from "Blackbirds of 1934." Some of the above will be released on H.M.V. shortly.

JAMSTERS TU

PAPEI

Hot Record
by - - -

★ Don Redman returns to the studio for Variety Re-waxing his "swing choir" arrangements—a style originated five years ago.



WITH twenty odd records queuing up just around the corner, I shall have to hurry through the rest of the Decca jam album before I run out of space again. *All My Life* is a Tour De Fitzgerald Force—Ella really gets under two skins in this piece: the tune's and yours. I seem to scent MSS. on this side, alone of all in the album; not that it matters, and not that Teddy doesn't have a complete and compelling chorus on his

fertile ground, with some beautifully controlled and phrased work from Choo.

"I'm Coming, Virginia."

Although I disagree with the leaflet's contention that this is the best side in the album, I will concede that it is the best fast side. But Billie's four slow numbers have already cornered my affections. In an entirely different mood, *Virginia* is no less felicitous.

Tense Impact of Soloists

The recording is perfect, the rhythm section as solid as they come, and the solos by Teddy and Hodges so tense in their impact that I am reduced to that maligned adjective "hot" in attempting to describe them.

"How Am I To Know?"

Made at the same session as *Virginia*, this has a Helen Ward vocal, superior even to her other two recent Wilson guest appearances. Harry James's trumpet lead, content to elaborate the original melody, manages to do so without being gaudy. As it is a memorable melody I am all the more grateful. Quite a celestial record.

"Where The Lazy River Goes By."

I was going to call this one a patchy side, but to be truthful there is only one black patch, and it comes right at the outset, when Mr. Mouse Randolph

plays a muted chorus in which he is from a quarter to a semitone sharp.

Midge Williams, the NBC songstress whom the short-wavers will know, seems to have her own ideas, and good ones, which is a refreshing change from the vocalists nowadays, who either have Holiday's or Fitzgerald's ideas at second-hand or else no ideas at all.

Teddy goes almost boogie-woogie for a few bars here, to great effect, and in a manner that will convince a few sceptics that he is by no means limited to the single-note, springboard-bass style more usually identified with him.

"I've Found A New Baby."

This tune, to me, always brings back memories of the Chicagoans' recording. The first chorus of this version has a rather similar ensemble tone, though by no means as seething with sin as the original. Buster Bailey seems to be the pivot of the atmosphere. The whole record, though, is rather more of a Chicago busking vein than the usual fast Wilson jam performance.

The drum breaks just don't count. They should be removed gently and the remaining pieces of wax surgically reset.

Trumpet Up An Octave

The quiet indifference of the "riffed" last chorus, and the effect of bringing Clayton's trumpet lead up an octave in the last eight, may be rated one of the biggest kicks in the entire album.

To sum up, the album is a regular jam-mine. There was so much material from which to make the selections that the project could hardly have gone wrong. If I were never given anything else but this sort of thing to review, life would be very pleasant indeed.

Coleman Hawkins with The Ramblers. "Something Is Gonna Give Me Away" (***).

"I Wanna Go Back To Harlem" (**).

(Decca F.6502.)

There is a gross case of mis-labelling mixed up in this somewhere. My copy is marked "Coleman Hawkins with The Ramblers" on both sides, but in actual fact *Something Is Gonna Give Me Away* is not played by the Ramblers. Moreover, there isn't any band on it at all. It is just Hawkins with a rhythm section, the pianist being, pretty obviously, Freddy Johnson. This label error might well be rectified, as people may be deterred from buying Hawkins' records by previous experiences of stiff and uninspiring arrangements played by the Ramblers. *Something*, etc., is a great relief from these performances. It is a simple and very natural swinging tune, built around a phrase which Hawkins is very fond of playing and which goes like this:—

Ex. 1.



expense in Paris after com (Paris, not the disc).

Tiger Rag was twisted a make *Knee Drops*. Towards the routine becomes so confused this day the boys may be what really happened. Hines, of the all-too-rare examples of era, is the hero of this explosion though his contribution is.

Piercing Sincerity

Skip The Gutter has a piercing sincerity in the improvised Hines and Louis share a glorious in breaks. It is not up *West End Blues* levels, but th Armstrong well worth digging antidote to the unutterable of the 1937 Louis on Decca.

Stuff Smith and His Onyx Club "Upstairs."

"Onyx Club Spree."

(*** Brunswick 02477.)

Upstairs has the introduction and all) that was used in Ell

other recent instances, in the coda. Stuff Smith's *Onyx Club Spree*. Ha kins plays solo throughout, except f an undistinguished piano chorus. I is obviously enjoying himself, and eve his perilous approaches to one or tv wrong notes—a most unusual trait cannot mar my complete enjoyment this record.

"Rophone" Takes It Back

I Wanna Go Back To Harlem derive its title, it seems, from that rather ur kind cut made in this column on th release of Hawkins' Swiss recordings when I said "Hawkins, go back t Harlem where you belong." By nov Hawkins should realise that I hav seen my mistake and take it all back Not that this will prevent me fro pointing out that *I Wanna Go Bac* is just another of those well-meaning Ramblers' compositions and arrange ments, which means that the secon chorus is very nice. For me, though this is a single-sided record.

Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five (1929).

"Knee Drops."

"Skip The Gutter."

(*** Parlophone R.2438.)

I am mildly annoyed that they have issued this. Me, I have obtained my copy with great difficulty and at great

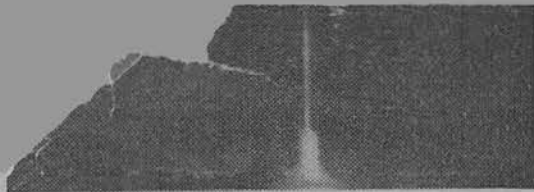
PUNTERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Favourite
- ★★★ 12-1
- ★★ 28-1
- ★ Outsider

own. Frank Newton's impassioned ending makes one regret again that this fine trumpet player's work is so little known over here.

"Mary Had A Little Lamb."

Made with half of Fletcher Henderson's Band (the last Henderson band but seven, was it?) with "Choo" and Roy Eldridge. The latter's vocal chorus makes one regret momentarily that he did not follow the example of Mary's little lamb and disappear one night. But once across the vocal, this side is



any-
in the album—some-
must be attributed to
ference in recording. Mr.
odman behaves himself admirably
with a couple of simple solos
which will satisfy only those who
realise that his type of simplicity is the
hardest in the world to achieve.

The Hour Of Parting, which origin-
ally saw the light as *L'Heure Bleue*, by
Spoliansky, and is a bewitching tune,
has been treated with great care if
without reverence. A young, unknown
lady named "Boots" Castle (do they
have to have these undignified names,
damme, sir?) delivers the lyrics in a
plain wrapper, but the highlights are

- CALL THE CREDIT RECORDS
- "Breakin' In A Pair Of Shoes."
 - "You Let Me Down."
 - "This Is My Last Affair."
 - "Easy Living."
 - "These Foolish Things."
 - "Why Do I Lie?"

I am not taking the records in the
order which the album allots to them,
because I don't find it the most logical
order in which to treat them. The
above three pairings obviously belong
together, bound by personal links and
common denominators of style.

The first side, however, can be
skipped without much trouble. It is
perhaps the least recent record in the
album, and shows Teddy Wilson as a
commercial-swing piano soloist, doing
his level best with a tune that clearly
doesn't inspire him. You can admire
his agility and all that, but who wants
to sit at the White City watching the
hare rush round the track without any
greyhounds after it?

Gloriously Fascinating

You Let Me Down is a tune to which
I am now incurably addicted, played
in a slow and appropriate tempo, with
top-rung solo work and a chorus by
Billie Holiday in her most gloriously
fascinating mood.

This Is My Last Affair is a tune to
which I am now incurably addicted,
played in a slow and appropriate
tempo, with top-rung solo work and a

Easy Living is a tune to which—oh,
heck, for comments on *Easy Living* and
also for *These Foolish Things*, see the
last paragraph and make up your own
synonyms.

Why Do I Lie was made on the same
date as *These Foolish Things*, viz., with
Hodges, Carney, Jonah Jones, Teddy,
Lucie, Kirby and Cozy. There is a
Hodges chorus that is all you could
desire, and none of the solos could be
called mediocre, but at present I have
not managed to find in this side the
sense of symmetry and form that
makes the majority of the other num-
bers doubly enticing.

Individual Credits

Perhaps, before dismissing these six
sides in this somewhat summary
fashion, I can stay with you long enough
to hand out one or two individual
credits. To ex-Norvo guitarist, Dave
Barbour, for eight fleeting but unfor-
gettable bars in *You Let Me Down*. To
Buck Clayton, and in a lesser degree,
Harry Allen, for their authoritative
captaincy of the ensembles in *Easy
Living* and *My Last Affair* respectively.

Well, imagine that. I almost forgot.
To Teddy Wilson himself, who also had
more than somewhat to do with these
records, a special prize in the form of
a huge jar of jam.

And I'll deal with the rest of the
titles next week.

"MELODY MAKER"
OCT 6. 1937



TALLEST STORY OF THE YEAR

Mildred
Bailey,
Queen
of the
Blues.
At least
all the
critics
agree
about
HER!

"The Boys in Clyde Lucas' Orchestra spent three months learning Mexican-Chinese in order to do the vocal ensemble in the band's latest release "Chinese Rumba."—(American publicity sheet.)

It is not generally known that the comparative obscurity in which Lionel Hampton was sheltered between the time he recorded with Armstrong in 1931 and his rediscovery by Benny Goodman last year can be attributed to Hampton's absence in the Far East, where he was studying local habits and customs prior to making his recent record of *China Stomp*.

The reason for Dave Tough's

sudden regeneration in the world of jazz drummers, it can now be revealed, was simply his return to America from Istanbul, where he had spent five years preparing for his part in the Tommy Dorsey version of *Twilight In Turkey*.

* * *

Presently Back to Real Swing

With the output of American swing records ever on the increase, leaders are finding the competition so stern that the conventional material for hot numbers is being increasingly neglected in some quarters. Nagasaki and Honey-

suckle Roses are giving way to more uncommon excuses for jamming. Tommy Dorsey tried it on with classical pieces, and Red Nichols has been following him up in the States with *O Sole Mio*, *Humoresque* and others. Joe Sullivan swung a piano solo based on Rachmaninoff's Prelude in C sharp minor. Yours truly tried it on with old English folk songs; Maxine Sullivan, the new singing sensation of

Fifty - Second Street, has been working wonders with *Annie Laurie* and *Loch Lomond*; Jimmy Dorsey fixed it for *The Blue Danube* and *La Capinera*; and now comes another entrant in the field of twisted swing. Artie Shaw has swung two bar-room masterpieces, *Sweet Adeline* and *How Dry I Am*, and, unkindest cut of all, has swung out with a Harlemaesque slant on *Tipperary!*

Feather forecasts that before this craze dies out there will be swing versions of *The Maid of the Mountains*, of *Vesti La Giubba*, of the famous aria from *Madame Butterfly*, of Chopin's *Funeral March* and of every available hymn. And then, exhausted, perhaps swing music will sink back and become swing music again.

* * *

It is good news that Buster Bailey is branching out on his own, and that Mills has signed him under an ex-

clusive contract with hopes of making him well known as an individual personality; for Buster has been for many years an unobtrusive but an important facet of the Henderson and Millinder personnels, and has never had the recognition he deserves as one of the greatest coloured clarinetists. Lately he has been with the jam band at the Onyx Club, using this combination for his first recordings under the name of Buster Bailey and His Rhythm Busters,

in two of his original compositions, *Dizzy Debutante* and *Afternoon in Africa*.

Watch out for Bailey and Marsala, two potential Goodmans in the world of commercially artistic swing music.

Feather Forecast and News

Honour for Ellington

Duke Ellington has been the recipient of an astonishing variety of compliments in his time, ranging from a meeting with Hoover at the White House in Washington to the sale amongst Rhythm Club members of a coloured bust of his ducal features. The latest news, though, seems to furnish his most solid assurance to date of a place in posterity; for a firm of British contractors, Messrs. Alexander Wells, Ltd., has selected the name "Ellington Court" for a recently completed block of flats in Southgate, London, N.13.

Accompanying a photograph of the flats, sent to Ellington, was a letter from the firm, thus:—

"It is the practice in this country to give names to blocks of apartment houses and, like the buildings to which they are applied, these often appear somewhat dull or dead. Convinced that our improvement was neither dull nor dead, we took the liberty of naming it after your good self. The considerable interest aroused is a valuable indication of the popularity you enjoy in this country."

Now we know where Ellington will stay next time he visits London.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

LEONARD
FEATHER should

swing for it!



IT is not about the aesthetic value of "swing" nor the suitability of the accordion as a "swing" instrument that I intend to take Mr. Feather to task. As long as he confines his attention to this subject I accept him as an expert. When, however, he is rash enough to venture on unfamiliar ground and pass judgment on the accordion as a *musical instrument*, he shows such a complete misunderstanding of the subject that almost every one of his remarks becomes a boomerang which you will now witness recoiling on his own head!

He says: "Even your most ardent supporter is not going to convince me that the accordion has been taken up by the 'classicals,' that the symphony orchestras will be featuring it very shortly, and that work is in progress to make it part and parcel of chamber music; that some noted composer intends to write an accordion sonata." Taking his points one by one, let me tell Mr. Feather that:

Point One. The accordion has already made its appearance in symphony orchestras in America, and has justified its presence among such distinguished company quite as handsomely as that arch-instrument of "swing," the saxophone, has done.

Point Two. Chamber music utilising the accordion already exists, and we may instance the delightful duets for accordion and cello (*Hymne* and *Reigen*, by J. H. Loebel) which were recently performed at a concert in London by

Implies

GEORGE BERESFORD CAMPBELL

—Who is not so concerned with whether the accordion is a swing instrument, but is determined to defend its proper place in serious music

Mr. Howard White and Mr. G. S. Mathis.

Point Three. Admittedly, no original sonata has yet been written for the accordion, but in this connection it must be remembered that the accordion is a comparatively new instrument, and it is only to be expected that some time will elapse before a classical literature exists for it comparable with that now available for the piano and violin.

In comparison with other *new* instruments, such as the saxophone, the accordion has certainly nothing to fear, either in the quality or the range of its musical literature.

In England alone, at least one "noted composer," Haydn Wood, has written a rhapsody (*Hungaria*) specially for it, of which he is justly proud. I am also reliably informed that another, Arthur Bliss (composer of *Morning Heroes*, *A Colour Symphony*, and other large-scale works which are regarded as being of universal importance by the world's most distinguished critics), is so impressed with the musical possibilities of the accordion that he has stated his intention of writing an original work for it—perhaps a sonata, who knows?—at the earliest opportunity.

Moreover, one of our most distinguished musicians, Sir H. Walford Davies, Master of the King's Musick, has not disdained to allow his well-known composition, *Solemn Melody*, to be published in an accordion arrangement.

And further . . .

Before leaving the subject of sonatas I must also state that there will be published shortly an accordion arrangement of *Sonatina* (Op. 20, No. 1), by F. Kuhlau—a revered contemporary of Beethoven—which has been highly praised by those musicians who have heard it.

We must not forget, also, Joe Rossi's outstanding playing of Mendelssohn's *Rondo Capriccioso*. And it may surprise Mr. Feather to learn that even such a monumental classical work as Buxtehude's *Preludium et Fuga pro Organo Pleno* has been arranged for accordion orchestra.

In the realm of modern music, a symphonic poem, *Spring*, by G. S. Mathis, which received its first performance a month or two ago, shows what can be done in translating to the accordion those subtle tone-colours and harmonic delicacies which are to be found in the works of such modern masters as Debussy and Stravinsky. This work was composed expressly for accordion orchestra and opened up entirely new possibilities as regards future compositions for the instrument.

On the Continent

In Germany a number of symphonic works for accordion orchestra have been written by a very talented composer of the modern school, Friederich Haag. Some of these were conducted recently by Alan Helm at a concert in the Berlin "Philharmonic" (the equivalent of our Queen's Hall) in the presence of a number of Germany's most distinguished musicians, who warmly applauded the works in question.

* * *

No, Mr. Feather! You have made the mistake of your career in saying that the accordion is capable of so few "subtleties of expression and phrasing," and lacks "such extreme sensitivity in the exponent and the listener alike" as to exclude it "from the realms of straight music and jass alike." From jazz, perhaps (although I doubt it), but from "straight music"—**definitely no!**

So, Mr. Feather, shall we leave it at that?

READERS WRITE TO US
ABOUT SWING

To the Editor,
Accordion Times and Harmonica News.
Dear Sir,

Mr. Feather writes on "Swing" as though he is a journalist, but a little ignorant of his subject. I have been an accordion player and student for about eight years, but I am not a journalist, so perhaps I cannot express what I feel about Swing on the accordion as Mr. Feather could if he were in my position. He has written all round the subject, but still has not said *why* Swing cannot be performed on the accordion.

True, he says that "Swing is too subtle for the accordion"—but it sounds very vague. I understand that Swing can be performed on any instrument; surely if Venuti can swing, why not Magnante? Or hasn't Mr. Feather heard of him?

Swing is not learnt, it is "born" naturally. Also, I understand, that the accordion *is used* in symphony orchestras in America, where, of course, Swing is also known and I feel quite confident that in due course it will be used in this country in a like manner.

Mr. Feather writes: "Swing music requires so many subtleties of expression and phrasing." Now why cannot the accordion supply these necessary virtues?—Of course, it can. Rhythm and Swing are not the same, maybe, but they are very closely allied. After all, Mr. Feather states that it is his "theory"—so I advise him to test his theories before committing them to paper for the public to see.

Perhaps we may see him at the Accordion Contests on November 6, at least, I hope he will attend. He should not feel so bitter against the accordion: it is not always played badly.

Yours, etc.,

LEN BAYLIS.

Walthamstow.

To the Editor,
Accordion Times and Harmonica News.
Dear Sir,

No doubt Mr. Leonard Feather understands the principles of Swing music, and, obviously, he has made a very extensive study of this fine art. So extensive, in fact, that he leaves one positively flabbergasted with a series of terms that hardly apply to the practical theory of the accordion at all.

I am not so well up in the art of expressing things this way. But, to get down to brass tacks, I understand that this type of music is being played on violin, saxophone, piano, and numerous other *melody* instruments. Now, on the accordion, in addition to our treble melody we have a left-hand rhythm section, which can be most effective when it is used in conjunction with a right hand that can finger something worthwhile and stylishly.

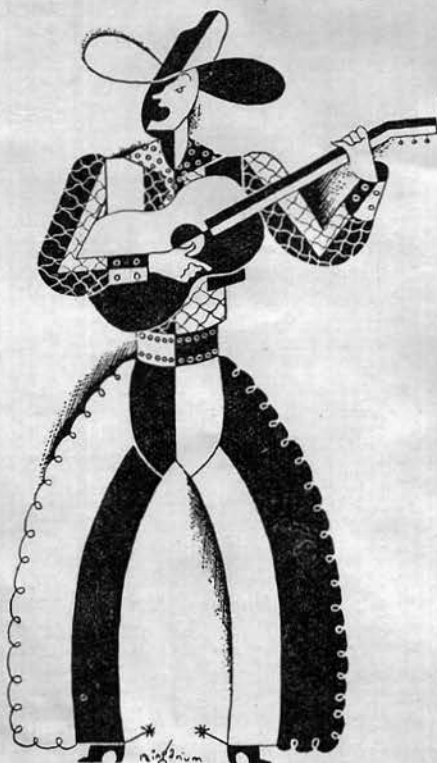
I do agree that there is a scarcity of players who endeavour to understand this thing at all—and there are far too many who use the same old "corny" rhythmic phrases that Adam used in the Ark—or was it Jonah?

But if Mr. Feather would at any time need proof that Swing *can* be done, and is done, on the piano-accordion, I suggest that he comes up to the Midlands some time, and I will endeavour to enlighten him with some Swing stuff that he has never heard in this country, anyway.

In conclusion, I do *not* believe in blowing my own "trumpet"; I would much rather Swing on my accordion!

Yours, etc.,

TOMMY O'HARA.



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THE CASTLE PRESS

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SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

AMERICA'S best-known representative of the mellifluous and polite manner in popular music will be submitted for the approval of British audiences on Wednesday, when, in the National programme at 7.45, Guy Lombardo and his Orchestra are to be presented.

This American relay will be something of a *volte face* after the distinct trend towards swing music in most of the previous transatlantic relays throughout the year. Lombardo represents the very antithesis of swing style. The sentimental complacency of his reed section has prompted a million arguments among musicians and laymen, some declaring it soothing and attractive, while others find in it a saccharine quality which they condemn with gusto. The broadcast will therefore be a provocative one, to say the least of it.

Few readers will know that Lombardo, who made his first professional appearance in 1923 at the age of fifteen, is London-born. In early youth his father taught him how to play the violin. A few months after starting his career in the United States with six months in vaudeville, Lombardo started broadcasting in 1924.

The orchestra has always had a strong fraternal strain in its personnel, which today includes Carmen Lombardo, alto sax and vocals; Victor Lombardo, baritone sax; and Lebert Lombardo, trumpet. Carmen is well known as a composer. One of his successes is 'Coquette', while a recent pair of hits, which themselves bear a brotherly similarity, are 'Boo-Hoo' and 'Toodle-oo'.

Before leaving Lombardo, I must disillusion you about his birthplace. When I said London, I was referring to London, Ontario.

Another of those controversial programmes, already heard from the North Region and to be continued next Monday evening, is the 'String Time' feature. This purports to present swing music played by an orthodox string quartet. So many arguments have already been raised for and against this innovation that the least one can say for it is that it has given a new subject for heated discussion among musicians, to whom arguments are the salt of life.

A newcomer to London's musical world is Ramona (*née* Ramona Davies), the American singer and pianist who recently arrived in England to be featured with Jack Harris at Ciro's Club, whence she has already broadcast. Ramona's career began in earnest when, as a solo pianist on the air, she was heard by a well-known American band leader, Don Bestor, who thereupon asked her to join his orchestra as an ordinary member of the instrumental personnel. It was some time later that she became celebrated as a vocalist. In 1932 she began an association with Paul Whiteman's Orchestra which ended only a few months ago.

The Signature Tune Is—'Bugle-Call Rag'. The signature is Harry Roy, and the time is Tuesday, Regional, 6.25.

'Bugle-Call Rag' is an evergreen of jazz, first published in Britain in June, 1923, and written by members of a pioneer American white band, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. The substitution of a solo 'break' for the first four bars, in the twelve-bar chorus of the opening movement, forms the setting for the bugle call *motif*. The tune is constantly used for improvisations by small bands, and there are some thirty-seven recorded versions.

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Lionel Monckton, who will be best remembered for his music to *The Arcadians* in 1906, died in 1924, but his music may survive him by many decades yet.

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ERA 11th NOV 1937

"MOON" SONGS

"Era" Provides Idea For Broadcast

IN our October 7 issue Leonard Feather commented in his gramophone record review: "The rest of the straight dance music lists seem to be composed entirely of song titles containing the word 'Moon' or 'Million.'" During a subsequent conversation with Sydney Kyte, Leonard Feather mentioned this point.

The result will be heard in a programme to be broadcast by Sydney Kyte and his Orchestra next Wednesday, November 17, from 9.30 to 10 p.m. in the Regional programme, in the shape of an item to be called "A Trip To The Moon, with Sydney Kyte and His Orchestra," comprising numbers which contain the word "Moon" in the title.

At the time of going to press a list of thirty-five such tunes, from which the final selection will be made, is available, though it is believed that this is a mere fraction of the numbers that might be used!

ERA 11th NOV 1937

LEONARD FEATHER
Orchestras and SIDNEY RAYMOND
Orchestras. Decca Records, B.C.C.
Private engagements and accompaniments. Devonport House, 14, Hart-st., W.C.1.

METRONOME Nov. 1937

LONDON

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

Jam Records

Hold your breath, close your eyes and open your ears—England has made some real jam records at last. Some time ago in this department I mentioned that Ambrose's orchestra includes an American clarinetist, Danny Polo, who played alongside of Bix in Goldkette's band and is a star swing man ranking in the Goodman-Artie Shaw class. Well, at last he has had a chance of proving it, and in a session just gathered together under the name Danny Polo and His Swing Stars on the Decca label, he waxed a really terrific rendering of *That's a Plenty*, as well as three originals entitled *More Than Somewhat*, *Strat-*

ton Street Strut, and *Blue Murder*.

Ambrose's ace trumpet solo man, Tommy McQuater, is featured with Polo on these sides, which also have a swell rhythm section comprising Eddie Macauley on piano, Eddie Freeman on guitar, Dudley Barber on drums and Dick Ball on bass. If Decca releases them in America, some of you will begin to believe that British musicians can swing, at that.

Waring Influence

Sydney Lipton, back from his American trip, decided to form a vocal specialty for his band which he will call the "Vochestra," consisting of three sopranos, two tenors, two baritones, two contraltos and a bass. Says he heard Fred Waring do something of the sort and wants to develop a personality for his band the way American bandleaders do. Lipton just lost his first trumpet, Max Goldberg, who returned to Ambrose and was replaced by Billy Smith.

New Bands

Also back from a short tour of the States is Maurice Winnick, who leads a new combination at the Piccadilly Hotel. Still another arrival here is Billy Bissett, who went back to the States and to Canada, where he was married to Alice Mann, charming vocalist seen here originally in Hylton's act. Bissett has fixed up a resident job for a twelve-piece band plus Alice Mann and himself in Bournemouth, a seaside resort a couple of hours from London.

Another new band is that organized by Emilio Colombo for the May Fair Hotel, which used to be the No. 1 Shop Window for big-priced bands in the West End, but doesn't talk or act in big terms nowadays. The new combo, an eleven-piecer, is fronted by Mickey Flome.

Raiding Ambrose

Joe Brannelly, who came over here over twelve years ago with Rudy Vallee and Carroll Gibbons, has severed his ten-year-old connection with Ambrose, for whom he was guitarist, right-hand man and organizer in general. Brannelly has gone over to Jack Harris, who, as reported last month, has been raiding Ambrose's talent. Another effort was made to lure away one of Ambrose's star vocalists just after Brannelly joined Harris, but at press time Ambrose's line-up of singers remains intact, with the addition of Elsie Carlisle, back again on broadcasts after a long absence from the band.

Notes

Harry Roy may start a tour of South America next March. . . . Brian Lawrence, Australian violinist and personality leader, has left Lansdowne House Restaurant to start a vaude tour. . . . Claude Bampton opened in London October 11 with his eighteen-piece combination of brilliant blind musicians. . . . Henry Hall started a successful vaude tour.

All-Star Band

Musicians' ballot is being run over here to discover local ideas on two all-star bands, one all-British and the other irrespective of nationality. Indications at present are that the international line-up will read like this:

Armstrong, Bix, Berrigan—trumpets.
Dorsey, Teagarden—trombones.
Hodges, Carter—altos.
Goodman—clarinet.
Hawkins—tenor.
Venuti—violin.
Hampton—vibes.
Wilson—piano.
Lang—guitar.

Krupa—drums.
Israel Crosby—bass.
So now you know the British idea of the all-American all-star, and utterly impossible orchestra.

London's Leading Song Hits
Hit songs in mid-October were as follows:

1. *It Looks Like Rain in Cherry Blossom Lane.*
2. *Moon at Sea.*
3. *September in the Rain.*
4. *So Rare.*
5. *Will You Remember?*
6. *The Greatest Mistake of My Life* (British, publ. Irwin Dash).
7. *Let's Call the Whole Thing Off.*
8. *No More You* (British, publ. Sun.).
9. *Was It Rain?*
10. *Home Town* (British, publ. Peter Maurice).

Feather Forecast and News Recalls and Discusses BANNED DISCS



★ **Band Master Woody Herman can smile, for he has never yet made a slip-up on a disc in the way that some famous people have, as is told herewith.**

THE currently advised but not very inspired catchphrase, "Hear what you want when you want it, only on a gramophone record," may have set some of you wondering just how widespread is the influence and use of the gramophone as an entertainment medium in the radio-ridden world to-day.

I have just learned of a most

interesting story recounted by William J. Avery, export merchandise manager for the RCA Victor company, who returned to the United States not long ago from a round-the-world trip during which he visited Victor and H.M.V. headquarters in many parts of the globe.

The scene of his most extraordinary experience was a leper colony in the

lonely Cebu Island, in the Philippines, where nine hundred and fifty inhabitants are given a full programme of the best in music, offered regularly from the belfry of the island's solitary church. From that unique vantage point Father George Kilbridie, a benevolent elderly priest of Irish origin and birth, arranges the programmes from records given him by friends and the RCA distributor at Manila. To prepare for the performances he ascends the belfry, in which he makes his home, and opens the windows at the top level. His gramophone soon floods the vicinity with music which draws the lepers flocking together around the church.

"With three nuns," Avery relates, "Father Kilbridie ministers to the spiritual needs of the lepers. There is only one doctor in the colony, assisted by several of the younger sufferers who help him administer aid to the lepers. Canned goods, clothes and other necessities are given to the colony by residents of other parts of the Philippines; but Father Kilbridie is particularly interested in obtaining more records to lend variety to his concerts."

Waxing Secrets Made Public

The release last week of a record by Valaida, in which that lady's highly-coloured opinion of her own performance is made inadvertently audible at the end, reminds me of other instances in gramophonic history when, sometimes accidentally or sometimes a-puppus, things have gone wrong.

The "noises-off" accident is one of the commonest. In many of the Ellington's piano solos Duke can be heard humming to himself, out of tune; Krupa has a similar habit of grunting and muttering. At the end of Benny Carter's *Synthetic Love* somebody starts shouting in the echoey distance. During Armstrong's solo in *Squeeze Me* the banjo player can be heard breaking a string. On Bix's *Old Man River* four bars of clarinet are in the wrong key.

Must Be Careful With Adjectives

Hoagy Carmichael's *Barnacle Bill The Sailor* introduces (intentionally) the sanguinary adjective, which may account for its non-release in England. This brings us to the subject of phonopornography, or pornographophony. A couple of years back, Regal-Zonophone issued a disc by Calloway's Hot Shots (not Cab, but one of his many female relatives) entitled *Sweet Birds*. Then somebody listened to it, and it was withdrawn within a few days of issue.

The most famous case of a "banned" record was Elsie Carlisle's *My Man O' War*, which really plumbed untold—er—heights, and made front page newspaper stuff on its retraction. Actually there is no censorship on records, but a mutual understanding amongst the company directors that anything doubtful is to be avoided.

And to think that in this column a week or so ago I was asking Parlophone to put out Bessie Smith's *Empty Bed Blues*. . .

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

The Shape of Swings to Come

BENNY GOODMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA. Recorded August and September, 1937, for American Victor.

- "Afraid To Dream."
- "Bob White."
- "Changes."
- "I Can't Give You Anything But Love."
- "Roll 'Em."
- "Sugarfoot Stomp."
- "When It's Sleepy Time Down South."

Goodman (clar.); Harry James, Gordon Griffin, Ziggy Elman (tpts.); Murray McEachern, Red Ballard (trbns.); Hymie Schertzer, Geo. Koenig (altos); Arthur Rollini, Vido Musso (tenors);

Jess. Stacy (piano); Allan Reuss (guit.); Gene Krupa (dr.); Harry Goodman (bass).

Betty Van sings on the first title and Martha Tilton, heard in Goodman's Camel broadcasts is on *Bob White*, *I Can't* and *Minnie*. All the above were made in accordance with the new arrangement between Goodman and Victor whereby unsuitable pop tunes are eliminated and extra prominence given to standards and revivals. The above list includes two titles included in the current H.M.V. list and others under consideration for future release.

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This number, now known as the somewhat martial foxtrot which serves to introduce Hylton's band, was written by Lionel Monckton in 1898, for inclusion in a George Edwardes musical comedy, *The Runaway Girl* at the Gaiety Theatre. It was sung by Grace Palotta (I wonder how many of my readers are old enough to remember her), and other artists in the show included Connie Ediss and Ellaline Terriss.

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Lionel Monckton, who will be best remembered for his music to *The Arcadians* in 1906, died in 1924, but his music may survive him by many decades yet.

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The production tonight (Friday) of another of Louis Levy's 'Music from the Movies' series has meant an extra bout of hard work for Peter Yorke. This busy arranger, already occupied with the preparation of material for another of his own 'Sweet and Lovely' programmes next Monday evening, has had to find time to supply a number of orchestrations for Levy's programme. Tonight's numbers will include selections from *On the Avenue* and *Firefly*. The latter film score provides Levy with an opportunity for breaking away from the dance tunes that inevitably constitute a large part of any programme of film music; for Friml's music for *Firefly* is in the true spirit of operetta.

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BUNNY GIVES BENNY A RUN FOR HIS MONEY

Bunny Berigan And His Orchestra.
"A Study In Brown."
"Caravan."
(***H.M.V. B8632)

THIS is the first record by a band which is likely to give Benny Goodman a run for his money in the H.M.V. lists. Berigan has organized a smashing band which, discounting a few fluffs here and there, puts up a fine showing on its first British release. This is the more creditable when you consider that of the six hardest numbers for a swing band to make anything out of at the moment, one is *Caravan* and the other is *A Study in Brown*. (The other four are all by Raymond Scott.)

Berigan so transforms these two trite pieces that, like a girl who has been through elaborate routines of dressing and make-up for a Hollywood screen test, they acquire a new personality. The final scenes of the *Brown Study* are too scarlet for me, but there are four excellent soloists by way of compensation—Berigan in capricious mood on trumpet; Joe Dixon, a fine clarinet man; Sonny Lee, swell trombonist, whom I noticed on some old Isham Jones waxings; and a really original tenor player named George Auld.

The rhythm section, with Lippman on piano, Morganelli on guitar, and the redoubtable Messrs. Wettling and Wayland on drums and bass, is one of the many noteworthy assets of the band.

Caravan is mutilated to the extent of only having 1½ full choruses left; which doesn't bother me at all. Berigan grows himself into an Oriental coma. Despite the atmospheric effects, there is some real beauty in this orchestration, particularly the clarinet unison fragment just before the middle part of the first chorus.

Promises To Be Dynamite!

When Berigan produces some more Beriganic material this band will be dynamite. And this recording will certainly suit me until the real thing comes along.

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

The Casa Loma rhythm section with batoneer Glen Gray leaning on the piano. Left to right: Stanley Dennis, Jack Blanchette, Joe Hall, Tony Briglia and Glen Gray.



wondrous to hear; and other good men on tenor, trombone and piano. Altogether a most interesting performance.

The Ellington side represents a lapse from grace on the part of Vocalion, whose issues are generally chosen with discretion. This piece of atrocious showmanship brings out all the worst in Rex Stewart. Wrong notes fly around like wasps. Who wants to get stung?

Artie Shaw and His New Music.

"I Surrender Dear" (***).

"Someday Sweetheart" (**).

(Vocalion S.114.)

Last time I reviewed Shaw something slipped out about a bad surface. I have since found out that this was due partly to my exceptionally light pickup, which didn't get right into the grooves, and partly to the rough test pressing from which I was reviewing; so to all ye who have heavy pickups, my apologies. I should hate to stop you from savouring the charms of the first chorus of *I Surrender Dear*, or the sax section part, or the coda. All these are arranged with Shaw originality, and mark the best work to date by Artie's Band. The other parts are somewhat commonplace, but anybody who knows anything about orchestration, or wants to, can listen indefinitely to that first chorus.

Someday Sweetheart starts with some very plain block-scoring on the melody, which, needing a clarinet obbligato or something else to fill it out, tastes rather like a sugar cake without sugar. Artie gets going shortly afterwards, and keeps it up right through. His entry into the last half chorus is one of those things—well, you have to be Artie Shaw to know how they're done.

Teddy Grace (Vocal).
"Dispossessed By You."
"Rock It For Me."

(*** Brunswick 02475.)

Grace Teddy would be a better name. It's a girl, and a white girl, though you'd hardly know it. Chalk up another name on the list of real femme swingers. Without imitating any of the prevailing favourites, Miss Teddy achieves a style that really rocks. The accompaniment helps no little, with an easy tumty-tumty rhythm throughout, grand recording, some very good clarinet work, and just one fault: *Rock It For Me* starts off with either half the band or the vocalist out of tune—or both.

The margin is slight, fortunately. Far be it from me to condone bad pitch at any time, but I should have hated to turn down such a surprisingly swell record for a fault that is in this instance only noticeable, if you're deliberately fault-finding.

Both sides are good, despite stupid lyrics, but *Rock It* is my favourite. This girl is my heart throb of the month.

Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra.
"Posin" (***).
"Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet" (*)

(Brunswick 02476.)

Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra.
"Posin."
"Chris And His Gang."

(*** Vocalion S.109.)

Of the two versions of *Posin*, Henderson's is the most satisfying as an orthodox jazz record, with a vocal by an improved Chuck Richards, but the Lunceford rendering is better taken

as a treatment of the statu-dance novelty number, and is altogether an example of the commercial Lunceford manner which is apt to become irresistible, conscious though you are of its artificiality. The band's superb cleanliness and power in ensemble, the unison gagging à la *Christopher Columbus* (that phrase dies hard), and the other little tricks, make this *Posin* a rare piece of superior Luncefordiana.

Christopher Columbus bobs up yet again in a new disguise on *Chris And His Gang*, written by Fletcher and Horace, with bits of *Jump On The Wagon* thrown in for good measure. The stunt of sounding a deep unison on the keynote on the fourth beat of the previous bar, and holding it over, is being slowly worked to death, but I haven't yet quite started to tire of it. *Chris And His Gang*, though played with less than the usual Henderson sparkle, is one of those things that will get you if you don't watch out. Besides,

"Choo" is there, and a first-rate clarinetist, Jerry Blake, and an unidentified but swell trumpeter, plus the excellent Israel Crosby in the basement.

Forget about *Old Grey Bonnet*.

I have never yet heard any band succeed in swinging at eighty-four bars per minute, and it is just as useless for Lunceford to make the attempt as for anyone else.

Mildred Bailey and Her Orchestra.

"My Last Affair."
"Heaven Help This Heart Of Mine."

(*** Vocalion S.115.)

I think I have mentioned that *My Last Affair* is a melody in a million, so the fact that Mildred sings it to perfection, aided by Roy Eldridge, Haymer on tenor, Scoops Carey on alto and the other worthies of the Eldridge Band, should steer you in the right direction. The other side is almost as lovely, with a group of Basie's men, an acceptable tune and Mildred's unwavering artistry.

Ben Pollack and His Orchestra (1936).

"Jintown Blues" (***).
Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (1936).

"Trumpet In Spades" (*).
(Vocalion S.113.)

Pollack is one veteran they can't keep down. Most of the boys who were with him on this disc a year ago have left him, but he now has another good band. In *Jintown Blues* are to be heard Harry James, whose trumpet has been distinguishing the latest Goodman discs; Fazola, a clarinetist

TREASURE HUNTERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Diamond
- ★★★ Ruby
- ★★ Onyx
- ★ Glass

FEATHER FORECAST AND NEWS

IT was not mere idle theory, but bitterly discouraging practice, which established the general belief that there is no such thing as a good British coloured orchestra. Until very recently this acceptance of the unfortunate fact held good. Then a young Jamaican dancer, smitten with the idea of forming a British Negro combination that would really stand on its feet as a musical attraction instead of a mere novelty for the indiscriminating public, proceeded to scour the Empire in order to assemble in this country a coloured band after his own ideal.

The young man was Ken Johnson ("Snakehips" to his audience), and, with the preliminary aid of trumpeter Leslie Thompson, he achieved the impossible. Patient rehearsal and judicious selection both of men and of material have resulted in a band of which one can at last be proud—the Jamaican Aristocrats.

Luxuries of a Mayfair Mews

In a Mayfair mews Ken's boys set the ball rolling midnightly at the Old Florida. For the comforts of a private telephone at your table and a revolving dance floor you are obliged to wear evening dress, but there is none of this stiff formality about the music provided.

Ken has concentrated his efforts on echoing some of the best arrangements to be heard on swing records. Usually it is not good policy to pursue this course of un-

originality, but so authentic is his interpretation of Tommy Dorsey's *Song Of India* treatment, and similar pieces from the Dorsey and other libraries that the impression is that of a genuine, not second-

hand article. The rhythm section has a quiet, confident unity, and the brass, unfortunately confined to mutes until most of the guests have gone, can really blast out with admirable gusto and team spirit.

On the vocal side Ken has trained his boys to present some of the unison "glee-club" choruses popularised by Redman and now becoming a vogue in America. This band is the first in England to try the stunt, and for radio the effect would be a treat.

B.B.C. Should Be Interested

This unique venture, a genuinely good British coloured swing band, should certainly not have been ignored by the B.B.C., and I feel it is more probably due to an oversight than to wilful neglect that Ken has not yet penetrated the airwaves. In fairness to the band and to the public I trust this will be rectified very soon.

NEWS:—Ella Fitzgerald had the thrill of being congratulated by Mayor LaGuardia on her performance at a New York charity concert. . . . Chick Webb's quintet (flute, clarinet, piano, bass and drums) made a record session waxing *I Got Rhythm*, *In A Little Spanish Town*, *I Ain't Got Nobody* and *Sweet Sue*. . .

Clearing Things Up

The confusion caused here by the appearance of the Hot Club Quintet records under three different names looks like being settled for good. Up to now they have been made under the names of Django Reinhardt on Oriole, Quintette of the Hot Club of France on H.M.V., and Stéphane Grappelly's Hot Four on Decca. They have now been signed up on an exclusive Decca contract to appear for this label alone regardless of names—which should save reviewers a lot of complicated explanations in future. . . .

They Always Return

They always come back . . . well, sometimes, anyway — Sonny Durham, who left Glen Gray's Orchestra to form his own band, has returned to Gray's Casa Lomans on a new five-year contract . . . and "Goldie" Goldfield, who left Whiteman a year back to try to run a band of his own, is home in the Whiteman fold again.

A COMPLETE GUIDE TO RECORD RELEASES for November 1937

Three shilling records

Berigan, Bunny, and his Orchestra. (New York, February, 1937.) *Blue Lou* (Comp., Edgar Sampson.) Bunny Berigan, leader and trumpet; Harry Greenwald, Harry Brown, trumpets; Ford Leary, trombone; Hymie Schertzer, Mattie Matlock, altos; Art Dollinger, tenor; Les Burness, piano; Tom Morganelli, guitar; Manny Berger, drums; Arnold Fishkin, bass. (For backing, see Carolina Cotton Pickers.) **Vocalion S.99.**

Carolina Cotton Pickers (N.) (Southern U.S.A., Summer, 1937.) *Get Together* (Comp., Chick Webb.) (For backing see Bunny Berigan.) **Vocalion S.99.**

This was recorded during an expedition in the Southern States by the American Brunswick recording engineers. Nothing is known about the band, except that it is coloured. It is in no way connected with McKinney's Cotton Pickers or any of the other combinations bearing similar names.

Jimmy Dorsey

Dorsey, Jimmy, and his Orchestra. (Los Angeles, March, 1937.) *Peckin'* (Vocal: Bing Crosby). *I Got Rhythm* (Comp., Gershwin; no vocal). Jimmy Dorsey, leader, alto and clarinet; George Thow, Toots Camarata, trumpets; Bob Byrns, Joe Yuki, Don Matteson, trombones; Jack Stacy, Skeets Herfurt, altos; Fud Livingston, tenor; Bobby Van Eps, piano; Roc Hilman, guitar; Ray McKinley, drums; Jim Taft, bass. **Brunswick 02481.**

This was recorded before the recent reorganisation of the Dorsey band, which resulted in an upheaval in the personnel. *Peckin'*, composed by Harry James, is based on a strain of the old Ellington composition, *Rockin' In Rhythm*.

Erskine Hawkins

Hawkins, Erskine, and his 'Bama State Collegians. (N.) (New York, May, 1937.) *Uproar Shout, Dear Old Southland.* Erskine Hawkins, leader and trumpet, S. Lowe, W. Bascombe, M. Green, trumpets; E. Sims, R. Range, trombones; Wm. Johnson, J. Mikell, altos; P. Bascombe, tenor; H. Henry, baritone; A. Parrish, piano; W. McLemore, guitar; J. Morrison, drums; S. Fields, bass. **Vocalion S.117.**

This band has quite a reputation in Harlem as a spectacular outfit on Lunceford lines. It has been recording for over a year with the American Record Corporation, but this is its first English release. The band, which appeared a short time ago at the Ubangi Club, was formed from a group of enthusiastic Alabama coloured college youths.

Edgar Hayes

Hayes, Edgar, and his Orchestra. (N.) (New York, July, 1937.)

Edgar Hayes, leader and piano; Bernard Flood, Leonard Davis, Henry Goodwin, trumpets; Clyde Barnhart, R. H. Horton, Davis James, trombones; Crawford Wethington, Roger Boyd, Rudy Powell, altos; Joseph Garland, tenor; Andrew Jackson, guitar; Kenneth Clark, drums; Elmer James, bass. **Brunswick 02482.**

Andy Kirk

Kirk, Andy, and his Clouds of Joy. (N.) (New York) February, 1937. *Down Stream.* Andy Kirk, leader and baritone; Harry Lawson, Paul King, Earl Thompson, trumpets; Theo Donnelly, trombone; John Harrington, John Williams, altos; Mary Lou Williams, piano; Ted Brinson, guitar; Ben Thigpen, drums; Booker Collins, bass. July, 1937: *A Mellow Bit Of Rhythm.* (As above, plus Henry Wells, trombone; Buddy Miller, alto.) **Brunswick 02483.**

Red Norvo

Norvo, Red, and his Orchestra. (New York, July, 1937.) *The Morning After* (Vocal: Mildred Bailey), *Do You Ever Think Of Me?* (No vocal). Red Norvo, leader and xylophone; Louis Mucci, George Wendt, Stew Pletcher, trumpets; Al Mastren, trombone; Leonard Goldstein, Chas. Lamphere, altos; Hank D'Amico, clarinet; Herbie Haymer, tenor; Bill Miller, piano; Arnold "Red" McGarvie, guitar; Maurice Purtil, drums; Pete Peterson, bass. **Vocalion S.108.**

Maxine Sullivan

Sullivan, Maxine (Vocal) and her Orchestra. (Mixed.) (New York, August, 1937.) *Loch Lomond, I'm Coming, Virginia.* Frank Newton, trumpet; Pete Brown, alto; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Babe Rusin, tenor; Claude Thornhill, piano; O'Neil Spencer, drums; John Kirby, bass. **Vocalion S.116.**

Claude Thornhill, who directed this session, and Babe Rusin, are the only two white players in the combination which accompanies seventeen-year-old Maxine Sullivan, the coloured singer, who made her bow before British radio listeners in the "Broadway Matinee" broadcast on November 1.

Two shilling record

Polo, Danny, and his Swing Stars. (London, October, 1937.) *More Than Somewhat, Stratton Street Strut* (Both comp. Danny Polo). Danny Polo, leader and clarinet; Tommy McQuater, trumpet; Eddie Macauley, piano; Eddie Freeman, guitar; Dudley Barber, drums; Dick Ball, bass. **Decca F.6518.**

These are the first two titles made at Polo's initial session under his own name. The rhythm section was taken from the bands at the Coconut Grove, the Berkeley Hotel, the Four Hundred Club and Ciro's respectively, while Polo and McQuater are, of course, both with Ambrose.

★ "ROPHONE" ★

thumbs-up and thumbs-down recent hot records and tells of Benny Goodman playing plenty blues, a great Krupa, a masterful Fats Waller, and in fact it all sounds like a

MELODY
MAKER
NOV 20th
1937

BARRELHOUSE JAMBOREE

Benny Goodman and His Orchestra.
"Roll 'Em" (***)
"Afraid To Dream" (**)
(H.M.V. B8631.)

Benny Goodman Quartet.
"Smiles" (****).
"Liza" (***).
(H.M.V. B8630.)

BOOGIE-WOOGIE would be a better name for Mary Lou Williams' *Roll 'Em*, an arrangement of the blues in which the famous barrelhouse strain is revived together with snatches of *Froggy Bottom* and other pieces by the same lady. This sort of thing does justice to the Goodman Band, giving Jess Stacy an admirable solo allowance and showing that Benny was being much too modest when he once said (while *Blues*

Of Israel was being made):—"No, I won't take a solo. I can't play the blues." Believe me, Benny plays all the blues you want, and here is the evidence.

Rather too many familiar phrases, and too much unison, make this slightly less than Mary Lou's best arrangement to date, but it is certainly a masterpiece beside the typical "commercial swing" on the back. The young lady who declares herself so afraid to dream is Miss Betty Van, who is as harmless as the others in the Goodman procession of vocalists; but neither she nor anything else in this title will excite people who like *Roll 'Em*. Like me.

English lists. Even this excavation of two titles from the days of his old Music Hall Band is better than you might expect. *The Dixieland Band* is again a vehicle for what became Helen Ward's most popular number with

Waller orchestral record also touches Fats' best standards, starting with excellent piano solos followed by passable vocals, and with a surprise on the first side in the form of an alto solo. The trumpet seems at last to be conquering

have done was to include just once the Morse for SOS. Which he doesn't.

The Chopin idea will be offensive to some people and meaningless to others. Tell me, which group do you belong to? **Quintette of the Hot Club of France**
"Exactly Like You."
"In A Sentimental Mood."
(** H.M.V. B8629.)

I have now reached a stage when I usually give Quintet records away after reviewing them; not that they are inferior to those I have already, but if I happen to be in the mood for Quintet music I already have more than enough of it in my cupboard to satisfy said mood, so there is nothing in any new release sufficiently different to warrant my keeping it

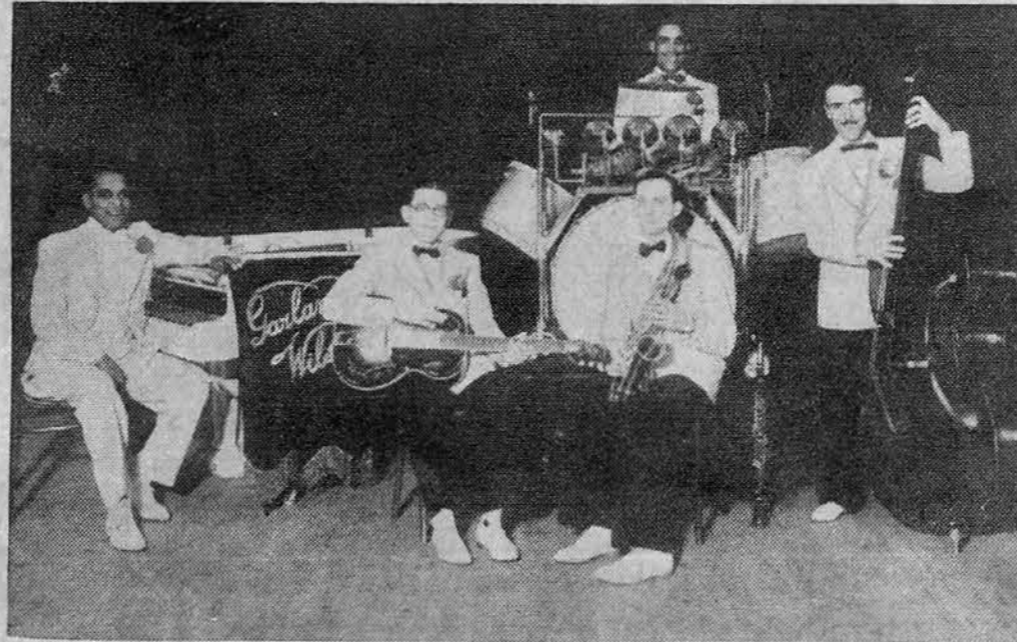
Jack Teagarden and His Orchestra.
"Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn."
"I've Got It."
(** Columbia DB5035.)

The only thing I should like to know about this coupling is whether it was by accident or design that the second title provided such an apt reply to the first.

Ex-Hylton Piano With Teagarden

In the band are Bud Freeman, Charlie T. and a pianist named Dave Ross, who worked with Hylton's American Band. Freeman alone acquits himself creditably. The ensemble does nothing whatsoever to prove it has no connection with the band next door. Jack T. trots out some of his better-known phrases, and sings on the first side, but is hardly "sent" by his *entourage*. The brass in particular sounds horribly bare at times, grappling ineffectively with what may well have been a doctored commercial arrangement of *Gabriel*.

Good in spots, but it's a pity they're so obviously nothing but spots.



★ The Monarchs of Rhythm, supporting Garland Wilson, all ready for a Barrelhouse Jamboree of their own. The drummer, Tom Wilson, is now with Ken Johnson, who is mentioned in Feather Forecast and News on page twenty. ★

Inexplicable Mystery

After hearing so much of Hampton I am mystified how he has managed to challenge Norvo in the Referendum. Unquestionably there is more swing in a bar of Norvo than in a whole chorus of Hampton; for one thing Norvo has instrumental advancement. The

Benny, and she sings exactly the same arrangement heard on the H.M.V. version, which costs a bob less on BD183, backed by Duke's *Delta Serenade*. I have always liked the novel character of this number and the authenticity with which it carries out its idea.

Cokey was contributed to Benny's repertoire by a Mr. J. Edmundson, a young unknown who produced under this title (which means, as

the technical handicaps which held him back on previous efforts.

Altogether, the Waller star at the moment remains undimmed.

Bert Shafter and His Rhythm Octet.
"S.O.S."
"Chopin's Ghost."
(** H.M.V. BD5273.)

The gentleman obviously doesn't believe in efficiency. After using the title *S.O.S.* and incorporating so many Morse code effects, the least he could

WHEN'S IT WORTH BUYING?

23

SIGNATURE TUNE: by Leonard G. Feather

The Rumba is Cuban Folk Music

An interview with José Norman, who inaugurated a new vogue in dance rhythm

La cucaracha, la cucaracha,
No puede caminar
La cucaracha, la cucaracha,
Marijuana que fumar!

AHAVANA night-club vibrated in sympathy with the old Cuban folk music, the even older strains of its rambling and disconnected lyrics. To the young London-born man who sat listening there was a fascination in it, the cause of which went deeper than his half-Cuban origin. The youth was José Norman, son of a Russian concert pianist. At sixteen he was on his second visit to Cuba, where he had lived between the ages of six and nine. Later, though he can hardly have suspected it, he was to bring to London and make famous throughout Europe the native Havana rhythms that had so taken his fancy on this visit.

At thirty José Norman can look back today on a long career in which he has stimulated a new musical vogue. After those first nights spent steeping himself in the Cuban atmosphere, he met Don Azpiazu, the band-leader who started the rumba rage in the United States; he wrote several songs in the Cuban style, later to have them courteously rejected (or just rejected) by every publisher in Charing Cross Road; he married the daughter of a Cuban ambassador; started to publish his own songs, and organised an English band to play Cuban music in the correct style—these were José Norman and his Rumberos, whose programme 'Havana Nights' was broadcast recently.

Introducing the Rumba

'When I first introduced the rumba here in 1930', he recalls, 'everyone thought I was crazy. This was so completely different from anything they'd heard in the ballroom before that the bands just didn't know how to handle the material, and the publishers thought it completely uncommercial. You can imagine how that added to my satisfaction when two of my compositions, "Mammy Bong" and "Cuban Pete", eventually became best-sellers.

The basic charm of Cuban music is that at its best it is genuine, unspoilt folk music. The lyrics of "El Manisero" (the original "Peanut Vendor"), of "La Cucaracha" and others of that type, were just traditional improvised jingles, created by semi-illiterates, who didn't care if they made sense as long as the last words of each line managed to rhyme after a fashion.

Later, the inevitable sophistication took place, with the result that now there are two types of Cuban music—the authentic stuff, played best by, for instance, Don Barreto and

the Lecuona Cuban Boys and my friend Azpiazu; secondly, the popularised stuff with carefully-written lyrics and more refinement, all of which is also accepted in this country under the common heading of rumba music. I try to adhere to the first class. All the arrangements and most of the compositions in the "Havana Nights" broadcast the other week were my own.

The Instruments

A typical instrumentation for Cuban folk music, as employed on the broadcast, comprises two trumpets, two clarinets ('doubling' on flute and violin respectively), drums, maracas, gourd, claves, bongos, and Norman himself on piano.

The bongos are little tom-toms played with the hand. The claves, two small sticks hit together, have to play a fixed rhythm throughout every bar of every number, on the second and third beats in one bar, and a variant of the Charleston beat in the alternating bars. Similarly, the maracas, consisting of two gourds (made from a Cuban vegetable, the *guira*, not unlike a marrow) have a set rhythm throughout in quavers and semi-quavers. The real rumba music is so harmonically simple, clinging to the tonic and dominant, that there is a 'national tune-rhythm' of Cuba, a two-bar rhythmic and melodic phrase, variants of which must occur in every rumba if it is to be true to type. The monotony is part of the fascination of this music.

Other instruments are the *quibadas*, consisting of a horse's jaw, which has to be smitten on the first beat of each bar; the *bomba*, or bottle, which produces a deep sound when blown into, and the *caja*, a wooden box with steel prongs, on which Norman played a solo in the broadcast. This sounds like a cross-breed of the marimba and the double-bass.

The Rumba in Britain

British musicians are beginning to acquire the feeling for the intricacies of Cuban music, declares Norman. A new British combination of this type, which made its radio debut last month and is to be heard this week in Wednesday's 'Fiesta', has been assembled by Ernesto Ritz, a London-born clarinettist and flautist, who for some years has specialised in the writing of Cuban numbers. Ritz has arranged most of the orchestrations for this band, which features an instrumentation similar to José Norman's.

Norman considers that Roy Fox, whose drummer, Maurice Burman, has written a really good rumba, 'La Majestica', achieves more of the correct atmosphere in his rumbas than any other non-Cuban band leader.

'But it may not be long', he adds, 'before the rage becomes even more widespread, and every British band will be able to bring an aura of Havana into the local ballroom. Well, don't blame me—blame Christopher Columbus. He discovered Cuba!'



José Norman

Feather Forecast and News

FEMININE COUNTERPART TO "FATS"



Glamorous
Una Mae
Carlisle

known licks, that only the lack of his prodigious touch and stretch would give her away on a first hearing — unless you count her voice, which is mercifully unlike Mr. Waller's.

Una Mae is one of my numerous memories of another brief but bulging trip to Paris, where I found her working at the Boeuf Sur Le Toit last week.

Whether playing solo or in duets with Garland Wilson, whether in the old familiar tunes or in such specialised jive as *Two Old Maids In a Folding Bed*, she personified personality. The fact that she has not yet recorded, and that she is expected back in London next month, seems to indicate a ripe opportunity for somebody.

Neglected by Waxworkers

Eddie South, who, like Una Mae, has been neglected by the waxworkers, finally broke the spell and made some titles for the new "Swing" label in Paris during his

engagement at the Ritz Hotel, which ended last week (and by the way, he may make the English music halls his next stop.) The recordings included fiddle duet work between himself and Grappelly, and a fiddle trio with the addition of Michel Warlop.

Brass and Rhythm Only

This French recording outburst is important. Some of the Dicky Wells titles which were played over to me, especially those made with just a brass section and rhythm, are amongst the best yet in Europe. Bill Coleman made a superb blues, and Wells made a non-stop three-minute blues trombone solo. The policy apparently calls for one twelve-bar blues on each session, which is a laudable motive *pro bono publico*, and, should an English release be arranged, may even work out *pro bono Pimlico*.

I am told that this is an off-season for swing in Paris, but by London standards it is still sensational. My recol-

lections float across a variety of scenes. Now I am at Charles Delaunay's swing flat, where hundreds of musicians' names are painted in myriad colours all over the walls, and where you sign on the door as you go in; now with Django Reinhardt and his handsome, round and swarthy gypsy wife, we are listening to the new test pressings. Django, though still the true gypsy at heart, has enough of the business man in him by now to ask frequent questions about new propositions, radio royalties, the plans for the London trip. His eyes brighten at the sound of a happy phrase by himself or another soloist, and the sleek right-angled black moustache twists slightly as he smiles.

Fifteen Minutes Of Blues

... Now I am at the Florence, sitting in with Willie Lewis for fifteen unbroken minutes of blues, and hurriedly climbing down in order to hear some more of the brilliant Chitison. He is recording some solos for Pathé next week which may at last show his real worth... now I am in a tiny all-night bar in Montmartre where the musicians gradually drift in—Benny Carter, Una Mae, Eunice Wilson, some of Willie's boys. Dawn has passed and the atmosphere is sleepy, but someone sidles on to a piano stool and tinkles, someone else takes a trumpet out of his case and plays from his table between mouthfuls. Una Mae sings as Chitison plays *They All Laughed* for her... What? A quarter past eight? And I have a date at noon, and you have a session at three, and he must audition at eleven...

Yes, Paris is still Paris, but all good swings must come to an end, and you'll pardon me now if I go to sleep for a week.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

HOW would you like to submit to a blindfold test, listen to a typical Fats Waller piano solo of a typical Fats Waller tune such as *Honeysuckle Rose* or *Crazy 'Bout My Baby*, and then, when the bandage was removed, find that sitting on the piano stool, instead of the two hundred pounds of massive brown-skinned masculinity you expected, was a light, slim, smiling girl?

There's no catch in it. The blindfold test would fool anyone unfamiliar with the work of Una Mae Carlisle, who has assimilated so much of Fats' pianistic style, and so many of his well-

1985

DUK

THE NATION VOTE ITS SWING FAVOURITE



Eddie Lang, with 1,737 votes, is the most popular instrumentalist in the "M.M." Referendum.

Ellington and Ambrose the World Favourite Bands ∴ Lang Polls Highest Number of Votes In The Ballot

BRITISH AND INTERNATIONAL RESULTS

(Note: Artists polling fewer than 15 votes have not been included.)

ORCHESTRAS

International.

1. DUKE ELLINGTON	960
2. Benny Goodman	759
3. Tommy Dorsey	165
4. Ambrose	108
5. Venuti-Lang, Etc.	70
6. Five Pennies, Etc.	61
7. Chick Webb	54
8. Bob Crosby	51
9. Lew Stone	27
10. Benny Carter	24
11. Jimmie Lancesford	23
{ Louis Armstrong	22
{ Chicago Rhythm Kings, Etc.	22
{ Fletcher Henderson	22
15. Teddy Wilson	21
16. Quintet of the Hot Club de France	20
17. Fats Waller	19
18. Paul Whiteman	18
19. Luis Russell	15

British.

1. BERT AMBROSE	1,413
2. Lew Stone	297
3. Henry Hall	74
4. Nat Gonella	61
5. Sid Lipton	52
6. Harry Roy	48
7. Benny Carter	39
8. Six Swingers	36
9. Roy Fox	29
10. Spike Hughes	20
11. Joe Loss	18

PIANO

International.

1. TEDDY WILSON	871
2. Fats Waller	476
3. Earl Hines	290
4. Joe Sullivan	117
5. Duke Ellington	88
6. Mary Lou Williams	84
7. Jess Stacey	57
8. Arthur Schutt	56
9. George Gershwin	30
10. { Bert Barnes	19
{ Willie (The Lion) Smith	19
12. Garland Wilson	17

British.

1. EDDIE MACAULEY	421
2. Gerry Moore	300
3. Bert Barnes	284
4. Bert Read	215
5. Billy Munn	157
6. Monia Litter	117
7. Stanley Black	80
8. Harold "Babe" Hood	65

9. Carroll Gibbons	52
10. Eddie Carroll	44
11. { Billy Mason	39
{ George Scott Wood	39
13. Cecil Norman	37
14. Charlie Kunz	33
15. Arthur Young	29
16. Jack Nathan	15

TRUMPET

International.

1. LOUIS ARMSTRONG	1,233
2. Bunny Berigan	348
3. Bix	315
4. Red Nichols	112
5. Henry (Red) Allen	78
6. Nat Gonella	66
7. Cootie Williams	51
8. { Roy Eldridge	30
{ Tommy McQuater	30
10. Muggsy Spanier	16

British.

1. TOMMY McQUATER	1,002
2. Nat Gonella	599
3. Max Goldberg	314
4. Duncan Whyte	60
5. Teddy Foster	41
6. Jack Jackson	20

ALTO

International.

1. JOHNNY HODGES	770
2. Benny Carter	748
3. Jimmy Dorsey	229
4. Frankie Trumbauer	136
5. Freddy Gardner	117
6. Danny Polo	39
7. Don Redman	28

British.

1. FREDDY GARDNER	1,055
2. Joe Crossman	588
3. Danny Polo	79
4. Dave Shand	75
5. Harry Hayes	43
6. Joe Jeannette	31
7. Burton Gillis	19
8. Sid Phillips	17

TROMBONE

International.

1. TOMMY DORSEY	931
2. Jack Teagarden	726
3. Miff Mole	211
4. Higginbotham	179
5. Lew Davis	86
6. Tricky Sam	49
7. Dickie Wells	31
8. Juan Tizol	22

9. Benny Morton	19
10. { Jimmy Harrison	16
{ Lawrence Brown	16
<i>British.</i>	
1. LEW DAVIS	1,343
2. George Chisholm	424
3. Ted Heath	116
4. Tony Thorpe	85
5. Bill Mulraney	34
6. Les Carew	27
7. Bruce Campbell	25
8. Eric Breeze	22
9. Jock Flemming	21

TENOR

International.

1. COLEMAN HAWKINS	1,520
2. Bud Freeman	217
3. "Choo" Berry	196
4. { Eddie Miller	43
{ Benny Carter	43
6. Arthur Rollini	31
7. Babe Rusin	29
8. Vido Musso	28
9. Billy Amstell	22
10. Don Barrigo	18
11. Pat Smuts	17
12. Lester Young	15

British.

1. BUDDY FEATHERSTON-HAUGH	621
2. Pat Smuts	419
3. Don Barrigo	256
4. George Evans	211
5. Billy Amstell	191
6. Freddy Gardner	155
7. { Joe Crossman	42
{ Harry Gold	42
9. Harry Berly	19
10. Andy McDevitt	17

CLARINET

International.

1. BENNY GOODMAN	1,380
2. Barney Bigard	247
3. Jimmy Dorsey	129
4. Danny Polo	95
5. Buster Bailey	71
6. Frank Teschmaker	67
7. Artie Shaw	61
8. Joe Marsala	39
9. Benny Carter	24
10. "Mezz" Mezzrow	22
11. Pee-wee Russell	18
12. { Jimmy Noone	15
{ Johnny Mintz	15

British.

1. ANDY McDEVITT	632
(Danny Polo (American) 618)	
2. Joe Crossman	399

3. Freddy Gardner	.....
4. Harry Roy	.....
5. Sid Phillips	.....
6. Burton Gillis	.....

GUITAR

International.

1. EDDIE LANG	.....
2. Django Reinhardt	.....
3. Dick McDonough	.....
4. Albert Harris	.....
5. Alan Reuss	.....
6. George Van Eps	.....
7. Eddie Condon	.....
8. { Lawrence Lucie	.....
{ Carl Kress	.....

British.

1. ALBERT HARRIS	.....
2. Ivor Mairants	.....
3. Danny Perri	.....
4. { George Elliott	.....
{ Joe Young	.....
6. Alan Ferguson	.....
7. Archie Slavin	.....
8. Len Fillis	.....
9. Joe Brannelly	.....
10. Sam Gelsley	.....
11. Jack Llewellyn	.....

BASS

International.

1. ISRAEL CROSBY	.....
2. George "Pop" Foster	.....
3. Wellman Braud	.....
4. John Kirby	.....
5. Arthur Bernstein	.....
6. Tiny Winters	.....
7. Bob Haggart	.....
8. Dick Ball	.....
9. { Hayes Alvis	.....
{ Al Morgan	.....
11. Joe Tarto	.....
12. { Bill Taylor	.....
{ Gene Traxler	.....
14. Harry Goodman	.....
15. Steve Brown	.....
16. Spike Hughes	.....

British.

1. TINY WINTERS	.....
2. Dick Ball	.....
3. Wally Morris	.....
4. Dick Escott	.....
5. Spike Hughes	.....
6. Arthur Calkin	.....
7. Charlie Winters	.....
8. Theo Farrar	.....
9. George Gibbs	.....

DRUMS

International.

1. GENE KRUPA	.....
2. Wm. "Cozy" Cole	.....
3. Chick Webb	.....

"M.M." REFERENDUM SHOW SOME SURPRISES



DUKE ELLINGTON—whose orchestra triumphed in the International Section.

AT a first glance, the voting in the MELODY MAKER Referendum might appear to indicate an extraordinary lack of taste and muddle-headedness of opinion on the part of the British swing public. (Although the ballot was international, it is safe to assume that the voting substantially represents opinions sent in from readers in this country.)

However, the swing fan has only the evidence of his ears, and if we find Gonella ahead of Cootie and Muggsy, or Lew Davis topping Dickie Wells, Benny Morton and Jimmy Harrison, it must be remembered that ninety per cent. of dance music fans do not earn more than £3 per week, of which only a very small fraction can be devoted to the luxury of gramophone records; whereas radio and the music hall, through which media the British stars are constantly before us, are within the reach of all.

Local talent, then, must be expected to receive a disproportionate abundance of votes.

The factors guiding the voting generally were:

(a) The number of records made by the artist;

(b) The number of radio and personal appearances in this country;

(c) The quantity of publicity in the MELODY MAKER; and

(d) Actual merit, though this department took a very secondary place.

DUKE ON TOP

That the MELODY MAKER can sway opinions as a shepherd guides sheep was indicated when Benny Goodman's Orchestra, after leading the voting, suddenly dropped into second place, while Ellington leapt ahead immediately after an article defending Duke had appeared in these pages.

A certain independence of spirit prevailed, however, with the weighty majority given to Armstrong despite the Press attitude towards his recent work; though it is almost certain that

- 6. Gilbert Webster 78
- 7. Tommy Blades 21
- 8. Styx Gibling 15

MALE VOCALISTS

- International.
- 1. BING CROSBY 941
 - 2. Jack Teagarden 486
 - 3. Louis Armstrong 427
 - 4. Al Bowlly 69
 - 5. Sam Browne 64
 - 6. Fats Waller 36
 - 7. Don Redman 33
 - 8. Bob Crosby 31
 - 9. Red McKenzie 24
 - 10. Cab Calloway 20
 - 11. Nat Gonella 16

- British.
- 1. SAM BROWNE 552
 - 2. Al Bowlly 333
 - 3. Denny Dennis 254
 - 4. Nat Gonella 179
 - 5. Sam Costa 75
 - 6. Brian Lawrence 54
 - 7. Teddy Foster 46
 - 8. Leslie Douglas 40
 - 9. Jack Cooper 34
 - 10. Harry Roy 29
 - 11. George Elrick 27
 - 12. George Evans 26
 - 13. Hughie Diamond 25
 - 14. Bob Mallin 20
 - 15. Joe Crossman 18
 - 16. Les Allen 16
 - 17. { Jack Doyle 15
 - { Gerry Fitzgerald 15

AN ANALYSIS OF THE RESULTS

most readers were voting for the Armstrong of the old days, just as they voted a dead man, Bix, into third place close behind Berigan.

The amazing rise to fame of Berigan bears out (a) and (b), his recordings having been extraordinarily prolific and his broadcast to England having caused a sensation—which, *ipso facto*, proves (c) and (d).

In the trombones, (b) is again demonstrated, for Teagarden and Dorsey were level in the voting, T. even leading at one time, until Dorsey was heard twice on the air from the B.B.C. Thereafter, his leadership went unchallenged. To think how half an hour can change people's views on the achievements of a musician's entire career!

The alto vote is an exception to our argument; for, in spite of (c), Benny Carter always ran second to Hodges, though at one stage he was only ten votes behind. But (b), Hodges has been heard in person all over the country, whereas Carter only had one single-night concert, in London.

Benny's leap into fourth place on tenor sax, an instrument on which he

an inevitable choice for male vocal though the lapse of Louis into third rating was gradual and unexpected. Red McKenzie has dropped incredibly out of favour.

The girl vocalists had a three-cornered battle for the first few weeks with Mildred Bailey a bare half-dozen points ahead of Billie Holiday and Ella Fitzgerald, all three being occasionally within ten points of each other. Bessie Smith could not be expected to rate high, since her records have not been released in this country. The vast majority of her votes came from countries where her records are well known.

Finally, amongst the bands, the fifth and sixth places went to what are in fact purely recording combinations rather than extant bands and very old ones at that.

THE BRITISH RESULTS DISCUSSED

NOW let us examine the British department. McQuater secured nearly twice the support offered to Gonella, despite the latter's build-up over many years and frequent provincial music hall appearances. Here again the attitude of the critics has gradually taken effect. Goldberg is the other artist who was ever in the running to any extent in the department.

Lew Davis secured the biggest vote of all British instrumentalists, and towards the last couple of weeks there was an interesting rise in the support of George Chisholm to second place. It would be interesting to see how Chisholm would fare another year's time, for at present is almost unknown outside London. The tenor saxes and pianists were both very evenly divided, with six marks in each section reaching the three figure mark. Freddy Gardner had the honour of a placing in three sections.

Tommy
Dorsey—
931
votes—
champion
trombone



was completely unknown until the record of *Nightfall* does credit to the success of his English recordings. However, in the tenor department, Hawkins had about twice as many votes as everyone else combined.

Goodman claimed a similarly vast majority through an invincible combination of the four essential elements of success, while less-boosted artists who have equal claims to greatness were left completely out in the cold.

The placing of George Gershwin amongst the pianists brings up a point that recurred constantly and exasperatingly, *viz.*, the number of readers who completely neglected the fact that this was not a jazz or dance music referendum, but a swing music referendum.

LANG'S HONOUR

To Eddie Lang goes the honour of receiving the largest number of votes of all the artists in the entire ballot. The years that have passed since Lang's death have not dimmed his memory to the slightest extent, even Reinhardt's persistent build-up on records having had a negligible effect.

Israel Crosby's position amongst the bassists came as a surprise, and is due less to the usual causes than to the advantage of an easily-remembered name. Undoubtedly most of those who voted for Crosby would be unwilling to dispute that there may be dozens

RESULTS—Continued

(Only those polling 15 votes and over are included in this list)

- 4. Sonny Greer 144
- 5. Max Bacon 123
- 6. Dave Tough 78
- 7. Vic Berton 59
- 8. Stan King 58
- 9. Ray Bauduc 51
- 10. Sidney Catlett 28
- 11. { Zutie Singleton 24
- { George Wettling 24
- 13. Bill Hartly 19
- 14. Kaiser Marshall 16

British.

- 1. MAX BACON 1,172
- 2. Joe Daniels 177
- 3. Bill Hartly 129
- 4. Jock Jacobsen 109
- 5. Maurice Burman 100
- 6. Max Abrams 88
- 7. George Elrick 78
- 8. Johnny Marks 27
- 9. Bob Dryden 25
- { Duke Ellington 20
- { Annie Gubertini 18

IN

International.

- DUKE VENUTI 1,670
- Buff Smith 255
- Éphane Grappelly 240
- Redie South 43
- Eric Siday 15

British.

- ERIC SIDAY 725
- Brian Lawrence 285
- Go Rignold 178
- Eril Hellier 86
- Eric Hitchener 60
- Maurice Sterndale 44
- Norman Cole 42
- Harry Balen 36
- Bill Lipton 28
- Eric Pursglove 20
- Harry Berly 17

CONGO & VIBRAPHONE

International.

- FRANK HAMPTON 997
- Ed Norvo 983
- Brian Rollini 173
- Jack Simpson 50
- Reddy Brown 36
- Reddy Starita 30

British.

- FRANK SIMPSON 762
- Harry Robbins 207
- Harry Wicks 140
- Reddy Brown 130
- Reddy Starita 85



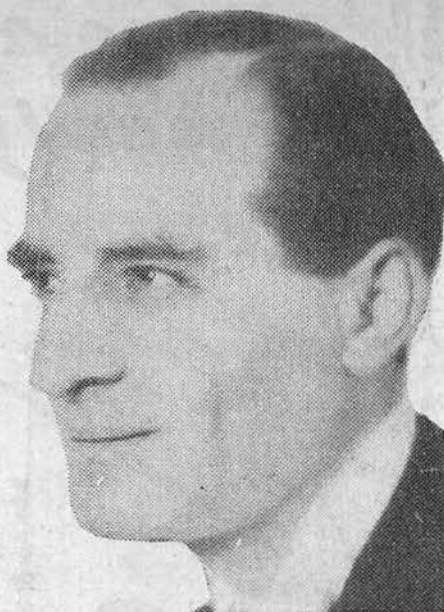
Teddy
Wilson—
871
votes—
champion
piano

GIRL VO

RESULTS

PRIZES

THE RESULTS



AMBROSE—leader of the orchestra voted as Britain's favourite.

first on alto, third on clarinet and sixth on tenor.

Danny Polo would have won hands down among the clarinetists had we not pointed out that he was not a British artist. After this point was made clear, he gradually gave place to McDevitt, ceding the top rung on the final day.

SHEER MERIT

Eddie Macauley's rise is one of the few examples of sheer merit bringing a newcomer into the limelight, for a year ago he was unheard of, and even during the period of the voting he was completely unknown outside London except for his brief associations with Benny Carter (two records) and Leonard Feather (one record, one broadcast).

Teddy Wilson's supremacy in the opposite column makes it appropriate that Eddie should rank first on the British side. In second place, there was never very much to choose between Moore and Barnes, while Read, Munn and Litter also varied frequently from day to day.

Albert Harris, with the second biggest British instrumental vote, had an entirely clear field except for a slight spurt from Mairants, after whom nobody had any substantial support at all.

Joe Daniels and Brian Lawrance earned second spots in their departments, despite allegations of "corn" levelled against them by critics.

In the xylo- and vibraphone group an enormous number of readers left a blank space or said "There aren't any." (Many more wrote similar statements across the entire English side of the coupon, or left it completely blank.)

The misconception of the motive of this ballot is perfectly illustrated by the voting in the two British vocal categories, where the majority of the leaders neither sing nor profess to sing in swing style.

Ambrose, with a terrific majority equal to double the rest of the voting in the bands' section, won hands down from the first day. Nearly all of the coupons which cited Lew Stone added in parentheses "Old Monseigneur Band." Jack Hylton is entirely out of the running, not having reached the 15-vote minimum for inclusion in the list.

TO SUM UP—

WHAT, then, are the main inferences to be drawn from these facts and figures?

One fact stands out. Readers should try to fight the natural prejudice of liking that which is already accepted, by publicity or financial backing, as being popular and therefore superior. There may be obscure musicians working for coffee and cakes in a stuffy night club who, this time next year, will have been discovered by a big management, launched upon the public, and risen to top place in the referendum.

If you are a real fan and can spot someone you like in an unlikely place, be it a club, a record or a broadcast, why not vote for him this time instead of waiting until everyone has approved?

To choose Benny Goodman as one's favourite clarinetist is too obvious, too easy; probably three-quarters of those who did so have no profound or sincere appreciation of his style.

The moral, then, is that readers must think for themselves. The things they see, hear and read about most do not have to be the best. They are just the best exploited. Who knows but that this time next year some of to-day's idols will have left the business, fallen from the big-money class, and consequently given way in the vote to new protégés of the god of bohoo? We shall see.

International.	
1. ELLA FITZGERALD	518
2. Mildred Bailey	417
3. Billie Holiday	391
4. Connie Boswell	252
5. Bessie Smith	121
6. Helen Ward	90
7. Evelyn Dall	86
8. Ethel Waters	63
9. Ivie Anderson	31
10. Elisabeth Welch	25
11. Valaida	24
12. Alice Faye	23
13. { Adelaide Hall	22
{ Edythe Wright	22
15. Mary Lee	21
16. Cleo Brown	19
17. Sophie Tucker	18
18. Ruth Etting	16
19. Vera Lynn	15

British.	
1. MARY LEE	318
(Evelyn Dall (American) 222)	
2. Vera Lynn	214
3. Dinah Miller	130
4. Marjorie Stedeford	119
5. { Pat Hyde	112
{ Peggy Dell	112
7. Elsie Carlisle	105
8. Ann Lenner	84
9. Anita Riddell	43
10. Judy Shirley	40
11. Eve Becke	33
12. Phyllis Robins	31
13. Pat Taylor	28
(Elisabeth Welch (American) 24)	
14. Ella Logan	20
15. Caroline	18
16. Suzanne Botterell	16

just the one microphone, a that saves time, trouble and money. ke was suspended by a milar to those used in the s, and hung about six feet ground. The piano was

private intimacy to the proceedings. Only about twenty by twenty-five feet in area, it has a false ceiling at about nine feet through which can be discerned the real ceiling several yards higher. After half-an-hour of toying around



"MELODY MAKER" 24 NOV. 1934

"M.M." REFERENDUM PRIZE ESSAY. RESULT

ON pages 2 and 3 this week, full results are given of the "Melody Maker" Swing Referendum, for which voting papers were received from all over the world.

In addition to the most interesting tabulation of readers' favourite British and international swingers, a £10 cash prize was awarded for the best short essay on a selected favourite.

ENTRANTS' FAULT

The main fault of the essays was their lack of any judicious blending of abstract appreciation with concrete reasoning. Too many were vaguely metaphysical, resorting to such journalistic

Fats
Waller,
cheery
subject
of the
prize-
winning
essay.



clichés as "an indefinable something" and "honest jazz without frills," and superlatives which might just as well have been applied to any other favourite musician.

The winner of the £10 is one who, discarding sentimentalism and grovelling hero-worship, expressed original thoughts in an original way. He is David Boyce, Jr., of the Roman Way, Glastonbury, Somerset, and his essay reads as follows:

The bibulous Fats is a perfect example of the real care-free spirit of true jazz overshadowing the pretentious æsthetic school of swing.

Without a big band; without a background story concerning the "oppression of the race," which is essential for the success of a coloured musician; without the ability to play the clarinet in a Mozart Quintet; without a "new music" build-up from the columnists; without any of this, Waller has turned out some of the finest recorded slices of swing.

No one has tried to label him

Sincere Artist . . . they know how Thomas would laugh! But he has the touch and technique to compare with the finest that jazz has to offer. His playing has an immense "lift" which, after all, is one of the essentials of ride music. All this he produces with an air of indifference. He burlesques, he shows you just how easy this swing business is.

If it hadn't been for his clowning somebody would have taken him seriously. Heaven forbid! A bottle of gin on each side of the piano, so they say . . . my, my!

"SWING-FAN" ANALYSIS

Several other essays received merit publication, and these will be printed next week.

In addition, a series of articles is to commence next week in the "Melody Maker" on the "average swing-fan"—an interesting analysis drawn from readers' replies to the optional questions on the Referendum Form.

MANTOVANI'S BEST SHOW YET

THE management of the Dominion Theatre, W., have this week provided a beautiful setting and excellent lighting for what can without any qualification be described as the best show that Mantovani has yet given us.

Monty's new show is a musical treat from start to finish, the playing of his orchestra being noteworthy for the polish and precision displayed, while the string tone is, as usual, very beautiful.

In a programme of such uniform excellence, it is a hard task to signal out special items, but a tango and rumba medley is particularly good, with extremely neat bridges from tune to tune, while the high-spot is the sextette of violins, led by Monty, which is a fine bit of part-writing for strings.

Ronald Binge, the ace arranger of the outfit, is his usual brilliant self on accordion, and the vocal side is well represented, as Monty has with him three singers of widely contrasted styles.

A powerful operatic tenor sets off Ken Crossley's excellent vocalism, and the glamorous Stella Roberta is in top form in *Vieni, Vieni*.

Last, but not least, the rhythm section is playing with plenty of lift, and, in addition to his useful work on drums, Charlie Fletcher puts over some good stuff on marimba.

BRITAIN'S FIRST REAL JAM RECORD

Danny Polo and his Swing Stars.
"More Than Somewhat."
"Stratton Street Strut."
(****Decca F.6518.)

OUTSIDE Benny Carter's quintet session, this is the first jam record to be made in this country in accordance with every one of the principles I have always advocated for the production locally of

FRUITERERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Strawberry
- ★★★ Mulberry
- ★★ Blackberry
- ★ Raspberry

first-class jazz, viz., standard or original tunes, hundred per cent. improvisation, musicians with a common understanding of real swing, and a complete absence of self-consciousness or of commercial concessions of any kind. In view of this it is hardly surprising that this is my first four-star British record, in other words the first one that merits the support of anybody who has the interests of our own swing music at heart.

In my opinion this disc shows that Danny Polo, Tommy McQuater, and Eddie Macauley are the greatest swing artists on their respective instruments in this country, and that Dick Ball

on bass and the remarkable new drumming discovery, Dudley Barber, run them pretty close. The attack of the rhythm sec-

tion behind McQuater's chorus in *More Than Somewhat* is a phenomenon usually precluded in Britain both by the caution of recording engineers and the gutlessness of the musicians.

McQuater, running dangerously near the border line between the unrestrained and the downright raucous, is better in solos than in ensemble, taking a grand, smooth-flowing chorus in *More Than Somewhat* (which, by the way, is a first cousin-unremoved to *Crazy Rhythm*). Macauley is not at his best on this title, but offers more than ample reparation in *Stratton Street Strut*, one of those sixteen-bar-chorus affairs which inevitably send any self-respecting swing man.

Danny himself has lengthy solos towards the end of both titles, and the conviction with which he gradually gets into the groove with the help of such an unwontedly appropriate background will give you a piercing insight into the cerebrations of a man who has been cooped up for years on end playing *Cherry Blossom Moon* or *The Schmaltz Waltz* or whatever it is that commercial bands play.

Danny's resurrection ought to be a regular event instead of a mere passing experiment. That is the least we deserve.



Above: Maxine Sullivan, new vocal star.
Left: Erskine Hawkins—high note aspirer.

leaves time for just two choruses altogether. Maxine puts into this lively tune, of which I have never before heard a vocal rendering, everything that it deserves. Her voice has a soft, gentle quality which—oh, don't ask me. I'm blushing.

Does Wonders With the Tune

I suppose *Loch Lomond* will be the more popular side on account of its novelty. Certainly Maxine does wonders with the tune, but it is clearly more natural for her to tell Virginia she is coming than to announce that she'll be in Scotland before us; so, by geographical and musical logic, the other side is the one I shall still be playing in ninety-nine.

Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra.
"High, Wide And Handsome."
"Spooky Takes A Holiday."
(**Bruns. 02482.)

Why does it happen to so many of these coloured bands? Chick Webb is falling rapidly into the commercial slough; Andy Kirk's reputation seems to hinge on Pha Terrell; and already the promising Edgar Hayes' band seems to have taken the wrong turning. Of this new coupling, one title is spoiled by a vocal and reprise, not merely commercial but wavering in pitch; and the backing is one of the most hackneyed novelty numbers of the season, slightly rescued by the slow tempo and partial rearrangement, but brought down again by some pseudo-Hampton stuff.

Edgar's piano style is catching up on the march of time, and the work of tenor, baritone and clarinet still give me great pleasure, but we need some more material, such as *Edgar Steps Out* and *Stomping At The Renny*.

I hope Edgar Hayes sees the yellow light before it turns to red.

Erskine Hawkins and his Bama State Collegians.

"Uproar Shout" (***)
"Dear Old Southland" (**)
(Vocalion S.117.)

The band from New York's Harlem Uproar House has a dash of the Luncford blood. The original number on the first side shows good work; *Southland Tumbles*, as Jimmie so often does, a very high-note trumpet

work, played in this instance by leader Hawkins himself, so that no one has the power to stop him.

If *Uproar Shout* is a just measure of its ability, this band is worth

Maxine Sullivan and her Orchestra.
"Loch Lomond" (***).
"I'm Coming Virginia" (****).
(Vocalion S.116.)

Those of you who heard Maxine's relay or read the report of my colleague "Detector" will know that they can expect of her wax debut an event of great importance, namely, the arrival of a gorgeous seventeen-year-old girl who at once takes her place in Row 1 of the world's swing singers, alongside of Holiday and Fitzgerald, and who may even yet justify Marshall Stearns' somewhat daring assertion, "The greatest swing vocalist in the world."

Backed by Swing Men

The record is infinitely better than the broadcast, for in place of the clumsy big band she is accompanied here by the band from the Onyx Club, directed by Claude Thornhill, with Frank Newton, Pete Brown, Buster Bailey, Babe Rusin, O'Neil Spencer, and John Kirby.

An unparalleled example of how to give form to a small swing band performance by means of a very simple but ingeniously routinized arrangement, *I'm Coming Virginia*, a quiet masterpiece. The planning of intro, bridge, and coda

Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra.
"Peckin'."
"I Got Rhythm."
(***Bruns. 02481.)

Here is one of those records to which my addiction is nothing more than a personal whim, and which I frankly admit bears as much critical analysis as a talk on politics by an inmate of Colney Hatch. You see, this record is quite nuts—in fact, the *I Got Rhythm* side is almost as nuts as Armstrong's version—but I happen to like the method in its madness.

Peckin' opens with an almost unrecognisable Bing Crosby, in a mixture of baby-talk and pre-War coon talk. It grows on you. Then follows a weird arrangement of *Peckin'* which comes nearer to an integral effect of improvisation than any other big-band arrangement outside of Bob Crosby. In the last chorus it seems as if Jimmy plays wrong notes galore on the clarinet, but so much is going on that I wouldn't be too sure. In *I Got Rhythm* he uses the same phrases he was playing years ago on his first Boswell record, *When I Take My Sugar To Tea*. Other features are a glorious middle-part unison phrase in the first two choruses, a couple of transfers from another Gershwin piece (*Rhapsody In Blue*) and a chorus lifted from Redman's arrangement. Some of Jimmy's playing is actually very good.

The only possible excuse I can offer for liking this is that it has the all-important quality of vitality. (Yes, I know the answer: So has the howling of a baby.)

Hot Records
Reviewed
by
"ROPHONE"

REAL BRITISH SWING

Our contributor finds himself a brain-father and follows parental tradition by being tickled to death with his off-spring

by "SWING HIGH"



HOWARD JACOBS

Danny Polo and His Swing Stars.
"More Than Somewhat."
"Stratton Street Strut."
(Decca F. 6518.)

Extract from "Swing High," September, 1937:

With people like Polo and McQuater in his band, Ambrose should be persuaded to give us some real swing music now and then.

Extract from "Swing High," October, 1937:

We could do with far more than we usually get of Polo.

Personnel of Decca F. 6518:

Danny Polo, Tommy McQuater, Eddie Macauley, Eddie Freeman, Dick Ball, Dudley Barber.

AFTER this little preliminary, I hardly need explain that in a way I was the brain-father of the Danny Polo session, and that for once my press campaigning has had the right effect on a gramophone company. In view of the personal pride I can therefore take in the result, I shall not indulge in an orgy of "I-told-you-so," or

emphasise the fairly obvious fact that this is at last the rare bird I have been praying for month after month, an honest-to-goodness British swing record.

Instead, I shall go into mildly analytical details to bear out my contention that people like Polo start swinging where the so-called British swing combinations leave off. Without extra charge, I have

patiently copied down (Ex. 1) the first half of the last chorus played by Danny in *Stratton Street Strut* (alias *How Come You Do Me*), and if you follow me (and the solo) you may agree that an ounce of practice is worth a pound of theory.

Danny starts on the last bar of the previous chorus with a growl on the ever-popular flattened 3rd, which is practically a part of the swing scale. For the first bar he returns to this note, relieving the simplicity of the threefold repetition by emphasising each note heavily and then contrasting them with a very rhythmic phrase in the next bar, beginning with the D syncopated into the previous bar. It is this syncopation of the D that is the making of the whole phrase. A musician with less understanding of swing, improvising a similar idea, might instinctively have played it, as in Ex. 2.

Things like this cannot be learnt, for



Ex.1 *Growl*

Ex.2

Real British Swing

continued

the only guide in extemporisation is instinct, natural or acquired.

After this first outburst, Danny gives us, and himself, a pause for breath by leaving the first two beats of the next phrase blank; building up his effect from there he sustains a high G for four beats (not hitting it quite in the middle, by the way, but after all it is a high G), after which the first main four-bar phrase is so nearly over that Danny uses the remainder of it as a link-up, or bridge, to the next phrase.

The descent on to the A 7th chord is neatly worked in Bar 6, after which he ascends on D 7th almost in straight quavers, but does not come back into the G 7th until he has used another F sharp as a passing note. The last phrase is the only one in this excerpt that does not swing; the D, instead of being held over into the third beat, could more logically have gone down to B. After this Danny prepares for the four single-bar breaks which constitute the middle part of the chorus.



The long solo, which occupies the last minute or so of *Stratton Street Strut*, demonstrates as a whole how Danny builds up to a logical climax, getting warmed up gradually in his four consecutive choruses. The chalumeau chorus earlier in the record contains practically nothing which swings; it is during the final bout that he gets into the groove.

I am sorry this leaves me no space to deal with the grand work of Eddie Macauley, the hardly less brilliant stuff by McQuater, or the qualities of the rhythm section in *More Than Somewhat*. But, as I said, I can safely leave you to judge these for yourselves.

Danny, I'd been waiting five years for you to make a record like this.

Bert Firman's Quintuplets of Swing. "Swing As It Comes." "Swingitis."

(Parlophone R. 2436.)

Quite a pleasant little record, particularly Freddy Gardner's composition, *Swing As It Comes*. I can let you into a secret about this opus. It was originally known as *Rambling in C*, and was previously recorded by Freddy with Benny Carter on piano, Leslie Thompson on trumpet and Al Craig on drums—but only for fun; the result was never released. The main phrase is not original, but is well treated by Freddy on tenor and (not so well) on clarinet. Cyril

Hellier and George Elliott lend quite a convincing Venuti-Lang atmosphere to the combination. Cecil Norman's piano work, like his composition, *Swingitis*, is too full of flourishes for my liking, though his musicianship is indisputable.

Coleman Hawkins With the Ramblers.

"I Wanna Go Back to Harlem."

"Something Is Gonna Give Me Away."

(Decca F. 6502.)

Valaida.

"Tiger Rag."

"I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me."

(Parlophone F. 923.)

Nat Gonella and His Georgians.

"Peckin'."

"Big Apple."

(Parlophone F. 908.)

Joe Daniels and His Hot Shots.

"China Boy."

"Farewell Blues."

(Parlophone F. 924.)

I have some suggestions for Santa Claus. I want Santa Claus to give Hawkins a labour permit for Great Britain, so that he stops all this wandering about Europe making swell records like *Something Is Gonna Give Me Away*, and bringing water to our mouths.

I want Santa to fill the stockings of the members of Valaida's orchestra with tuning forks.

I want him to send Nat Gonella one of those special mouthpieces, advertised in an American contemporary with the caption "Bound to make you swing!"

And I want him to give Joe Daniels a nice big stocking full of candies (or Zildjians, whichever he prefers) for making a drum record in which the drumming is not so tasteless as to make me want to remove the disc immediately.

To elaborate on these points, the Hawkins' title which I like is played simply by Bean and the rhythm section,

with none of the heavy orchestral stuff heard on the reverse. The Valaida record is—and I say this after serious consideration—the worst record I can ever remember hearing in seven years of listening to records. From every point of view. So much so that Valaida, disgusted at her own failure at the end of *Tiger Rag*, can be faintly but distinctly heard to utter an epithet so terse and pungent that the record will probably have been withdrawn from circulation by the time this gets into print.

Nat Gonella has certainly become a very polished performer technically with the advancing years. My main complaint against his effusions is the coarseness of ensemble tone produced by the trumpet and tenor.

Daniels' record has some acceptable alto playing. The ensemble work consists mostly of well-known clichés, but here and there are little sops of good solo stuff to sustain the interest. Daniels' drumming, though a little more restrained than usual, is still Daniels' drumming, which is a Mike-ish but inevitable way of dismissing the subject.

Howard Jacobs.

"Solitude."

(Columbia FB. 1770.)

This is not quite the cloying sort of performance you might expect. Howard Jacobs is not just an instrumentalist; he is a fine musician. He knows how to give form and continuity to his performances, as can be heard from his angle on *Solitude*. Much of the space is taken up by an anonymous girl singer in the manner of Marjorie Stedeford.

Don't ignore legitimate saxophone playing; even Hodges and Carter pause to admire such exquisite work as Jacobs'.



The Dutch Ramblers—who accompany Hawkins



**Drawn by
B. ten Hove**

To some jazz fans he is just a name . . . to others he is the elusive, fleeting figure with whom the only links are a few early records by Clarence Williams, Louis Armstrong and the New Orleans Feetwarmers . . . to a fortunate and enlightened minority he is one of the pleasures that have been afforded for many years to those who have followed the vicissitudes of Noble Sissle's Orchestra . . . originally he was known as one of the first great swing clarinetists, but the musicians who admire him centre their praise on his handling of the soprano saxophone . . . he is the first swing man to become identified with that rarely-used but mellifluous horn . . . Louis Armstrong, in his book, tells of how Bechet teamed up with Ed Atkins, trombonist, and the two of them struck out from New Orleans to see the world . . . they got to London before the Dixieland Band in 1917 and took the town by storm . . . later on Bechet toured the Continent with Jim Europe's band . . . a character whose name has earned a place in the history of jazz . . . that's SIDNEY BECHET.

SIDNEY BECHET

SIGNATURE TUNE : by Leonard G. Feather

DANCE BAND FAVOURITES

A RECENT epidemic in the United States which has been expressing itself through the medium of the Press, has found its echo in this country. America has statistical mania, a disease characterised by an intense desire to probe public opinion on every conceivable subject, and to delineate that vague and elusive figure, 'the average man'.

Inevitably the idea has spread to this country and to the world of music, with the result that a campaign has been going on during the past two months to discover the tastes of the 'average fan' in jazz. Since the love of filling in coupons is said to be a national characteristic, it is not surprising that this musico-statistical drive has produced a wealth of enlightening information.

That radio plays a more important part than ever before in framing the opinions of the dance-music enthusiast is a fact that emerges promptly. No less than forty-three per cent of those who answered the queries stated that they listen to short-wave programmes by dance bands from abroad, so the proportion who rely on radio in general for their dance-music diet must be overwhelming.

The selections of favourite instrumentalists also brought some interesting revelations, the majority of the winners being established broadcasting favourites.

Tommy McQuater, of Ambrose's Orchestra, headed the list of British trumpet players, with Nat Gonella and Max Goldberg in the next places. On trombone the honours went to Lew Davis, of Jack Harris's Orchestra.

Roy Fox's Orchestra was twice represented in the list of favourites, by his clarinetist, Andy McDevitt, and his young girl vocalist, Mary Lee. Freddy Gardner, who headed his own unit in the 'Swing That Music' series, led the alto saxophonists, with Joe Crossman as runner-up. Several other members of the Ambrose organisation came out on top in their respective departments, as did this band itself in the list of favourite orchestras. These included Sam Browne as male vocalist, Albert Harris, guitarist, Tiny Winters on bass, Max Bacon on drums, and Jack Simpson on vibraphone. Another well-known broadcaster, Eric Siday, was elected to represent the violinists.

Space prevents any elaborate comments on the selections, so by way of a concluding helping of food for thought, here is the corresponding list of American stars, also selected by British voters: Johnny Hodges (of Ellington's Orchestra), alto saxophone; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Coleman Hawkins, tenor saxophone; Louis Armstrong, trumpet; Tommy Dorsey, trombone; Teddy Wilson, piano; the late Eddie Lang, guitar; Israel Crosby (of Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra), string bass; Gene Krupa and Lionel Hampton (both of Goodman's Orchestra), drums and vibraphone; Joe Venuti, violin; Bing Crosby, male vocalist; and Ella Fitzgerald (of Chick Webb's Orchestra), girl singer; finally, favourite orchestra, Ellington's.

These names make me wonder what would happen in a similar ballot this time next year. Nothing can be more fickle than public opinion.

M.M. Dec 42

Complete Guide to Record Releases

Three-shilling records

Armstrong, Louis, and His Hot Five. (N.Y., Chicago, 1928).—*Got No Blues*. (Comp., Lil Armstrong). Louis Armstrong, leader and trumpet; Kid Ory, trombone; Johnny Dodds, clarinet; Lil Hardin Armstrong, piano; Buddy St. Cyr, banjo; Babe Dodds, drums. *Sugar Foot Strut* (New York, January, 1929). Armstrong; Fred Robinson, trombone; Jimmy Strong, clarinet; Earl Hines, piano; Mancy Cara, banjo; Zutie Singleton, drums. Parlophone R. 2449.

Bailey, Mildred (vocal), and Her Orchestra. (All N. except Mildred Bailey). (N.Y., June, 1937).—*It's The Natural Thing To Do, The Moon Got In My Eyes*. Buck Clayton, trumpet; Hersal Evans, tenor; Edmund Hall, clarinet; Ed Sherman, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; Joe Jones, drums; Walter Paige, bass. Vocalion S.119.

Basie, Count, and His Orchestra. (N.Y., N.Y., July, 1937).—*Listen My Children And You Shall Hear* (Vocal: James Rushing). *Smarty* (No vocal). Bill Basie, leader and piano; Ed Lewis Bobby Moore, Wilbur "Buck" Clayton, trumpets; Dan Minor, Geo. Hunt, trombones; Earl Warren, Ronald Washington, altos; Lester Young, Hersal Evans, tenors; Freddy Green, guitar; Joe Jones, drums; Walter Paige, bass. (Arr.: "Skippy" Martin). Brunswick 02490.

Carroll, Eddie, and His Swing Music. (London, August 31, 1937).—*Monotony, Melody In Riff*. Eddie Carroll, leader and piano; Arthur Mouncey, trumpet; Alan Yates, Jay Farley, Freddy Gilmore, tenors; Archie Slavin, guitar; Stanley Marshall, drums; Duggie Lees, bass. Parlophone R.2447.

Carter, Benny, and His Orchestra. (Mixed). (The Hague, Holland, August, 1937).—*My Buddy*. Benny

December 1st

Carter, alto, trumpet and leader (N.); Coleman Hawkins (N.), tenor; Jimmy Williams, alto, clarinet; George Chisholm, trombone; Freddy Johnson (N.), piano; Ray Webb, guitar; Robert Montmarche (N.), drums; Len Harrison, bass. *Lazy Afternoon* (Comp. Carter). Carter, alto and trumpet; Sam Dasberg, Cliff Woodridge, Rolf Goldstein, trumpets; George Chisholm, Harry van Oven, trombones; Louis Stephenson (N.), alto; Jimmy Williams, alto, clarinet; Bertie King (N.), tenor; Freddy Johnson, piano; Ray Webb, guitar; Robert Montmarche (N.), drums; Len Harrison, bass. Vocalion S.118.

Dorsey, Tommy, and His Clambake Seven. (N.Y., July, 1937).—*After You, All You Want To Do Is Dance*. Tommy Dorsey, leader and trombone; Pee-Wee Erwin, trumpet; Johnny Mintz, clarinet; Bud Freeman, tenor; Howard Smith, piano; Carmen Mastren, guitar; Dave Tough, drums; Gene Traxler, bass. H.M.V. B.8670.

Froeba, Frank, and His Orchestra. (Mixed). (New York, January, 1937).—*There'll Be A Great Day In The Morning*. (Comp., Alex Hill). Frank Froeba, leader and piano; Jack Purvis, trumpet; Herbie Haymer, tenor; Slats Long, clarinet; Clayton Duer, guitar; Eddie Dougherty (N.), drums; Carroll Walrond (N.), bass. (For backing see Meroff). Parlophone R.2448.

Goodman, Benny, and His Orchestra. (Los Angeles, summer, 1937).—*I Can't Give You Anything But Love*. (Vocal: Martha Tilton). *Sugar Foot Stomp*. (No vocal). Benny Goodman, leader and clarinet; Harry James, Ziggy Elman, Gordon Griffin, trumpets; Murray McEachern, Red Ballard, trombones; Hymie Schertzer, George Koenig, altos; Vido Musso, Arthur Rollini, tenors; Jess Stacy, piano; Alan Reuss, guitar; Gene Krupa, drums; Harry Goodman, bass. H.M.V. B.8671.

Lunceford, Jimmy, and His Orchestra. (N.Y., N.Y., winter, 1936).—*Muddy Water*. Jimmie Lunceford, leader and alto; Eddie Tompkins, Sy Oliver, Paul Webster, trumpets; Elmer Crumbly, Russell Boles, trombones; Eddie Durham, trombone and guitar; Willie Smith, alto; Ed Brown, alto and tenor; Earl Carruthers, alto and baritone; Dan Grissom, alto; Joe Thomas, tenor; Edwin Wilcox, piano; Al Norris, guitar; James Crawford, drums; Moses Allen, bass. *The First Time I Saw You* (N.Y., July, 1937).—As above.

Meroff, Benny, and His Orchestra. Brunswick 02491. (N.Y., September, 1935).—*Yankee In Havana*. Including Jack Marshall, trombone. (For backing see Froeba.) Parlophone R.2448.

Pollack, Ben, and His Orchestra. (Mixed). (N.Y., 1934).—*Deep Jungle, Swing Out*. Shirley Clay (N.), trumpet; Benny Morton (N.), trombone; Mattie Matlock, clarinet; Eddie Miller, tenor; Dean Kincaid, alto; Gil Bowers, piano; Hilton Lamare, banjo; Ray Bauduc, drums; Bob Haggart, bass. Columbia DB.5036.

Quintet of The Hot Club of France. (Paris, June, 1937).—*Solitude, When Day Is Done*. Stéphane Grappelly, violin; Django Reinhardt, Pierre Fer-

ret, Marcel Bianchi, guitars; Louis Vola, bass. H.M.V. B.8669.

Shaw, Artie, and His New Music. (N.Y., September, 1937).—*Shoot The Likker To Me John Boy*. (Comp. Shaw). Vocal (?) by Leo Watson (N.). *It's A Long, Long Way To Tipperary* (no vocal). Artie Shaw, leader and clarinet; John Best, Malcolm Crain, Tom Di Carlo, trumpets; Harry Rodgers, George Arus, trombones; Les Robinson, Henry Freeman, altos; Tony Pastor, Jules Rubin, tenors; Les Burness, piano; Al Avola, guitar; Cliff Leeman, drums; Ben Ginsberg, bass. Vocalion S.120.

Tatum, Art. (N.). Piano solos. (N.Y., 1935).—*Liza, Beautiful Love*. Brunswick 02489.

Two-shilling records

Grappelly, Stéphane, and His Hot Four. (Paris, March, 1935). *Lilly Belle May June*. (Vocal: Jerry Mengo). Stéphane Grappelly, violin; Django Reinhardt, Joseph Reinhardt, Roger Chaput, guitars; Louis Vola, bass. *Smoke Rings*. (Paris, July, 1935). Stéphane Grappelly, violin; Django Reinhardt, Joseph Reinhardt, Pierre Ferret, guitars; Louis Vola, bass; Arther Briggs, Pierre Allier, Alphonse Cox, trumpets; D'Hellemmes, trombone. Decca F.6531.

Waller, Fats, and His Rhythm. (N.Y., N.Y., September, 1937).—*She's Tall, She's Tan, She's Terrific, I'm Always In The Mood For You*. Thomas Fats Waller, piano; Herman Autrey, trumpet; Eugene Sedric, tenor; Albert Casey, guitar; Wilmore Slick Jones, drums; Charlie Turner, bass. H.M.V. BD.5297.

Four-shilling records

Berigan, Bunny, and His Orchestra. (N.Y., summer, 1937).—*I Can't Get Started* (vocal: Bunny Berigan). *The Prisoner's Song*. Bunny Berigan, leader and trumpet; Stephen Lipkins, Irving Goodman, trumpets; Al George, Sonny Lee, trombones; Mike Doty, George Auld, Joe Dixon, Clyde Rounds, saxes; Joe Lippman, piano; Tom Morgan, guitar; George Wettling, drums; Hank Wayland, bass. H.M.V. C.2939.

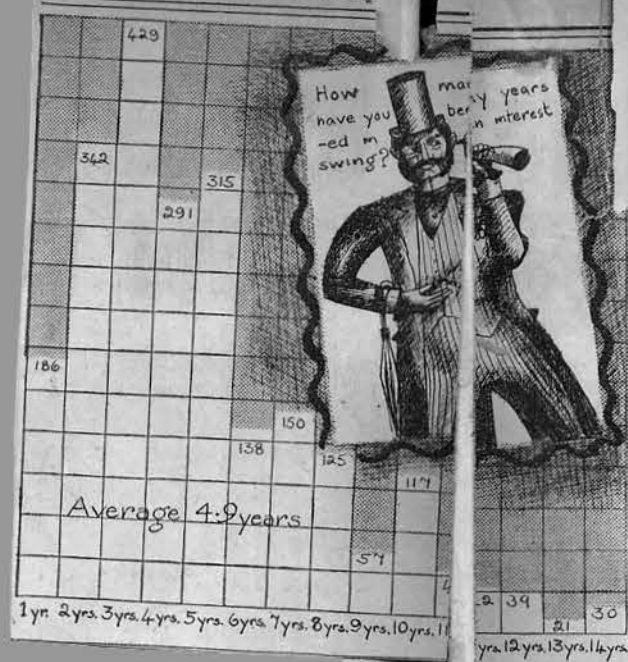
Dorsey, Tommy, and His Orchestra. (N.Y., summer, 1937).—*Stop, Look And Listen, Beale Street Blues* (arr. Dean Kincaid). Tom Dorsey, leader and trombone; Andy Ferretti, Pee-Wee Erwin, Joe Bauer, trumpets; E. W. (Red) Bone, Les Jenkins, trombones; Mike Doty, Bud Freeman, Johnny Mintz, Fred Stulce, saxes; Howard Smith, piano; Dave Tough, drums; Gene Traxler, bass. H.M.V. C.2938.

Goodman, Benny, and His Orchestra. (N.Y., summer, 1937).—*Sing, Sing, Sing*. Parts 1 and 2, introducing *Christopher Columbus*. Personnel same as three-shilling record. (See above.) H.M.V. C.2936.

Waller, Fats, and His Rhythm. (N.Y., summer, 1937).—*Honeysuckle Rose, Blue Turning Grey Over You*. Personnel same as two-shilling record. (See above.) H.M.V. C.2937.

The above four are available in an Album at £1, under the title "A Symposium of Swing."

December 4, 1935



How many years have you been interested in swing?



Page 3



Mike Edger John Hughes Disc-Jackson Hammond Panassa Course Others

The Funny Side of the Referendum

ALTHOUGH the number of burlesque coupons submitted in the MELODY MAKER Swing Referendum, was surprisingly small, unconsciously humorous entries provided plenty of light relief in the task of compiling statistics.

Here are some of the most peculiar selections:

- Dorsey Brothers for favourite trombone.
- Coleman Hawkins (7 times) for alto saxophone.
- Johnny Hodges (5 times) for tenor saxophone.
- Red Nichols and Paderewski for piano.
- Dick McDonough and Django Reinhardt for British guitarists.
- Yehudi Menuhin for violin.
- Albert Sandler, Jack Payne, Stephanie Grappely (sic), all British violinists.
- Mary Lou Williams for American girl vocalist.
- Harry Roy for British girl vocalist.
- Gracie Fields and Aunt Cathie of the Children's Hour also as British girl vocalists.

Django Reinhardt was spelt in almost every conceivable fashion. The best version that comes to mind is *Shanger Rhirnard*. After Django, the most misspelled individual was Gene Krupa, who appeared as everything between *Crooper* and *Kupra*.

Sid Phillips bobbed up fantastically in almost every instrumental department, from alto saxophone and clarinet (which he plays) to trombone, tenor saxophone and violin.

THE AVERAGE FAN

The First Of A Series Of Articles Analysing The Answers To The Optional Questions In The 'M.M.' Swing Referendum

This graph tells you the number of years that fans have been interested in swing music.

THE MELODY MAKER Referendum results have been announced; the revelations of readers' favourite musicians and bands have been heatedly disputed and discussed all over the country, and, at last, the excitement is beginning to die down.

But one aspect of the ballot has yet to be dealt with—namely, the many interesting inferences to be drawn from the answers submitted by readers to the eleven optional questions appended on the coupon.

In the first place, let it be stated that the response to these queries, which were clearly stated not to be an obligatory part of the coupon, was almost overwhelming. At least 95 per cent. of the entries included

answers to these questions, with the result that it has been possible to get a far broader survey than was expected of the characteristics and tastes of the average fan.

QUESTION 1.

How many years have you been interested in swing music?

EVIDENTLY the jazz fans are not the schoolchildren they are often accused of being. Although the three-year figure polled the largest number of votes, there is such a large propor-

no particular significance attaching to it, of course.

Other interesting statistics produced from the answers to this query reveal that 53.1 per cent. of the MELODY MAKER readers also read RHYTHM regularly; 16.6 per cent. read "Musical News"; 5.5 per cent. read "Metronome," and the remainder combined amount to 24.8 per cent. of the MELODY MAKER total. It is remarkable that "Swing Music," which has been defunct for over a year, was mentioned on quite a large number of coupons, with such parenthetic comments as "R.I.P." or "When it was published," etc.

Incidentally, it is astounding and

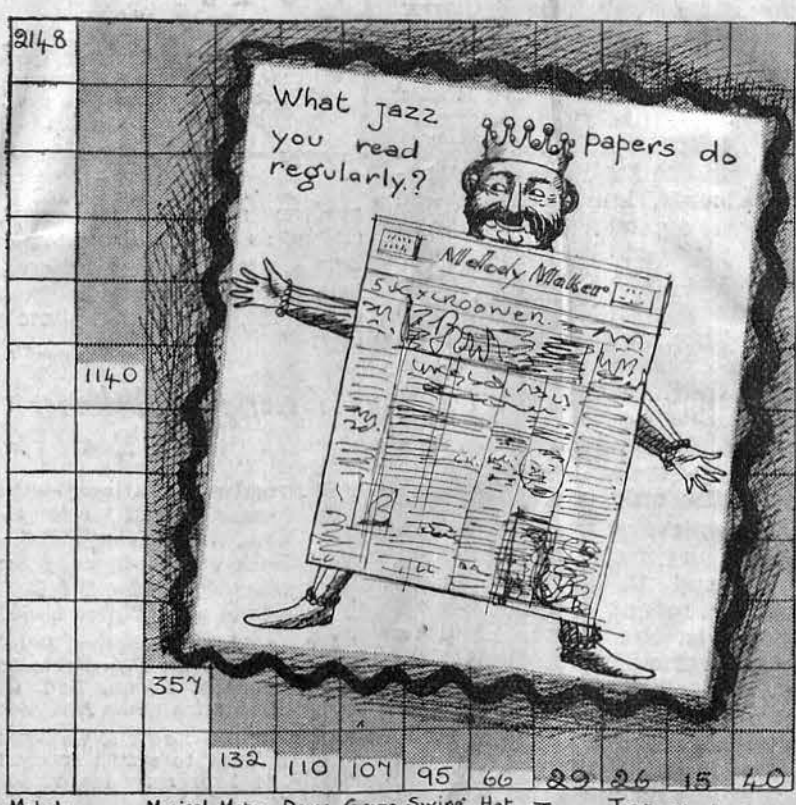
Here is a graph of the critics who guide fans in the choice of their records

of those whom they read regularly in the jazz papers. The lists of favourite musicians illustrate this point abundantly, for everybody who has been boosted unanimously by the critics has found a correspondingly high place in the voting.

Of the remaining 43 per cent., 20 per cent. (or just under one-half) selected "Rophone," while 9 per cent. cited "Mike."

In each of these two categories were incorporated a number of votes which were sent in coupling "Mike" and "Rophone" with their presumed identities, doubtless due to the fact that a sizeable number of MELODY MAKER readers see *Metronome* in which these alleged identities were recently given. Like Brer Rabbit, we're lying low and saying nuffin.

The most unexpected answer to this question came from a reader who chose—believe it or not—Ernest Newman!



The total of fans who read the "Melody Maker" is about equal to all those who read any other jazz paper, as this graph of the findings shows.

tion spread over the higher figures—including, you will notice, a miniature spurt at the comfortable round figure of ten years—that the average works out at 4.9 years.

We can thus assume that the "cross-section fan" started to think about swing music and to buy records at the beginning of 1933.

In the light of this average figure, it may appear strange that Question 11, regarding the changes in jazz since 1929, should have been answered by practically everyone who dealt with the optional questions at all, when fewer than 450 readers have even been interested in jazz in 1929. This point will be taken up when Question 11 is dealt with.

The hardest veterans encountered produced two or three entrants each at 14 years, 15, 16, 17 and 18. The longest of all were one of 21 years and another at 22.

almost heartbreaking that a large proportion of people read RHYTHM but cannot spell it. This word, which must be seen a thousand times a year by the average reader, came in countless times as "Rythm," and there were other variations ranging from "Rhythm" to "Rhytm," and even "The Rythme." Eyes have they but they see not. Nor is it a question of education, for the really erudite are often all at sea with it.

Amongst the American papers, *Down Beat*, the youthful and enterprising Chicago monthly, is offering a challenge to the fifty-year-old reputation of *Metronome*.

Other periodicals mentioned are *Orchestra World*, *Jazz*, *Accordion Times*, *Orkester Journalen*, *B.M.G.*, *Variety*, *Modern Guitarist*, *Cavalcade*, *Radio Times*, *Radio Pictorial*, and the *Jewish Chronicle*.

QUESTION 3.

Are you guided by any critics in buying your records? If so, by which critic?

MORE searching and accurate a method of putting this question would have been "Are you consciously guided?"; for of the 57 per cent. of readers who stubbornly maintained that they are never guided by critics, it is almost beyond doubt that a large proportion subconsciously absorb the views

QUESTION 2.

What Jazz papers do you read regularly?

SINCE the coupons only appeared in the MELODY MAKER it is hardly surprising that this paper, which in any case has the largest musical circulation in the world, produced a total which was almost exactly-equal to that of all the other papers combined. There is

HOT JAZZ

French Hot Club Quintet For London?

HOW THE 'SWING' RECORDS ARE MADE

NEWS from the Paris jazz front indicates that there is still plenty of good flesh-and-blood music in the French capital at the moment.

A new and smart cabaret known as Chiquito's, off the Champs Elysées, opened recently with an interesting coloured band under the direction of George Johnson, the alto player who was with Willie Lewis until a few months ago.

Johnson himself and Teddy Brock, the trumpet player, are the only Americans in this combination, but in spite of the mixed origin of the others, the band shows great promise. Johnson himself is really a fine alto player somewhat in the Carter tradition.

The other members of this combination are: Jean Pia (tenor); Jean Ferrier (piano); Freddy Bouvin (guitar); and Arturo Rachmann (drums).

Prior to this engagement George Johnson and his boys were at the Villa d'Este, where they have now been replaced by a group directed by Fletcher Allen, who will be remembered as tenor sax man and arranger with the orchestra used by Louis Armstrong in England.

Allen has now switched to alto and is playing very well, while the tenor work in his combination is being handled by Cass McCord. The latter was in the Original Blue Rhythm Band for some time, and was in a recent edition of "Blackbirds" in London.

BENNY CARTER

Benny Carter and his Orchestra continue to attract large and smart crowds to the dance room at the Boeuf Sur Le Toit, while, in the cocktail room at the same establishment, Garland Wilson and a white American pianist, Val Garman, have been earning considerable popularity with their duets.

The cabaret attractions in this room are Mabel Mercer and the ever-popular Una Mae Carlisle, who is considering another trip to London.

At the Cotton Club, in Montmartre, there is a band under the direction of the trumpet player, Arthur Briggs, consisting entirely of Cubans and non-U.S. Negroes.

The Quintet of the Hot Club is non-existent for the time being. Grappelly is in town doing this and that, while Django has just returned from Holland, where he worked for a while with Coleman Hawkins and Freddy Johnson and their orchestra.

CHARLES DELAUNAY, THEIR MANAGER, WILL PROBABLY BE IN LONDON NEXT WEEK, AND IT IS TO BE HOPED THAT NEGOTIATIONS WILL BE CONTINUED WITH REGARD TO THE POSSIBILITY OF THEIR APPEARING IN A SPECIAL CONCERT IN LONDON.

I have never heard a more beautiful tone or a more fluent style produced from a clarinet.

Artie is brilliant in *Tipperary* too, but the arrangement is not inspired, and I have hardly had the inclination to play this side. I seem to be turning into an old reactionary, what with preferring the backing to Maxine Sullivan's *Loch Lomond*, and now forsaking the "novelty" of *Tipperary* in swing time in favour of the more straightforward jazz on the back.

Mildred Bailey (Vocal) and Her Orchestra.

"The Moon Got In My Eyes."

"It's The Natural Thing To Do." (***)

(Vocalion S.119.)

Another of those invincible combinations: Mildred's lovable voice, Eddie Sauter's arrangements, Basie's solos and a couple of good pop tunes.

Art Tatum (Piano Solos) (1935).

"Liza."

"Beautiful Love."

(*Brunswick 02489.)

Tatum is one of those infuriating people who could be so magnificent (*vide* the second half of *Liza*, despite the ninety-bars-a-minute tempo) if it weren't for that awful insistence on flashiness and avoidance of steady tempo. Most of these two sides is sheer balderdash and bunkum.

do insist that this brass section can impart a kick, and the reed section a thrill, the like of which have seldom been heard in jazz.

Sceptics

Please Note

For the sceptics I may add in conclusion that *Muddy Water* was made at the same session last year as another high-grade piece of Luncefordians, *Harlem Shout*.

Benny Carter And His Orchestra.

"Lazy Afternoon."

Benny Carter and His Orchestra.

(Guest Star: Coleman Hawkins.)

"My Buddy."

(***) Vocalion S.118.)

With a composition somewhat in the style of *Scandal In A Flat*, and an arrangement equal in beauty to his famous *Foolish Things*, Benny has made a notable success of *Lazy Afternoon*. This is not only the style of work in which he excels, but also that in which he seems to be most successful in bringing out the best qualities of his orchestras over here.

The second chorus demonstrates Carter's admirable method of blending solo and ensemble work, his alto interplay with the band being extraordinarily well worked out.

The chord in the second bar of

... were still musically fresh and had not yet run out of ideas. I like the tune. A drummer named Jerry Mengo, who takes the vocal chorus, has a charming style which makes one overlook the fact that it is obviously pitched too high for him.

Something

From Norvo

Red Norvo and his Orchestra.

"Do You Ever Think Of Me?" (***)

"The Morning After" (**)

(Vocalion S.108.)

Andy Kirk and his Clouds of Joy.

"A Mellow Bit Of Rhythm" (***)

"Down Stream" (**)

(Brunswick 02483.)

First sides excellent, showing both bands' finest qualities. Backings too commercial, especially the Kirk.

Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra.

"Blue Lou" (**)

Carolina Cotton Pickers.

"Get Together" (**)

(Vocalion S.99.)

Both good in parts, with good solo work by Bunny on his side, but these two numbers are to me so closely identified with Chick Webb that I am prejudiced against second-hand versions.

"ROPHONE"

Reviewing Hot Records, tells of

Trombone Playing Without a Trombone!



Martha Tilton, charming vocalist with Benny Goodman. She was discovered by Benny in Hollywood, where she was singing with Jack Oakie

the chorus has still got me guessing and wishing I might see the original score. It is a great gift to be able to create such simple melodies and yet make them vitally interesting by virtue of such striking chord progressions.

My Buddy is a care-free contrast, in the "solid sender" class. Its five solos follow an ascending graph, the last two providing real excitement—a full chorus by Hawkins, with grand accompaniment from the rhythm section, and a splendid trumpet solo from Benny, thoughtful and infinitely expressive.

Count Basie and his Orchestra.

"Smarty."

"Listen My Children And You Shall Hear."

(***Brunswick 02490.)

Felicitations to a Mr. Skippy Martin for two excellent arrangements. All the best Basie qualities bob up in this coupling, and for variety you have the two tenor men in solos: Hersal Evans in the first title and Lester (Motor-Horn) Young on the reverse. Basie's pianistic simplicity is very effective this time. No vocal is mentioned on either label, but *Listen* has a chorus and reprise by James Rushing.

Artie Shaw And His New Music. "Shoot The Likker To Me John Boy."

"It's A Long Way To Tipperary." (***) Vocalion S.120.)

Do you know how to play trombone without a trombone? This is one of the lessons to be learnt from Leo Watson, whose all too short contribution, described on the label as "Vocal (?) by Leo Watson," is the high spot of *Shoot The Likker To Me John Boy*. Ever since his early scat choruses with the Spirits of Rhythm I have considered Watson one of the great vocalists in the purely instrumental style. (To complete the illusion, by the way, he even slides his arm up and down playing an imaginary trombone while he sings.) His two eight-bar contributions to this Artie Shaw title become indescribably fascinating. After Armstrong it might be permissible to call Leo Watson the greatest exponent of this particular type of perverted vocalism.

Attractive Arrangement

Leo is not the only highlight on this side. The composition is Artie's own, and his arrangement and solo work have many attractions. All three sections of the band seem to have improved considerably.

Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra.

"Muddy Water" (1936).

"The First Time I Saw You." (***) Brunswick 02491.)

People who only listen once to the better Lunceford records before reaching a decision will find them very smart and sophisticated and very dull. People who go to the trouble of a few more hearings will realise that sometimes there are enough merits to make it difficult at first to see the wood for the

SNOB'S GUIDE

- ★★★★ Duke
- ★★★ Baronet
- ★★ Esq.
- ★ Mr.

trees. The fact is that in two such superior examples as the above, Lunceford can make a commercial performance much more interesting than any other band outside Ellington's. There is such unbelievable confidence and unity in the playing, and so much originality in the arranging (witness the conclusions on both sides, and the background to the vocal on *The First Time I Saw You*) that it is all too easy to dismiss such work as clever, affected, and so forth.

I don't like the high-note trumpet playing any more than Mrs. Jones next door does, and I don't usually go for vocal trios, though I concede that the trio work in *Muddy Water* makes a bold effort to vanquish my prejudice: but I

Rushing Is An Exception

Rushing is a cut above the crooners who ruin so many coloured band records nowadays, and if you don't like him yet I might remind you that lots of people don't like Cointreau the first time they taste it. *Smarty* has no vocal and will cause you no trouble at all, so lend an ear.

Stéphane Grappelly and His Hot Four (1935).

"Smoke Rings" (**).

"Lily Belle May June" (***). (Decca F.6531.)

Last month Decca issued a record by Coleman Hawkins and a three-piece outfit which they credited on the label to the enigmatic Ramblers Band. Determined, would seem, to balance out this numerological inexactitude, here they are this month with a title which they attribute to a Hot Four in which there are actually no less than nine people present!

The Quintet is augmented in *Smoke Rings* by a four-piece brass section. The idea was a very good one, but unfortunately the brass is badly under-rehearsed and D'Hellemmes' trombone poorly balanced, which rather wastes a very pleasant effect.

Made at the second session the Quintet ever recorded, *Lily Belle May June* proves that at that time

Feather Forecast and News

SWING IN PARADISE

THE other night I went to Paradise. I am, however, still here to tell the tale, for this particular Paradise happens to be a large and luxurious underground bottle-party in Regent Street. Here it is that Arthur Rosebery has his interesting nine-piece combination, which remains as yet un-aired.

It is easy to name a dozen bands that have had National and Regional airings in the past few months without a tenth of the qualifications.

"Versatility" is a disarming adjective, conjuring up images of jacks-of-all-trades and masters-of-none. Yet Rosebery's men, who can produce a battery of six strings and displace them in a magic minute by a whole gallery of saxophones, really know their jobs on each instrument.

live in. Or something.

* * *
One of the reasons that makes swing fans homesick for Harlem (or, as a second best, Montmartre) is the absence in this capital of any swing spots such as used to flourish a few years ago, when the local boys would crowd on to the band stand during the small hours down at the "Bag o' Nails."

Since the "Bag" went out of fashion as a musician's haunt, it has been almost impossible to hear good jam

Arthur Rosebery goes in for a little gin-mill piano and the result seems to be pleasing . . . him, at any rate!



Jerry Rawson and Sidney Delmonte, aided by the bassist Alf Leah, take off such Venuti-Lang duets as *Wild Dog* on violin and guitar to good effect. The whole band also has some swing arrangements which it performs with conviction. This group should be allowed to progress from the limited recognition accorded to it on its broadcasts from Ireland before the London job started. National listeners must be given a chance of imagining themselves in Paradise!

* * *
A few weeks ago I pointed out the relationship between jazz and crime. An odd link can be found in a recently reported case of four Newark (New Jersey) youths who were accused of selling fake tickets for a dance given by Benny Goodman's Orchestra last June.

As it happens, the youths were acquitted, but the mere thought that anybody might go to such trouble to provide access to a swing band must surely be significant of the age we

music in London except under stifling conditions. However, there is one decently-ventilated club which shows signs of recreating the enthusiasm of yore.

At the "Palm Beach," in Frith Street, where musicians are always given a hearty welcome, the resident band includes Gerry Moore, an excellent tenor and clarinet man named Alfie Kahn, and a good drummer, one Hymie Schnyder.

Early one morning last week I found George Chisholm sitting in for the evening, playing some really wonderful stuff, and a number of musicians dropped in from the adjacent London Casino and other homes of the big bands. Can it be that the pristine enthusiasm is surging again in the hearts of British musicians? I certainly hope so.

* * *
Duke Ellington's record (with the piano duet) of *Twelfth Street Rag* has just been re-issued yet again on American Brunswick. The evil that men do lives after them. . . .

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

ANOTHER £10 PRIZE IN SWING ESSAY COMPE

Winner Overstepped The Wordage Limit So Writer Of Bud Freeman Essay Gets A Lucky Break

LAST week it was announced that the £10 prize for the best essay accompanying a coupon in the "Melody Maker" Referendum had been awarded to David Boyce for his appreciation of Fats Waller. This essay gave such an excellent pen-portrait of Waller's character and musical idiom that in our editorial enthusiasm, coupled with the heavy task involved in sifting out the best efforts from the hundreds of essays, a main point was overlooked, namely, that this essay exceeded the prescribed length of one hundred words, and, as a number of readers were quick to point out, did not qualify for the award.

THIS PRIZE, THEREFORE, MUST BE REGARDED AS A SPECIAL ONE APART FROM THE REGULAR COMPETITION, AND THE TEN POUNDS FOR THE BEST ESSAY COMPLYING WITH THE REGULATION REGARDING THE HUNDRED WORDS HAS BEEN ALLOTTED TO J. LITTLER, OF 14, WINDLEHURST AVENUE, ST. HELENS, LANCs, FOR HIS ESSAY ON BUD FREEMAN, TOMMY DORSEY'S TENOR SAX STAR.

This has been selected as the prize-winning effort because, even to those unfamiliar with Freeman's work, it offers a revealing definition of the artist's style and one which could not be applied to any other musician. Here it is:—

BUD FREEMAN.

Style determines the greatness of Bud Freeman, for few other artists express themselves in a manner at once indigenous and inimitable.

It has been said that he always plays "The Eel." But jazz is the language of many races, and "The Eel" is Freeman's accent, as inseparable from his playing as rolled R's from the speech of a Scot.

Highly individual in tone, he also shares with few the gift of treating a simple phrase to every conceivable twist and turn without ever once repeating himself.

His solos are improvisation of the highest order—fast, unflinching, and limitless in invention.

Several other essays proved of sufficient interest to merit publication. Incidentally, there was a response of about one essay to every six coupons submitted in the Referendum—a fairly good proportion.

Not unnaturally there was a profusion of entries dealing with Benny Goodman, one of the best of which came from J. Markey, of 70, Warwick Square, S.W.1, who said:—

BENNY GOODMAN.

To me, Goodman and his clarinet are a symbolical signpost, not to the daylight end of this "Tunnel of Jazz," but rather of an upward trend to a new musical form.

Goodman has grown with Jazz, absorbing it in ideal surroundings, to which he lent himself with natural artistry, ability and enthusiasm.

From the "Rah! Rah!" days to the present chromium productions of the Hollywood Moguls, he has smoothly expressed the Jazz idiom in the language of whatever era he has been passing through, leaving sparkling, if minute, gems of inspiration for the delectation of the initiated.

The subject of two very good efforts was an artist who provided ideal material for a sincere epitaph, namely

Bix. These two efforts come from Mark Donald, 45, Rosslyn Avenue, Maghull, Lanes, and Robert H. Fairley respectively.

BIX.

I think Bix was the greatest musician ever to play jazz, for his solo work has a personality and grace that the years do not dim. This playing of Bix's has a quality almost unknown in jazz, i.e., repose.

The beauty of the main body of jazz works is a beauty of movement; this is their limitation for the greatest artistic beauty is that of repose or rest.

Bix's every solo possessed this something different.

Some prefer to call his style lazy, but I would rather say that his musical conceptions had the supreme quality of repose.

BIX.

It is a minor miracle that out of the crude beginnings of jazz should have arisen a creative artist of the stature of Bix Beiderbecke.

This incomparable musician brought us subtlety and taste in a degree almost ultimate when judged by jazz standards. An intense, compelling player, his inspired improvisations were a moving emotional experience, could thrill or sadden as his moods dictated. His tone was brilliant, vibrant, the very epitome of hot music, his power of expression unique.

A true musician in the finest sense, Bix's personal legacy is inestimable; his existence alone would have justified the jazz idiom.

Another favourite who is gone but far from forgotten is the late Frank Teschmaker, whose Chicagoan ideals were expressed by A. H. Moore, 37, Pemberley Avenue, Bedford, as follows:—

FRANK TESCHMAKER.

To-day, too few people appreciate the true worth of the Chicago style, and the pureness of jazz it represents.

In the old Chicago style records there is a freeness and exhilaration in the improvisations that thrill to this day, and the greatest of all the players was Frank Teschmaker. Not only his expression of his feelings, but also his tone, show what a great musician he was.

He is to clarinetists what Eddie Lang is to guitarists—a great player who died early and whom it would seem impossible to surpass and who will probably never be equalled.

A third clarinetist to inspire one of the better essays was Barney Bigard, Mark White, of Oakfield, Lemsford, St. Albans, Herts, wrote:—

he plays. But they are intended, those cracked 'uns. They are meant to depict the cracking of the cosy home fire. Long live Empson!

And, last of all, an effort which epitomises the outlook of quite a number of those who filled in the referendum coupons, and is the work of fifteen-year-old Miss L. Toomey, 19, St. Loy's Road, N.17.

My reason for thinking Harry Roy the best English musician is because I reckon he is the only guy who has enough hot stuff (which you call swing) to enable him to come on the level with such famous personalities as Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and Jimmy Lunceford, etc.—(Signed) From a future hotcha-ma-cha-cha, I hope.

in another mood, another artist pleases you as well

I have chosen Barney Bigard as my favourite clarinetist because his playing can fit more moods than that of anyone else.

He can be the Bigard of the emotionally riotous Saturday Night Function, or the Bigard playing with a "green and yellow melancholy," as in Saddest Tale. While in between these lie an infinite variety of moods, for each of which he has something soothing.

Finally, two essays which do not strictly qualify for inclusion, but should be of interest. Firstly one on Billy Plonkit's mythical trumpet player, sent in unsigned from 64, Eglinton Crescent, Troon, Ayrshire:—

RED ROGERS.

This incomparable, handsome, gentlemanly and intelligent artist has always been a favourite of mine.

The Plonkit Orchestra has never sounded better (i.e., louder) than since Rogers joined. Only the presence of Rogers in this country made me answer Yes to Question 10 of the Referendum. Red's trumpet is the home of swing.

Have the swing music intelligentsia heard his record of Home, Sugary, Home? They will criticise it, I suppose, for the number of cracked notes

swing = the last word . . .
OR IS IT?

by
LEONARD FEATHER

The Swing controversy in *Accordion Times*, dates back to our April issue. In this article Leonard Feather has the last word—at any rate, until someone else has something to say!

THE dispute on swing and the accordion has now been running for over six months. Since no agreement or truce is ever likely to be reached, perhaps I may be permitted to have the last word on the subject. (Whether it is the last word of all I leave to the editor, but, anyway, it will be my last!)

Fully accepted?

Mr. George Beresford Campbell, in his interesting reply last month to my claim that the accordion has no place in serious music, raises several points which are new to me and regarding which I bow to his superior knowledge. The facts that chamber music for the accordion already exists, that symphony orchestras have adopted it (though no specific instance is given), I shall not attempt to dispute. What I do dispute, however, is that these departures of the accordion have been accepted unreservedly by lovers of standard music.

It might equally well be said that accordions have found their way into swing music, as might be proved by the examples cited in Bud Harrison's original article dealing with records by Ellington, Moten, and Cornell; for the matter of that, it is no less possible for a small man with a jaw's harp to creep in through the back door at the Queen's Hall and take part in a concert, or for Donald Duck to interrupt a performance of *William Tell* by playing his piece on a tin whistle. But does that prove that these instruments belong in such surroundings?

More Evidence wanted

You may point out that there is a difference in Mr. Campbell's citation, in as much as these accordions were accepted officially by the conductors concerned and did not need to creep in through the back entrance; but there is no more evidence that the instrument was generally accepted as congruous with its surroundings than there is that swing music fans and critics in general have accepted any example to date of an accordionist playing in a swing band.

There are two other letters from last month's issue which call for a few brief comments. Mr. Len Baylis somewhat enigmatically observes: "Surely, if Venuti can swing, why not Magnante? Or hasn't Mr. Feather heard of him?" This is equivalent to objecting: "I can get America on my radio; why can't I see the television programmes on it too?"—or, to put it legally, it is a *non sequitur*.

We should hear about it

And there is Mr. Tommy O'Hara, who takes the more boastful attitude with a suggestion that I come up to the Midlands some time, where he will "endeavour to enlighten me with some swing stuff that I have never heard in this country, anyway."

Surely, if there were any better example than those I have cited of recorded accordion swing, they would not only have come to light internationally by now, but would have met with an acclaim equal to that accorded to Norvo when his first record



Leonard Feather

proved the previously unexploited theory that it was possible to swing on the xylophone. The first swing accordionist would be subjected to the same glare of limelight that was focussed on a Mr. Casper Reardon when, in a record called *Junk Man*, he played what was considered an outstanding swing solo on the harp.

Open to Conviction

Norvo and Reardon have proved the unprovable; it remains for some unknown to shatter my narrow-minded beliefs about the accordion. I am and always have been perfectly open-minded on the subject; I have no earthly reason for prejudice of any sort against the accordion either as an instrument or as a medium for conveying swing music; I am simply basing my arguments on facts, figures, and experience.

In other words, if the golden day dawns when a Norvo of the accordion makes his debut, I shall be only too glad to join in the general enthusiasm. But I feel comfortably immune in making this statement, because I know, as far as anyone can possibly know, that it just can't be done!

LEONARD G. FEATHER

"MELODY MAKER" 11th DEC 1937

Carroll's Sensational Line-up

THE all-star combination which has been assembled by Eddie Carroll for his forthcoming participation in the Firth Shephard film-and-variety show has now reached the rehearsal stage.

If the band turns out to be as strong as its personnel would appear to indicate, this may well become one of the two or three most interesting units in the country.

The brass section is little short of sensational, with Jimmy Macaffer on first trumpet and Arthur Mouncey on second; Bruce Campbell on trumpet and trombone; Freddy Welsh and George Chisholm (trombones).

Campbell and Chisholm are considered by many to be as good as the best trombone swing men in the country to-day, so that there are prospects of some terrific solo work.

The reeds comprise Les Gilbert and Jay Farley on altos, with Benny Greenwood and Benny Winestone on tenors.

Eddie himself at the piano heads a rhythm section which includes Archie Slavin on guitar, Doug Lees on bass and Sid Hieger on drums.

"MELODY MAKER" 11th DEC 1937

SWING IS NOT MUSIC—IT'S JUST A GAG

says W. C. (Father of the Blues) Handy

of the blues or jazz age products, and that it is seldom written. In this last is the one outstanding factor in this type of music. Granting that Mr. Handy has written everlasting melodies in *St. Louis Blues*, *Memphis Blues*, and others, it must also be granted that anyone who can read notes can play any blues song or any other theme from notes. But unless that player is a musician deep down in his heart he cannot make this acceptable to listeners. It is the improvising—that which comes naturally to a true musician—that turns swing into real music. It sells, too, for a check on any recording concern will prove that the outstanding swing band efforts are leading any other type. Yet, with a number of really great swing organisations doing the same themes, no two recordings will be the same.

the Ellington recording contingents, had another session recently, when *Watchin' I Can't Give You Anything But Love*, and other titles were made, with solos this time by Lawrence Brown and Otto Hardwick. One of these days—but don't take this as a positive forecast—you may have a surprise from Cootie in the shape of a trombone solo. Among the most prized possessions in my record collection, and the only copy in existence, is a private recording on which

Cootie plays some blues on the trombone with piano accompaniment by Duke. The flesh was a little weak, but the spirit was notably willing. For all I know Cootie may by now have developed this hobby into a really useful double.

Feather Forecast and News

Right Men! Wrong Instruments

There are scores of novel records that could be made by having the stars playing all the wrong instruments, and on novelty value alone they should be big sellers. For instance, Jack Teagarden could make an excellent trumpet record, as could Buck, the pianist, and also, of course, Tommy Dorsey. Benny Goodman could join in on alto. Over here we could have Hawkins on clarinet, Benny Carter on flute, and many other oddities.

I think I've got something there.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Guy Lombardo (centre) rehearses his Royal Canadians for Paramount's "Many Happy Returns."

WHEN the composer of the world's most famous swing vehicle starts attacking swing, that's news. W. C. (*St. Louis Blues*) Handy, that grand old gentleman who sits in a Broadway office watching the royalties roll in from the innumerable swing recordings of his compositions, has seen fit to issue a statement that "swing is not music; it is just a commercial term, strictly a gag."

He adds that you cannot carry swing away with you, you cannot hum it, and that it does not sell worth a dime. Tommy Dorsey has entered into a spirited argument with Handy. A letter which recently appeared in a New York daily signed by Tommy says:—

"Mr. Handy's viewpoint is not up to date in the matter of swing. After all, no one denies that swing is a variation

that you cannot follow the tune in it, and that Tommy's own record of *Beale St. Blues* (the 12 inch) is an example. "See if you can recognise it!" he says. "If Dorsey's recording is *Beale St. Blues* then I am Mussolini."

"Most of the music in this album doesn't say anything—but it says it very elegantly. That's technique." "Mike" in *Rhythm*.

Yes. "Mike's" technique! I hear that Cootie Williams' Rug Cutters, one of the most successful of

Threatening Letters Greet Kick-off of Mezirow's Black-And-White Band

Dick C. Lander (deputising for Al Brackman, who is ill in hospital) Rushes The Dance Lowdown From New York

TIZOL'S SERIOUS ILLNESS IS NEW BLOW FOR DUKE

THE opening of Mezz Mezirow's mixed-colour Orchestra at New York's Harlem Uproar House, though it did not prove more than mildly successful in itself, has caused one or two sensational repercussions.

Mezz and his "Disciples of Swing," as the fourteen-piece combination is called, were the subject of big headlines in certain sections of the press, and a statement attributed to the manager of the Uproar House ran as follows: "I see no reason why this band should be cause for complaint. Music, as one of the arts, is really art, no matter what colour or creed plays it."

SWASTIKA!

Mezirow is quoted as commenting: "No swing band worthy of its name as a swing band can give a true performance if the colour of a player's skin qualifies his eligibility in the band."

When the band opened, Willie "The Lion" Smith became a last-minute replacement as featured pianist. Mezz who is said to have given up his business connections in order to concentrate on this musical pioneering venture, has rehearsed tirelessly, though it is feared that the reluctance of bookers to handle this proposition may make the future uncertain for him.

More sensational is the news that vandals entered the Harlem Uproar House at 5 a.m. the other day and painted a large swastika on the dance floor. According to the management, threatening letters have been sent to the effect that Mezz's orchestra must be taken out, or else . . .

The police were called in and are reported to be working on the case, so that whether this is a genuine incident or just a publicity gag, it has certainly helped to draw attention to the venture.

CROSBY SPLITS

Bing Crosby is in the news following his split with the Rockwell-O'Keefe management. Suits and counter-suits may land in court shortly. Bob Crosby's Orchestra has also undergone a managerial change, having switched from Rockwell-O'Keefe to MCA.

Chick Webb, who was due to open at the Savoy Ballroom on December 5, has re-signed with Decca for three years. The contract calls for forty-eight sides per year by the full band and eight sides by Ella Fitzgerald and the Savoy Eight.

Louis Prima came back to New York to open a new swing spot which will take the name of the old Famous Door. With him are a genuine bunch of New Orleans boys: Frank Finero (piano); Frank Federico (guitar);

Godfrey Hirsch (drums); Louis Masinter (bass); and Myer Weinberg (clarinet). Art Tatum will play during Prima's intermissions.

MAXINE ON STAGE

Maxine Sullivan, Claude Thornhill's sensational swing discovery from Pittsburgh, made her stage debut at Loew's State Theatre with a CBS Swing Session presentation, featuring the band heard on these Saturday night broadcasts, and, as specialities, Leslie Lieber (the "hot tin whistle" expert) and Joe Sodja, solo guitarist.

The personnel of the band which joined Louis Armstrong for his opening at the New Vogue Club in California is as follows:—Red Allen, Louis Bacon, Charles Madison, Wilbur de Paris, George Washington, Jay C. Higginbotham; Charlie Holmes, Shelton Hempill, Pete Clark, Bingy Madison, Albert Nicholas; Luis Russell, Lee Blair, Paul Barbarin, Pop Foster. Fletcher Henderson follows Louis into the Vogue on December 11.

A new combination which has been causing some excitement around town and is currently alternating with Mezz at the Harlem Uproar House is the Emilio Caceres Trio, consisting of the leader on violin, his brother Ernie

Caceres on clarinet and baritone saxophone, and Johnny Gomez on guitar.

Benny Goodman and a host of musicians have been enthusing about this combination, and the inevitable comparisons with Venuti and Lang have arisen. The combination has signed up with Victor, and its first releases are *Humoresque In Swing Time*; *I Got Rhythm*; *Who's Sorry Now*, and *What's The Use?*

TIZOL ILL

Duke Ellington's sick list had yet another new name added last week when Juan Tizol was stricken with pneumonia in Boston. The famous valve-trombone king and composer of *Caravan* is seriously ill and is expected to remain in hospital for at least four weeks.

By the way, rumours are flying around that Elliott "Jonah" Jones, former partner of Stuff Smith, may fill the trumpet vacancy in the Ellington aggregation shortly.

The Bert Shefter Rhythm Octet, which attracted great interest with its Victor recordings, such as *S.O.S.* and *Locomotive*, and seemed likely to provide serious competition for Irving Mills' protégé, Raymond Scott, has just been signed up on a big contract—by Irving Mills!

Shefter's activities for Mills are

scheduled to include recordings, theatrical and radio appearances, and there is a great likelihood that this original composer and pianist may crash the film studios within the next few months.

WATCH HIM!

Another newcomer in the Scott-Shefter school of rhythmic music is Joe Usifer, who was given a big record date by Mills for the Brunswick label, for which Usifer decided to assemble a mixed ensemble of symphony and dance men. The titles scheduled for rhythmic transcription are Grieg's *Hall of the Mountain Kings* and Jerome Kern's *Jockey On The Carousel*.

The personnel was as follows:—Harry Bluestone, Jack Zaide, Joe Raymond, Benny Feldman, Waldo Mayo, Vladimir Zelinsky, Carl Stern (violins); Dave Sturkin (viola); Alfie Evans (alto bass clar., flute clar.); Arnold Brillhart (alto, flute, piccolo, clar.); Milton Cassel (baritone, oboe, flute, bassoon); Jimmy Lytell (clar., tenor, bass clar.); Chas. Margulis, Mannie Klein, Henry Levine (trumpets); Wilbur Schwichtenberg (trombone); Paul Prince (bass); Claude Thornhill (piano); Dick McDonough (guitar); and Chauncy Morehouse (drums).

Stuff Smith, his Union difficulties finally straightened out, is expected back at the Onyx Club any time now either with John Kirby's present band there or with a new combination of his own. . . . Hoagy Carmichael has a new number called *April In My Heart* which he believes may prove to be a second *Stardust*. He wrote it as part of his Paramount picture assignment for the Mae West production *Every Day's A Holiday*. . . .

DORSEY FOR FILMS

Other news from the film front includes a story that Tommy Dorsey will be on the Pacific coast by the new year planning to appear in a forthcoming picture.

Raymond Scott, who has completed four films for Twentieth-Century-Fox and has been assigned to a fifth ("Sally, Irene and Mary"), has thought up some screwy new titles for his latest compositions, including *New Year's Eve In A Haunted House*; *The Parrot and The Penguin*; *Celebration on The Planet Mars*; *Dead End Blues*; and *War Dance For Wooden Indians*.

Teddy Wilson has recorded some piano solos for the first time in nearly two years: *Don't Blame Me* and *Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea*. . . . Martha Tilbn has copied Maxine Sullivan's stunt of swinging to *Loch Lomond*, and has waxed it with Benny Goodman's Orchestra, which reminds in that Larry Clinton and his recording orchestra on Victor have rashed through with a swing version of *The Campbells Are Coming*. Whataxt!

12-INCH

and



Our

Fats Waller and His Rhythm.
 "She's Tall, She's Tan, She's Terrific."
 "I'm Always In The Mood For You."
 (**H.M.V. B.D.5297.)
 "Honeysuckle Rose."
 "Blue Turning Grey Over You."
 (**H.M.V. 12in. C.2937.)

★ HUDSON DE LANGE IN FULL BLAST

Left shows Eddie de Lange with guitarist Busse Etri, whose gutbox strumming of "Bugle Call Rag" is a highspot of the band's show. Centre is Gus Bovana, getting off in the new Hudson opus "Going Hay-wire." And right are Eddie de Lange and Betty Allen, band's tonsil torturer, in "Pop Corn Man."

HERE we have an excellent illustration of a knotty point. The second record is one of an album of four twelve-inchers issued by H.M.V. as "A Symposium of Swing," priced at a pound or separately at four shillings a record.

Three-Minute Time Limit

The point that the Waller issues raise is the old one about the three-minute time limit. There are some zealots who have been hammering at the recording companies' doors for ears demanding more twelve-inch swing records as a release from the limitations of the three-minute form. After the

H.M.V. concession to this argument it would be ungrateful to conclude from the results that twelve inches are two inches too many.

It is only in the case of sheer improvisation such as Waller's that four minutes become a little uneasy on the ear. Such a long performance demands some form and arrangement, which is precisely what this record lacks. On the other hand, as I shall point out in a moment, the twelve-inch plan for big orchestras can be turned to great advantage.

In spite of the vocals and the commercial tunes I find Fats' ten-inch record by far the more satisfying of the above two.

I'm Always In The Mood For You is a one-man show built on a pleasant slow number featuring Fats' art of twisting clichés slightly and subtly so that the result might almost be something brand new. His vocal is also better than usual here.

On the twelve-incher everything seems unhappily wrong. *Honeysuckle Rose* has become hackneyed lately and seems not even to inspire the composer. The trumpet becomes raucous and careless towards the end. There is a vibraphone solo that doesn't mean a thing, and a lot of tiresome stuff by drums. There are also, let me make it quite clear, other bits which are really very excellent.

On *Blue Turning Grey* nobody seemed to be sure of the chords in the middle part of the chorus. Since Fats wrote the number himself the point should not have been difficult to clear up.

Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra.
 "Stop, Look and Listen."
 "Beale Street Blues."
 (**H.M.V. 12-in. C.2938.)

Tommy Dorsey and His Clambake Seven.
 "After You" (***).
 "All You Want to Do Is Dance" (**).
 (H.M.V. B.8670.)

Now here you can see what I was talking about in re twelve-inch technique. Tom Dorsey's *Stop, Look and Listen*, which lasts over five minutes, pole-vaults way over anything else the band has recorded and is altogether one of the big-band thrills of the year.

The routine is simple and ingenious. After a first ensemble chorus, Tommy, Pee-Wee Erwin and Johnny Mince have one chorus each, then Bud Freeman takes two choruses in which the solo work is partly prepared and has the

serve individual plaudits. Erwin, Mince, Freeman, Smith, Tren, Tough, Traxler — I he to you for a swell job. Edythe Wright can take a bow much more acceptable performance than usual. In the last chorus a treat that has been denied to the old days of *It's Right Here You!* Tommy Dorsey playing some mean, lowdown trumpet with the old style and the same old mutes.

The coupling comes down to merical earth with a bit of a though even here, apart from the

chorus, the some grant within the tions of the

This is N Dorsey Mor must be records like Benny Go and His Ore

"S u g a r Stomp."

"I Can't Give You Anything Love."

(**H.M.V. B.8671.)

"Sing, Sing, Sing" (Parts I & II)
 (**H.M.V. 12-in. C.2936.)

Benny Goodman could have taken a lesson from Tommy Dorsey on wax. do with twelve inches of wax. double-sided version of Louis F mediocre tune is the most formless disjointed production you can imagine. The ensemble parts consist mostly of licks that taste as though somebody had a previous lick at them. E inches are taken up by solo trumpet beatings which are no doubt excellent.

GALLIC GUIDE

- ★★★★ A lorable
- ★★★ A gréable
- ★★ Assez bien
- ★ Abominable

December 11, 1937

SWING why not?

asks
"OPHONE"
Hot Records Critic



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ingly clever, but seem to me to impart about as much kick as a stockinged foot. The whole thing rambles on and on and on. The best I can say of it is that it is probably very exciting when heard in the flesh, and that the record will get by in a slightly convivial gathering when the glow has set in.

There are some fine solos if you can wait for them, but under these conditions it seems almost a shame that the soloists bothered to give of their best.

Immediately after playing *Sing, Sing, Sing*, I put on *Sugarfoot Stomp*, breathed a sigh of relief and murmured: "That's more like it!" Here you have the real qualities of the Goodman Band: glorious tone, attack and first-class arrangement, Benny playing infinitely better, and Krupa in his proper place as furnisher of a solid background. Harry James repeats the famous original King Oliver chorus with variations.

Nice Musical Upbringing

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I Can't Give You also possesses the advantages of a nice musical upbringing. Stacy does what he can with his eight brief bars. I imagine the muffled trumpet solo is by Ziggy Elman and the open by Harry James. Everything, especially the arrangement, is completely successful, apart from the one blemish in the form of a chorus by the latest of Benny's endless procession of new vocalists, Martha Tilton. Her effort here is just plain nondescript, which is all the more of a crime in connection with a tune we associate with so many memorable vocals.

assistance of the ensemble for some extraordinary stop effects. The suspense of this trick and the sheer uncanny brilliance of Freeman's phrasing and expression make this as exciting as anything he has recorded for years.

The preceding three solos are also grand. It is too bad I can't expand this review in proportion to the increased radius of the records this week, but I should be overdoing the cramping if I did not include a mention of credit for Dave Tough's drumming throughout both sides.

Not To Be Dismissed

Beale Street Blues is arranged by Dean Kincaid of Bob Crosby's Band, which must account for the slightly Crosbian ensemble character displayed by the Dorsey bunch here. Once again the finer points are much too fine to be dismissed so summarily. A point that seems to have been overlooked so far is that the trombone solo is not by Dorsey, but by Les Jenkins, a very able guy with a tone that might be called slightly rougher or darker than Tommy's.

After You is another grand and much more unexpected treat. This must be the best tune for a long time that has escaped from Tin Pan Alley. It hardly seems possible that it was written by Coslow and Siegel as just another commercial film number for *Double or Nothing*. A nicer sixteen-bar blues opus you could hardly wish to hear. The blend of the ensemble is something to rave about, and all the eight oarsmen in the Clambake boat de-

"RADIO TIMES" 10th DEC. 1937

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

A YOUNG pianist whose band, organised only three years ago, is among the biggest money-making orchestras in the United States, will be heard in a relay from New York this evening (Friday). This is Eddy Duchin, an enthusiastic and cheerful personality who may already be known to British audiences through his appearances in such films as *Coronado* and, quite recently, *The Hit Parade*.

Duchin's piano style, though straightforward and not remotely connected with swing, is nevertheless individual enough to have made him as distinct a personality in America as, say, Carroll Gibbons or Charlie Kunz over here. Before forming his own orchestra, he was the pianist in Leo Reisman's combination. This engagement, which set him off in the musical profession, was the result of a casual audition to which he attached very little importance, as at that time he was engaged in the study of pharmacy at a college in Massachusetts. It was his intention to go into his father's business in his home town of Boston.

Already, at twenty-eight, Eddy Duchin has substantial reasons for being thankful that his career followed an unexpected course.

* * * *

The signature is Roy Fox; the signature tune, it need hardly be added, is 'Whispering'. On Monday at 6.15 (Regional) the ex-Californian band-leader and his British orchestra will bring this familiar signature on the air again in a programme from Birmingham, where they will be playing in *Variety* next week.

Written by John and Malvin Schoenberger and first published in 1920, 'Whispering' is one of the dozen or so melodies of the early post-war

era that have scarcely diminished in popularity since the first day of publication.

One of the first to introduce the song in this country was Art Hickman, with his pioneer orchestra of 1921. Paul Whiteman, in an *Æolian* Hall concert in 1924, used 'Whispering' as the basis for one of the earliest 'legitimate *versus* jazz' experiments, playing the melody first in true form and then announcing 'Same in jazz treatment'.

Roy Fox adopted this as his signature tune in the days when he was an instrumentalist as well as a conductor and was styled 'the whispering cornettist'. Fox first entered the musical world as recording supervisor in a Hollywood studio, and later played trumpet with Abe Lyman. After running his own band for a while in America, he came to England in 1929 and shortly afterwards formed the famous all-star British group which proved to be an important step in the paths to fame of Lew Stone, Nat Gonella, Al Bowlly, Tiny Waters, Bill Harty, and Ernesto Ritzel (of the December 1 'Fiesta').

* * * *

One of John Watt's earliest 'discoveries' will be heard in the 'Stop Dancing' programme from Northern Ireland in the National programme on Thursday. This is Dorothy Morrow, whose broadcasting debut took place in Texas as long ago as 1924, in her sixteenth year. John Watt, when he was *Variety* producer in Belfast, gave her her first contract in Great Britain. Dorothy Morrow's voice is one-third of the Three in Harmony, the other members being Elva Orr and Yolande Mageean. With James Moody, who has devised next week's programme, these three have made themselves popular with Irish listeners for some time.

"MELODY MAKER"
DEC. 11th 1937

B.B.C. TO RELAY BENNY CARTER FROM PARIS

THE next programme in the B.B.C.'s series of Continental relays, the latest of which was offered by Willie Lewis, will cause considerable interest among swing fans who have been waiting to hear some more of Benny Carter.

After protracted negotiations with the B.B.C., Benny has at last reached an arrangement which will be mutually satisfactory, and which provides for the augmentation of his present seven-piece outfit at the *Bœuf Sur Le Toit*.

TWELVE PIECER

Drawing his talent from one or two other white and coloured combinations in Paris, Benny will assemble a group not less than twelve strong, and is already lining up the personnel for rehearsals.

This will be his first British airing since June, when he was relayed with his resident band from Holland with Coleman Hawkins as guest star.

The programme is set for Monday, December 20, on *Regional*, from 9.30 to 10.0 p.m.

THE AVERAGE FAN

Continuing The Series Of Articles Analysing The Answers To The Optional Questions In The 'M.M.' Swing Referendum

Question 4: Do you play any instruments? If so, which?

THE four questions which are being dealt with this week were all included in the coupon with one central object, viz., to discover the degree of musical erudition of the average fan.

The ambush behind which the victims of swing fans' contumely have always protected themselves has been the allegation that these self-appointed arbiters are musically illiterate. Let us examine the results of the enquiry in regard to this imputation.

Of the 2,500-odd people who answered question 4, 795 replied that they do not play any instrument. This figure amounts to 30.8 per cent. of the total.

PIANO FIRST

It must not be immediately assumed that this rather large figure indicates a lack in musical education, for there must be those who have an instinctive ear for music, and may even have tried their hands at composition without being sufficiently good on one particular instrument to be able to reply in all honesty that they can play it.

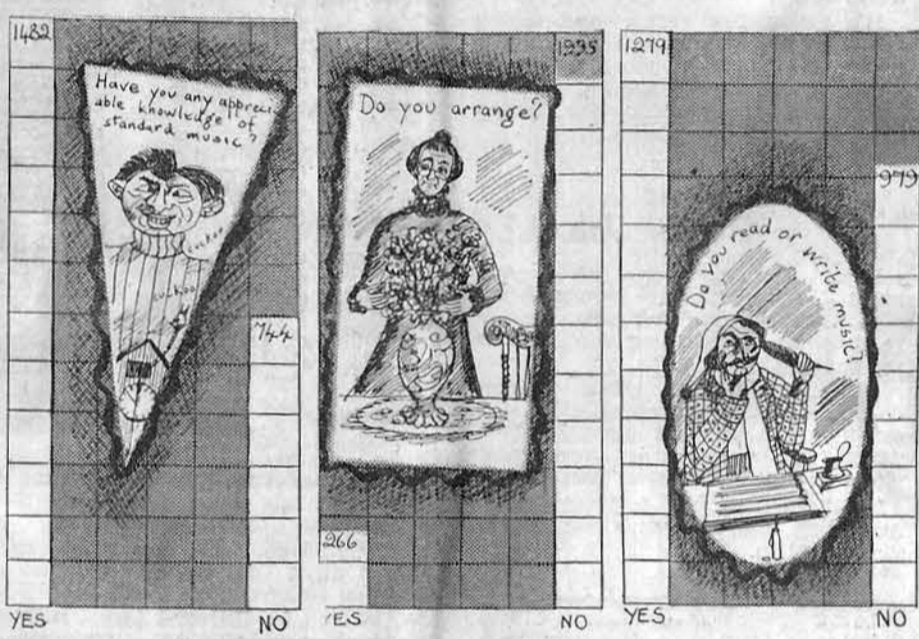
Naturally the instrument that ranked first in the list was the piano, which is played by fifteen per cent. of the entrants—just half as many as those who play no instrument. The fact that the piano is one of the most expensive instruments to purchase was, of course, counterbalanced by its use as a solo instrument and as a piece of furniture, even in the humblest home.

CAREER GUIDE

One of the most striking coincidences in the Referendum brought the drummers and the trumpet players together in a dead heat for second place, each claiming seven per cent. of the total. The percussionists probably include a large proportion of those who, without genuine musical training at all, go to "have a bash" because it is nearest they can get to playing an instrument. Similarly, the clarinetists, who come next on the list, may include a number who whose real métier is the ukulele.

Respective purchasers of an instrument will find in the answers to this question an invaluable guide to the value of an instrumental career, for a balance of power obviously needs considerable adjustment in relation to instrumentation of the average orchestra.

In any instance, judging by their posi-



tion on the lists, there are fewer trombonists, tenor saxophonists and bassists, and far more guitarists and drummers than are actually needed. If attention is paid to these points, the Referendum may in this instance have contributed in a small way to the relief of unemployment amongst musicians.

Question 5: Do you read or write music?

THE replies in this instance confounded all expectations. 1,279 people, or fifty-seven per cent., answered yes, while 979, or forty-three per cent., gave "no" to this enquiry into musical literacy. It was certainly not expected that the majority would be able to answer this question in the affirmative, for, in addition to being a trade paper, the MELODY MAKER obviously caters up to a point for the interests of dilettantes, or just plain fans.

It is amusing to note that Question 4 reveals that 69.2 per cent. play some musical instrument, so that they exceed by 12.2 per cent. the number of those who are able to read or write music—which means that 12.2 per cent. play entirely by ear.

Possibly the affirmative answers to Question 5 might have been even more voluminous if there had not been an occasional misunderstanding of the meaning of the question. Several readers answered "read but not write," as if they took the word "write" to mean compose.

Naturally, this was not what was meant, as the question was merely intended to refer to musical handwriting or copying.

Question 6: Do you arrange?

JUST under 2,000 people, constituting eighty-eight per cent. of the voting, have yet to study the department of orchestration. Here again we construe a great opportunity for those who have not yet attempted to cash in

on this incompletely exploited source of income.

There must be more arrangers needed than the mere twelve per cent. who responded here, and if the forty-five per cent. who read but don't arrange took the trouble of buying, for instance, Lew Stone's volume on Harmony and Orchestration for the Modern Dance Band, they would cer-

tainly find ample reward for the expenditure of a little time and money.

Question 7: Have you any appreciable knowledge of standard music?

ONCE again we feel that readers were not honest either with themselves or with us in their replies. In the fear of being branded as musical lowbrows and of being held up to possible scorn by the "M.M." staff—perhaps even imagining that their personal revelations might be made public through these pages—it is certain that a number of readers who in all fairness should have answered no to this question failed to do so.

As a result 66.6 per cent., or almost exactly two-thirds, claimed an "appreciable" knowledge of classical music.

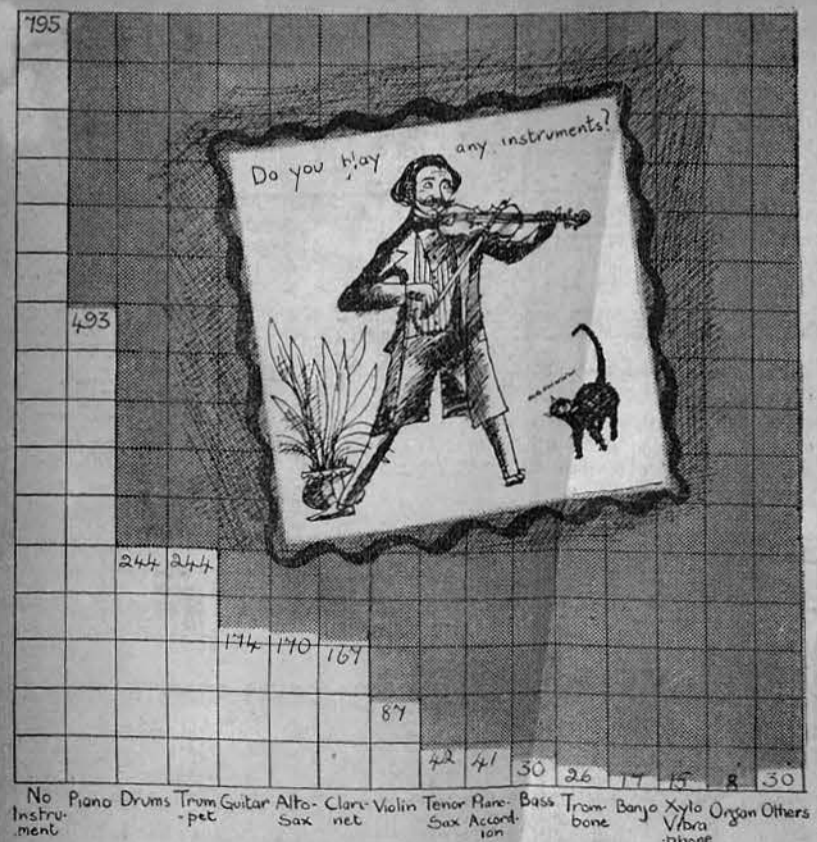
MISCONCEPTION

Can it be that our readers were not quite clear about the meaning of the term "standard music"? This was intended to convey what is sometimes referred to as good music or non-jazz music, but, since the term classical music did not cover the entire field, it was felt better to use standard as the most appropriate adjective.

Some readers may have been confused by the association of this term with *St. Louis Blues* and *Tiger Rag*, which have come to be known in certain circles as "standard numbers."

This misconception might certainly account to a large extent for the discrepancy between the proportions evidenced by the answers and what we believe to be the real proportion of those who actually possess a real understanding of the branches of music reviewed by Spike Hughes in *Rhythm* every month.

TO BE CONTINUED



This graph shows the instruments played by readers of the "M.M." who filled up the Swing Referendum form.

"MELODY MAKER"

11th DEC 1937



FREDDY TAYLOR IS HERE

FREDDY TAYLOR, who for the past four years has been one of the best known figures in Parisian musical circles, arrived in London last week for what may turn out to be a lengthy visit.

Freddy is a versatile artist. He began his career as a dancer with Duke Ellington at the Cotton Club in New York, then came to Europe with Lucky Millinder, later establishing his own orchestra, which was known as "Freddy Taylor and his Swing Men From Harlem."

It was with this combination that Freddy recorded *Blue Drag* and *Viner's Dream*, which has for some years been a favourite of record collectors. Issued here by Levy's on their Oriole label at the somewhat prohibitive price of 3s. 6d., it nevertheless reached the remarkable sales total of nearly two thousand. Freddy is also well known to those who heard his vocals on several records of the Quintette Du Hot Club De France, issued by H.M.V., including *Shine*, *Nagasaki*, and *After You've Gone*.

A short while ago he opened his own club in Montmartre, the Harlem, leading a coloured orchestra. For some time this was known as the principal Parisian rendezvous of swing stars, but Freddy has now dissociated himself from the venture, dissolved the band, and come to London looking for fresh fields to conquer.

Whether as dancer, vocalist, trumpet player or band-leader, it is quite possible that Freddy may find some interesting outlet for his abilities in this country.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED DECEMBER 17, 1937

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

FOR the first time since June 22, when his resident band was relayed from a ballroom in Scheveningen, Holland, Benny Carter will be devising a programme for British listeners on Monday (Regional, 9.30).

It is now nearly two years since the famous coloured virtuoso was first mentioned in this column on the occasion of his arrival in London to act as staff arranger for the BBC Dance Orchestra. During the six months that have elapsed since the Dutch relay, he has once again pitched his camp in Paris, where he was a member of Willie Lewis's Orchestra before Henry Hall brought him across the Channel.

Carter has his own combination in Paris now, but will be augmenting it for the broadcast by recruiting members of one or two other noted white and coloured Parisian bands. He himself will be heard in solos on alto saxophone, clarinet, and trumpet; the orchestrations and most of the compositions will also be his.

Another signature will be added on Wednesday to the BBC's dance-music autograph book. Billy Cotton and his Orchestra will sign on in the National programme at 7 p.m. with their familiar 'Somebody stole my gal.'

Like so many of these signature tunes, this is a proven veteran, dating from an unidentified year which almost certainly preceded the war, and published over here in 1918. Its author was an American, Leo Wood, who was a prominent member of the New York Song Writers' Association. It is said that the number first earned attention at a gathering of composers at the old College Inn in New York, where a 'Song Writers' Night' used to be held every week at which new possible hits were tried over by their composers and frank criticism was invited.

One date in the year on which broadcasting bands are assured of an exceptionally large audience is Christmas Eve, when theatres and cinemas are often neglected in favour of an evening at home preparing the festive decorations.

With this point in mind, Joe Loss has been making arrangements for a particularly attractive programme next Friday night. Leslie Vinall, his staff arranger, is preparing a Christmas medley of the old appropriate tunes, while one or two successes of the past will be presented as separate items featuring Betty Dale and Monte Rey. The latter is once again appearing, Joe Loss tells me, as a regular broadcaster with his orchestra.

I am able to reveal the identities of the newly formed vocal trio which on Bram Martin's last broadcast combined with his regular vocalist, Gene Crowley, to produce what their leader proudly claims to be one of the strongest batteries of voices on the air in this country. They are Betty Dale, her sister Teresa, and Harry Phillips. The last-named has been credited, under the initials H. A. P., with the part-authorship of such popular song hits as 'I need you' and 'Here am I', both written in conjunction with another well-known vocalist, Suzanne Botterell.

For his Christmas Day broadcast Ambrose will augment his band to include seven strings, oboe, six brass, four saxes, five rhythm, five vocalists, and the BBC Male Voice Chorus. The programme will include a musical sketch by Ray Sonin, 'A Visit to a Cinema.'

SECOND STABS SELDOM SUCCEED

Bing Crosby and Connie Boswell.
 "Basin Street Blues" (***)
 "Bob White" (**)
 (Brunswick 02492.)
 Bunny Berigan And His Orchestra.
 "I Can't Get Started."
 "The Prisoner's Song."
 (***)H.M.V. 12-in. C.2939.)

THE first sides of both the Bing-Boswell and the Bunny Berigan prove the old axiom that Second Stabs Seldom Succeed. The "new" *Basin Street Blues*, though an agreeable record and actually better than the backing, could never be really outstanding to anyone who has heard Teagarden's original version (Parlo. R1356) on which this is based; and Berigan's twelve-inch rendering of his signature tune, though good in itself, is not a patch on the original ten-incher (Vocalion S.26), waxed with a band half the size.

Short and Sweet Disc Now Is Meaningless

The reason why second stabs seldom succeed must be that if the first one goes right through the heart, the only effect the second can have is to buckle the knife. Duke's original *Creole Rhapsody* was a hundred-per-cent. production, and in attempting to better the best with his expanded twelve-inch version he robbed his own

says
 "PARLOPHONE"
 in his review of the
 Current Hot Records

work of some of its form and beauty. Armstrong's second attempts with *Tiger Rag* and *St. Louis Blues*. Venuti's big-band re-creation of *Cheese and Crackers*—I could fill this column with a list of such examples of resuscitations that didn't come off.

Bunny's original *I Can't Get Started* was short and sweet; a grand tune which he sang and played with feeling. The new version, instead of filling up the extra two inches usefully, takes three-quarters of a minute over a rambling and meaningless introduction. Although some of his trumpet solo is lifted off the original version, the most important part is missing, i.e., the beautiful cascade of notes with which he descended from very high

to very low register in the last eight bars. The spontaneity and freshness of the original creation have gone.

As for Connie singing Teagarden's *Basin Street*, with interjections from Bing, it can only be said that this two-star merger would have been more successful with more original material. Bing does hardly any solo singing on this title, and when he tries a duet with Connie their voices do not blend as well as you might expect. The performance is, however, musical and entertaining, and John Scott Trotter's accompaniment includes good trombone and trumpet soloists.

A Simile From The Breadbasket

Bob White includes some of the nursery-diction done by Bing on Jimmy Dorsey's *Peckin'*. There is also some whistling by Bing, and the world's oldest coda. Good comedy, but still far short of its musical possibilities.

The Prisoner's Song is like a slice of nice buttered bread with a very thick crust. The rough tone of two of the soloists, Berigan on trumpet and Joe Dixon on clarinet, are apt to spoil your appreciation of the excellence of their improvisations. Nothing, however, can blind your enjoyment of the swell stuff by George Auld on tenor and Sonny Lee on trombone. The arrangement, adequate if not inspired, lapses into one chorus in the minor which destroys the mood of the piece, but, on the whole, this is a good production, and the possibilities of the Berigan band are still exciting.

Ben Pollack and His Orchestra. (1934).
 "Deep Jungle."
 "Swing Out."
 (*Columbia DB5036.)

That these two sides are quite undistinguished is all the more eyebrow-raising when you consider that the combination is a pick-up one including a couple of Don Redman's boys. It is the compositions, both by Mannone, that seem to bring the whole thing down.

Frank Froeba and His Swing Band (1936).
 "There'll Be A Great Day In The Morning" (**)



★ Listen for her on the hot records —Edythe Wright, charming songstress with Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.★

no bass drum, nothing but piano, banjo and clickety-click from tap box—yet somehow you don't notice it, which might be useful in a debate on whether swing comes from the melody or the rhythm section. The trombone and clarinet are as weak in solos as they are swell in team work with Louis in the ensembles. Hines' piano, Louis' trumpet and singing are at their peak in this record.

Got No Blues is much more dated still, with some laughable banjo work, but still plenty of great stuff by Louis.

Valaida.
 "Nagasaki."
 "Some Of These Days."
 (**Parlophone F952.)

Although these were as carelessly and hurriedly made as the other recent Valaida releases, a little order seems to have arisen out of the confusion in these two instances, and there are passable solos by Reg Dare, tenor, and the Mills Brothers' guitarist, Norman Brown, in addition to Valaida herself in fair fettle.

Eddie Carroll and His Swing Music.
 "Melody In Riff" (**).
 "Monotony" (*).
 (Parlophone R2447.)

Dormant and without inspiration. To use a title like *Monotony* was asking for trouble.

Benny Meroff and His Orchestra.
 "Yankee In Havana" (*).
 (Parlophone R2448.)

Froeba himself is the worst sufferer from the bad recording and balance of this title from his very first session, made a couple of years ago. The ensembles are mediocre, but tenor man Herbie Heymer and trumpet Jack Purvis offer adequate solos.

Will Hudson's piece of Havana ham would be a pain in any orchestra's throat.

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra (1928).
 "Sugar Foot Strut" (***)
 "Got No Blues" (**).
 (Parlophone R2449.)

When you take the chair away from underneath a fellow and he still manages to stay in a sitting posture, it is time for wondering. Underneath the melody line of *Sugar Foot Strut* all the lower frequencies are missing—no bass,

COMPLETE GUIDE TO SWING RECORD RELEASES for Mid-December 1937

Three-shilling records

Basie, Count, and His Orchestra: *Honeysuckle Rose* (N.Y., January, 1937). Count Basie (leader and piano); Joe Keyes, Carl Smith, Buck Clayton (trumpets); George Hunt, Dan Minor (trombones); Jack Washington, Cauchu Roberts (altos); Herschel Evans, Lester Young (tenors); Claude Williams (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Paige (bass). *Good Morning Blues* (N.Y., August, 1937). Basie; Ed Lewis, Charles Shavers, Wilbur "Buck" Clayton (trumpets); Benny Morton, Quinton Jackson (trombones); Earl Warren, Jack Washington (altos); Lester Young, Herschel Evans (tenors); Freddy Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Paige (bass). Brunswick 02496.

Casa Loma Orchestra: (Los Angeles, July 1937). *Casa Loma Stomp; Swing Low, Sweet Chariot*, Glen Gray (leader and alto); Frank Zullo, Grady Watts, Walter Smith (trumpets); Billy Rautch, Pee Wee Hunt, Fritz Hummel (trombones); Art Ralston, Clarence Hutchenrider, Danny D'Andrea (altos); Pat Davis, Kenneth Sargent (tenors); Joe Hall (piano); Jack Blanchette (guitar); Tony Briglia (drums); Stanley Dennis (bass). Brunswick 02497.

Norvo, Red, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., July, 1937). *Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie* (Arr. Edgar Sampson); *Russian Lullaby*. For Personnel see

Release Guide, November 20, 1937. Vocalion S.121.

Edgar Hayes Quintet: *So Rare* (N.Y., August, 1937). *I Know Now* (N.Y., October, 1937). Edgar Hayes (piano); Rudy Powell (clarinet); Kenneth Clarke (drums and vibraphone); Andy Jackson (guitar); Elmer James (bass); Bill Darnell (vocal). Brunswick 02495.

Sullivan, Maxine (Vocal), And Her Orchestra: *Annie Laurie; Blue Skies*. For Personnel see Release Guide, November 20, 1937. Vocalion S.122.

Two-shilling records

Armstrong, Louis, And His Orchestra: (N.Y., July, 1937). *Public Melody Number One* (from Armstrong's Film, "Artists and Models"); *Yours And Mine*. Louis Armstrong (trumpet and vocal); Louis Bacon, Henry Allen, jun. (trumpets); George Matthews, George Washington, Jay C. Higginbotham (trombones); Pete Clarke, Charles Holmes (altos); Albert Nicholas, Bing Madison (tenors); Luis Russell (piano); Lee Blair (guitar); Paul Barbarin (drums); Pop Foster (bass). Decca F.6540.

Polo, Danny, And His Swing Stars: (London, October, 1937). *Blue Murder* (Comp. Danny Polo); *That's A Plenty*. Danny Polo (leader and clarinet); Tommy McQuater (trumpet); Sidney Raymond (alto); Eddie Macauley (piano); Eddie Freedman (guitar); Dudley Barber (drums); Dick Ball (bass). Decca F.6550.

Feather Forecast and News

Strange Birds These Semi-Cats!

ALTHOUGH I appreciate the good that the Rhythm Clubs have done for the propagation of swing music in this country, I never cease to wonder at the manifestations of odd outlook and mentality displayed by certain members of these organisations. Two recent incidents have helped to strengthen my conviction that there is no stranger bird than your semi-initiated student of *le hot*.

One of the incidents was related to me by Mary Lytton, who paid a visit the other day to a leading London club. "Why," somebody said, "I didn't expect you to come to hear new records. I always thought you were only interested in the old stuff." To which Miss Lytton replied that she is far from averse to many of the newer jazz products, and

records, which at that time had not been issued. Inviting guesses at the identities of the players, I received suggestions of Buster Bailey as the clarinettist, Frank Newton for the trumpet, and Teddy Wilson for the piano before somebody finally spotted the correct answer. One young man, who avidly follows the Panassié-Mezzrow school of thought and despises all home-made jazz *ipso facto*, was most intrigued and delighted with Danny's *Blue Murder* and confessed himself baffled as to the personnel.

* * *

Retrospective forecast: Last week in this column I ventured to propose that Tommy Dorsey might

From ring to rhythm! Larry Gains is yet another boxer to turn to music. Here seen with his band at Southend-on-Sea.



that she relishes particularly the work of Artie Shaw.

"Oh, him," replied her interlocutor, "I don't think much of him."

"What's the matter with him?" asked Mary. "Is he too musical?"

"That's it," answered the young man perfectly seriously. "He's too musical."

If you don't believe this story, I can tell you of other folks who have even proclaimed that so-and-so's technique is too good and that so-and-so was much better before he could read music.

The other incident is more amusing. At another London club I played over, without announcing its identity, one of the Danny Polo

make another trumpet record after all these years. By the sheerest coincidence, elsewhere in the same issue, it was revealed that the new release of *After You* by the Clambake Seven concludes with a trumpet chorus by Tommy. It's a small world. . . .

* * *

Feather Forecast crashes through:— On November 20 in this department it was suggested that Ken Johnson's all-British coloured orchestra should be worth the attention of the BBC.

News has just come to hand that Ken and his gang will be presented in a special studio broadcast (in the "connoisseurs' dance music" category) to be produced by John Burnaby and aired in the Regional programme on January 11 from 9.0 to 9.30.

THE 'M.M.' DISCOVERS THE AVERAGE FAN

Concluding The Series Of Articles Analysing The Answers To The Optional Questions In The 'M.M.' Swing Referendum

Question 8: Roughly, how many records do you buy a month?

HERE is a question to which the answers provided some of the most revealing information yielded by the entire Referendum. The number of those who do not buy any records can't be ascertained exactly owing to the number of people who left the answer blank, though in this case, if they had also offered no answer to the question regarding which critic's opinion they followed, it was assumed that they did not buy any records.

In cases where Question 3 had been answered, but Question 8 left blank, it was assumed the reader could not be bothered to compute any average figure, and the blank space, therefore, was not counted as signifying that he did not buy any records.

It may seem curious that it was the even numbers which scored throughout in this question and that those who buy two, four, six, eight or ten records a month outnumber those who buy one, three, five, seven or nine respectively.

3 RECORDS MONTHLY

This phenomenon can be simply explained by a glance at the leading columns, which show that the fours and the twos drew almost exactly level, and were obviously contributed by those who thought: "Well, I suppose I buy one a week," or "Well, about one a fortnight, I imagine."

The average figure works out at 3.4 records per month.

When it is considered that the average monthly issues comprise anything from twenty to thirty records coming approximately into the swing music category, it can be seen how far the supply exceeds the demand at present.

Noteworthy, too, were the added comments of many readers, such as, "Formerly six or seven; now only two or three"; or even, "Used to buy about eight, now none at all." On the other hand, the number of people who pointed out that they buy more records now than previously was precisely nil.

Two very simple inferences can be drawn from these figures (a) That although the increase in swing record prices from 1s. 6d. to 2s. 6d. a few years ago did not seem to affect the sales, the point has now been reached where the increase to 3s. is proving too much of a strain on the average buyer's pocket. Were there a reduction to, say, the

2s. level, it would be of enormous value in increasing sales;

(b) The recent expenditure of tens of thousands of pounds on co-operative publicity by the gramophone recording companies has not stirred the emotions of the swing disc-buying public. On the contrary, sales have either decreased or are at a standstill.

The highest figure recorded was from one young plutocrat, who computed his figure at thirty records a month, while eleven people estimated their purchases at twenty or over, but it must be remembered that many of these purchases are probably made in the second-hand stores where the collectors rummage for threepenny bargains.

At the average figure of 3.4 records a month, and an average price of 2s. 6d., it can be gauged that the average fan spends about 8s. 6d. a month for his gramophonic entertainment.

Question 9: Do you listen to American bands on short-wave radio?

THIS question also brought surprising figures, inasmuch as it was never suspected that 43 per cent. of MELODY MAKER readers were sufficiently enthusiastic to own radio sets capable of transatlantic reception, and (presumably) to sit up until all hours of the

night, in order to pull in programmes by the more interesting bands.

The radio factor is so important in keeping this country in touch with the current trends in America that the average fan may be far more up to date than one imagines.

Indeed, this point may even affect the answers to the previous question, since most of the American records are at least three or four months old at the time of their issue in this country, and may seem like ancient history to some fans who have heard the same numbers played on the air by the same bands months before, and have since become tired of them.

Question 10: Do you consider British musicians comparable with Americans in the field of swing music?

NO less than 527 people, constituting 24 per cent. of the electorate, hoisted the British flag in opposition to the 1,632, or 76 per cent., who did not allow patriotic sentiment to interfere with their replies.

Of those who answer yes, quite a few qualify the affirmative with "Some" or "A few." This is, of course, absurd, since the question was intended to enquire into whether British musicians in general are likely to be superior, and

if in choosing a British musician blindfold you stand more than a fifty-fifty chance of hearing a good swing interpretation than in choosing an American musician blindfold.

There is no reasoning musician or jazz student in this country who can fail to concede to Americans that this type of music is one of their indigenous and instinctive art forms, in which Great Britain can never expect to be more than a follower.

Those who answered yes must surely have misinterpreted the question by overlooking our qualification, signified by the words, "in the field of swing music."

The fields of popular dance music and stage bands are an entirely different question, in which the British can be considered to start on a level footing with the Americans.

Question 11: Do you think Swing Music has (a) improved, (b) degenerated, (c) stayed more or less the same since 1929?

IT was pointed out in a previous article that, according to the answers to Question 1, fewer than 450 readers have been interested in jazz since 1929, but a far greater number of them attempted to answer Question 11.

This indicates that their knowledge of the jazz of eight years ago was either drawn entirely from recorded evidence (1929 is, of course, intended to convey in general what has come to be known as the golden era of hot music), or else that they were drawing entirely on their own imagination for a picture of the jazz of those days, and that their opinions are, therefore, worthless.

Be that as it may, 1,221 people, amounting to 54.5 per cent., believe that jazz has improved, while 585, or 25.5 per cent., think that it has degenerated, and the remaining 423, or 20 per cent., consider that it has stayed more or less the same.

In these pages, and over the B.B.C. airwaves, there have been frequent disputes between the protagonists of progress in jazz ("Rophone," Edgar Jackson, et al.) and the defenders of the theory of stagnation ("Mike" and Spike Hughes).

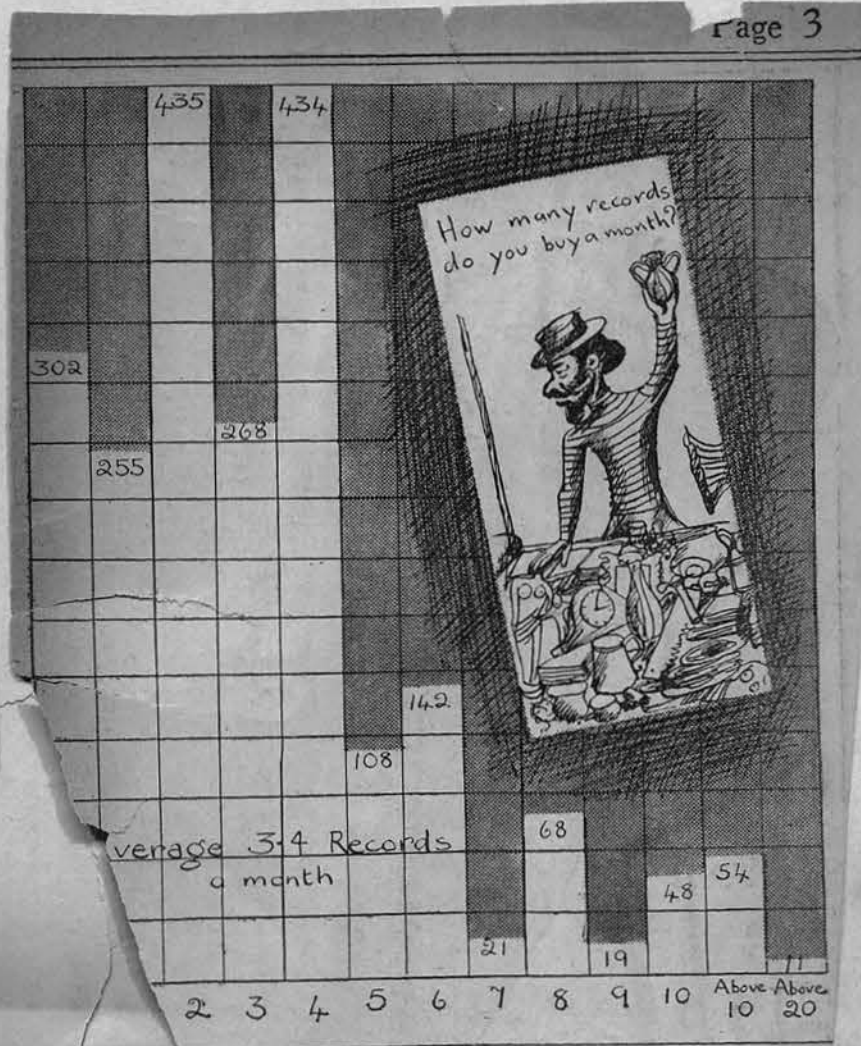
Although "Mike" is undoubtedly one of the most provocative and readable journalists that swing music has ever known, it is manifest from the above figures that his opinions are taken by readers with a whole cellarful of salt. Perhaps part of "Mike's" trouble is that he attacks the new so frequently without defending the old.

Another factor that swayed opinions against the theory of degeneration is the acceptance of swing in certain forms by the general public, and by the greatly-increased quantity of orchestrated swing music played by white bands.

HERE IS THE AVERAGE FAN:

TAKING the answers to the entire group of optional questions as a whole, we can build up the following picture of the average fan:

- He has been interested in swing music since January, 1933; and
 - He reads the "Melody Maker" and "Rhythm";
 - He can play either piano, drums or trumpet, or no instrument at all;
 - He reads music but cannot arrange; thinks he knows all about classical music;
 - He buys 41 records a year and prefers his own opinions to those of any critic;
 - He either has an all-wave set or intends to buy one within the next year or two; and
 - He believes American musicians to be superior to British in swing music, and thinks the jazz of to-day at least a step ahead of the jazz of yesterday.
- And now that that's all over, how near are you to the average swing-fan?



TOPICAL SWING

SERGEANT-MAJOR'S GUIDE

- ★★★★ 'Tenshun!
- ★★★ Eyes Right!
- ★★ Stand At Ease!
- ★ Dismiss!

Count Basie and his Orchestra.

"Good Morning Blues" (***).

"Honeysuckle Rose" (**).

(Brunswick 02496.)

"Santy Claus, Santy Claus, listen to my plea,

Don't send me anything for Christmas but my baby back to me!"

WITH these topical sentiments, James Rushing provides the focal point of *Good Morning Blues*, which is a reconstruction of an Eddie Durham composition from the old days when Basie and Durham were together in Benny Moten's Orchestra.

Preceding the blues core of the record, a rather plaintive little minor-key melody is played attractively by Buck Clayton. Excepting for a somewhat inept ending this is a very satisfying side.

Watered to Death

Of all the unhappy occasions to select for the release of yet another *Honeysuckle Rose*! The rose has been watered to death this year and withers far more quickly than the blues. This version was waxed at Basie's first session a year ago, and as in the case of most of his first recordings, both the piano and ensemble work are too derivative. The famous riff from Henderson's record is lifted once again. Lester Young evidences what might be considered a crude sense of humour, but this can certainly not be said of his sense of style.

P.S.—The bass player was still out of tune at this time, and they gave him eight bars in the lime-light to prove it.

Maxine Sullivan (Vocal) and her Orchestra.

"Annie Laurie."

"Blue Skies."

(***Vocalion S.122.)

I give up. If Maxine can continue doing with other folk songs what she does to Annie Laurie, my

tical objections to the stunt motive of this novelty will vanish in smoke.

"Maxwellton

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anny Polo and his Swing

stars.

Blue Murder."

That's A Plenty."

**Decca F.6550.)

What an artist this man Polo is! In

blues, which is a blues of such con-

dition and feeling as I never dreamed

hearing in this country, he takes

his entire choruses, starting in chalu-

au register and gradually climbing

for a gloriously conceived climax

ect.

Tommy Makes A Bad Join

This record would be perfect were it for the contribution of Tommy Quater, whose four bars where he as in at the end of the long Polo o jar completely with the authentic ful atmosphere Danny has so care-ly built up. Tommy's solo chorus o seems to miss the real spirit of blues.

By a strange contrast, Mr. McQ. es us in *That's A Plenty* what is ev-ably the best solo chorus he has r recorded (just before Danny's last y). It is a pity there is a little fluff Danny and a routine error on this e, for in every other respect it ieves the atmosphere of the num- so perfectly that at times it might



★ Dudley Barber—the new drum "find" who appears in the latest Danny Polo record. ★

be easy to take the ensemble for that of the old Louisiana Rhythm Kings in their memorable recording of the same tune.

Eddie Macauley is very fine in *That's A Plenty*, but he really reaches the peak of his recording career in the blues. The rhythm section achieves the same abandon and power as in the previous coupling, with a special credit to the splendid solid drumming of Dudley Barber.

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.

"Yours and Mine" (***).

"Public Melody Number One" (**).

(Decca F.6540.)

In his trumpet chorus in *Yours And Mine* is a rare glimpse of the real Louis emerging ephemerally from the shroud of commercialism and offering a truly lovely performance in which he worl up to a high-note ending which is zically placed, without the

Hot Records Reviewed

by

"ROPHONE"

usual synthetic suspense. And what a superb note it is!

It is obvious that Russell's band has improved considerably. There is now some sort of tone in the ensemble and considerably more team spirit. Louis' vocal is the shadow of the old days; he still harps on the dominant, as if too weary to introduce any real variations of the melody; and his gruffness seems to have lost the personal warmth that used to qualify him as the world's greatest jazz singer. To-day it is just gruffness.

Public Melody Number One is a repetition of Louis' infamously short and inadequate appearance in the film "Artists and Models," dished up in the worst commercial fashion with an appalling, gallery-courting finish.

Red Norvo and his Orchestra.

"Russian Lullaby."

"Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie." (**Vocalion S.121.)

Clap Hands is a tune that may have sinister recollections for some of us, but in case that should give you any false ideas let me point out that the Norvo version is an Edgar Sampson arrangement, and by the time Edgar and his protagonists—notably Norvo, D'Amico, Haymer, Miller and Fletcher—have finished with it, it might almost be a good tune.

Russian Lullaby has the advantage of being a good tune in the first place. D'Amico's contribution shows him as a clarinetist who manages to dissociate originality from eccentricity, with admirable results.



U.S. BLACK AND WHITE BAND

The New York Dance Band Lowdown From Dick C. Lander

LONDON

By Leonard G. Feather

Semi-Pros Now in Union

The big event of the month for most of the British dance band leaders was a midnight meeting at the Dorchester Hotel, London, attended by forty important members of the Dance Band Directors' Association. The latest development in the policy of this year-old organization is the decision to grant membership to semi-professionals (Britain still has thousands of clerks and office workers who do band work for a hobby in the evenings).

Since every important leader in the country now belongs to this organization, the situation resulting from lack of a strong Union is likely to be considerably ameliorated quite soon—but none too soon, for undercutting has now reached the stage where some of the most reputable London restaurants and hotels, which used to pay vast sums for their orchestras, now offer £500 a week for an entire full-sized band and get well-known leaders to fall for it.

Nix on Viv

Vivian Duncan, who came over here a few months ago as half of the Duncan Sisters act, has succeeded Bert Firman at the Cafe Anglais with an orchestra which, though she herself conceived the idea and put it up to the cafe, she is not allowed to conduct, owing to her inability to obtain a Ministry of Labour permit. Consequently she will appear there only as a cabaret turn, and the band, known as the "12 Million Airs", will be under the leadership of Stanley Barnett.

Bert Firman, who had a brassless combo at the Anglais, has enlarged with two trumpets, two trombones and an extra sax and transferred to the London casino.

Ambrose-Harris Talent Hunt

Last month I mentioned that Elsie Carlisle was returning to the air with Ambrose, and also that Jack Harris was cornering a great deal of Ambrose's talent for the improved Harris group at Ciro's. These two items are linked up in the fact that after one broadcast with Ambrose, Elsie Carlisle went over to Jack Harris and is now appearing in his broadcasts instead!

The Ambrose bunch is working on its newest and biggest motion picture assignment to date, £350,000 opus entitled *Kicking the Moon Around*.

Hot Club

The Quintet of the Hot Club of France, with Django Reinhardt on guitar and Stephane Grappelly on violin, is expected in London next month, arrangements being in progress for their debut here, in a special Sunday concert.

Won't Book Blind Musikers

Claude Bampton's 20 piece unit of blind musicians and singers, despite the backing of Jack Hylton and subsidy of the National Institute for the Blind, is finding great difficulty in getting work. Audiences up to the present have reacted favourably, yet for some reason managers are afraid to book the act, with the result that talk of dissolution is already in the air.

Ship Biz

Jack Hylton has arranged with the Royal Mail Steam Packet Service

to supply a band for a four-week cruise on one of its most important liners. If the band clicks, the possibility is that Hylton will establish a permanent connection to supply bands for the line, which should help to improve both the music and the money on board several important ships.

Swedes Object

The engagement of Freddy Bretherton with his orchestra on a resident job in Sweden caused a sensational demonstration and a march of protest by Swedish musicians, who objected violently to the employment of a foreign band. However, Bretherton still continues successfully in the job.

Top Tunesters of Britain

The musicians' ballot, of which the international list was given here last month, has produced the following list of Britain's favourite British instrumentalists:—

Tommy McQuater, trumpet; Lew Davis, trombone; Freddy Gardner, alto; Buddy Featherstonhaugh, tenor; Andy McDevitt, clarinet; Eddie Macouley, piano; Albert Harris, guitar; Max Bacon, drums; Tiny Winters, bass; Eric Siday, violin; Jack Simpson, xylophone; Sam Browne, male vocalist; Mary Lee, girl vocalist.

The most popular British band, by a vast majority, is Ambrose's. In the international side of the ballot, Duke Ellington just edged Benny Goodman out of first place.

Top Tunes of Month

Unique and unprecedented situation in the song-publishing world—top numbers currently in both Britain and the States are British tunes: *Harbour Lights* in America and *Home Town* in this country. Ten biggest numbers here at press time are: *Home Town* (English, publ. Peter Maurice), *Greatest Mistake of My Life* (English, publ. Dash), *Moon at Sea*, *Was It Rain?*, *Whispers in the Dark*, *Cabin of Dreams*, *This Year's Kisses*, *So Rare*, *Stardust on the Moon*, *Afraid to Dream*.

THE SADDEST NEWS OF THE YEAR FOR SWING FANS IS THE CLOSING OF THE HARLEM UPROAR HOUSE AFTER ITS FAILURE TO MAKE GOOD WITH MEZZ MESIROW AND HIS DISCIPLES OF SWING. DESPITE THE WIDELY DISSEMINATED PUBLICITY RESULTING FROM THE SWASTIKA-PAINING STUNT REPORTED IN THE "M.M.," THE MANAGEMENT COULD NOT ATTRACT A LARGE ENOUGH PATRONAGE TO JUSTIFY ANY FURTHER GAMBLING, SO LAST WEEK THE UPROAR HOUSE STOPPED ROARING FOR GOOD.

With no plans fixed at the time of writing, it looks as though Mezz's band may thus be obliged to disintegrate at this early stage in its career.

After the unhappy efforts made previously to establish a mixed-colour orchestra (notably John Hammond's convocation of Benny Goodman and Benny Carter for the European tour offered by Jack Hylton a few years ago) it is doubly unfortunate that this apparently unique opportunity should have failed to establish the precedent that might have been expected, namely, a commercial swing proposition regardless of the colour line.

GOODMAN'S PRECEDENT

Perhaps there is a grain of consolation in the news that the colour bar will be broken in no less dignified a sanctum than the Carnegie Hall when, on January 16, Benny Goodman's precedent-setting swing concert in this home of classical music will include items by the Quartet, featuring Lionel Hampton and Teddy Wilson.

From Hollywood, I hear that Irving Mills is on a visit out there making some new swing recordings; and that Bob Crosby's Orchestra, working at the Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles, has a very interesting trumpet gallery these days, for old-timer Charlie Spivak, who was with this combination years ago when it was directed by Ben Pollack, has rejoined, replacing Zeke Zarchy; and a star third trumpet named Bill Butterfield is also attracting plaudits since his recent addition to the Dixieland swingers Bob and his boys, incidentally, are providing the swing accompaniments for some further waxings by Josephine Tuminia, whose cooperation with Jimmy Dorsey on the *Blue Danube* caused such a riot.

Several other changes have been

made in leading bands lately. Cab Calloway and Chick Webb have switched first alto men, so that Garvin Bushell is now with Webb, and Chauncey Houghton leads the reeds for the Hi-de-Ho man.

Red Norvo has let out two of his original men, Maurice Purtill (drums) and Stewart Fletcher (trumpet), with replacements as yet unknown. Earl Hagen, a clever young trombonist and arranger, has replaced Red Bone with Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra.

Toots Mondello, famed white alto star, heard on many of Benny Goodman's recordings, has decided to form his own band, and is being handled by M.C.A.

For a trial session at Brunswick, Toots gathered together a bunch of leading studio musicians and waxed some pop tunes with vocals by Barry McKinley.

Stuff Smith will not return to the Onyx after all, but has arranged to return to Hollywood's Famous Door for another twenty-two weeks. Also busy out on the Coast is Louis Armstrong, the title of whose speciality in "Doctor Rhythm," the new Bing Crosby picture, is *Trumpet Player's Lament*.

SIGNED FOR FILMS

Also signed for pictures on a long contract with M.G.M. is Adele Girard, charming harp player and vocalist, featured with Joe Marsala's Chicagoans at the New York Hickory House. With Casper Reardon also busy on assignments in the celluloid city, that makes two more or less hot harpists captured for the screen.

Willie "The Lion" Smith has come out with some extraordinary recordings in which he teams up with Milt Herth, the Hammond organist, and O'Neil Spencer, drums.

The Dipsy Doodle and *That's A Plenty* are amongst those waxed.

Duke Ellington's latest contributions to the recording world are a composition by Rex Stewart entitled *Chatterbox* and Duke's own *Dusk In The Desert*.

IS BRITISH JAZZ GOING TO THE DOGS?

A CANDID SURVEY

By

LEONARD G. FEATHER

IT is with a pessimistic pen that I take up the subject of what 1937 has meant to the British dance music profession.

Before any misunderstandings arise, let me make it quite clear that I am not talking of the song publishing aspect of the business, which is dealt with elsewhere, but with the aspects of the profession which bear more closely upon the lives of the musicians themselves. In the first place, price conditions are admitted to be appalling. Not even the coronation weeks brought the big boom that was expected, and the rest of the year has seen a steady decline, tending more and more to indicate that, particularly as far as the West End is concerned, and in varying degrees outside this area, the dance orchestra is largely regarded nowadays as a necessary evil among the accoutrements of a place of entertainment, an inevitable overhead expense rather than an attraction and an inducement to the public.

All over London prominent hotels and restaurants are trying

to engage entire bands of nine or ten men for £50 or £60, and in many cases they are succeeding, while in the provinces professional musicians are doing an evening's work for a matter of shillings.

How is this drastic price-cutting going to be overcome? The Dance Band Directors' Association, which has done such excellent work during the year in ameliorating conditions with the B.B.C., can hardly be expected to grapple with this problem, particularly as it affects the rank and file musicians more gravely than the leaders, and it is the rank and file who are disorganised, too apathetic to unionise completely, and too impractical to convene a mass meeting which might produce a united front to deal with the situation.

The causes of apathy on the part of those who employ dance bands, go deeper than the mere waning of faith in the orchestra as an attraction to the public. The impasse which prevents foreign orchestras from entering this country on the grounds that they would be displacing British labour is, paradoxically enough, largely responsible for the situa-

tion. The visit of a few of the great American dance orchestras to this country would stimulate interest, competition and ambition amongst British musicians, and it would help to raise price levels, for restaurateurs are generally willing to pay a much higher price for an American attraction, and this would start them thinking in terms of big money once again so that a British band afterwards would have far less difficulty in keeping prices up.

As things are, the ban on American musicians has produced several astonishing anomalies during 1937:—

(A) Teddy Hill's Orchestra, one of America's greatest coloured bands, was reluctantly granted a permit to accompany the Cotton Club Revue at the London Palladium, but was constrained from playing a single note outside of the strictly background music for the singing and dancing acts, or from taking any work outside the Cotton Club engagement.

(B) Benny Carter, perhaps the most talented all-round musician jazz has ever known, after spending eight months here, during which he was allowed to arrange for Henry Hall, but forbidden to play a note on his many instruments, or to organise an all-British band which might have been the greatest orchestra this country has ever known, left in despair and formed a band abroad.

(C) Jimmie Lunceford, with Harlem's finest trained and most original combination, arrived in Europe for a tour. He could have provided a real object lesson and inspiration for British musicians, but he only spent a few days in London and left the country almost unobserved.

(D) Rudy Vallée opened at the Holborn Empire, sang a few songs and played a saxophone solo with his American pianist, but was not allowed to bring his band.

(E) Vivian Duncan, of the Duncan Sisters, supplied a (British) orchestra for the Café Anglais, but she, being an American, the management had to use another name for the combination, and she was only allowed to appear as a cabaret artist.

* * *
What is being done to correct such situations as these? The Music Corporation of America in the first year of its London office has been very busy getting its hand in at several London and provincial establishments, but does not seem to have got very far in the matter of putting up prices or improving the quality of orchestras.

Against these signs of decline can be set the good work of the B.B.C. during 1937, not only in slightly increasing the money for broadcasts and the number of bands admitted to the air waves, but also for its encouragement of swing music, its categorisation of the mid-evening programmes into three classes (non-vocal, "production" and "connoisseur") and its relays of some of America's finest swing bands.

In the connoisseur category there have been a number of programmes, by specially formed British combinations, calculated to increase the public's appreciation of the better and lesser-known form of jazz. However, most of the big money was spent on "production" programmes, such as those by Louis Levy, Geraldo, Peter Yorke, Ben Frankel, and so forth. This year also saw the abandonment of the policy of retaining a house band at the B.B.C., and Henry Hall was left free to crash the music halls and the big money.

Among the most promising new British bands are those of Eddie Carroll at the Piccadilly Theatre, Bert Firman at the London Casino, and Ken Johnson

leaving only two main groups of recording companies in the country, paved the way for the big co-operative advertising campaign ("Hear What You Want When You Want It, Only on a Gramophone Record"), on which tens of thousands of pounds have been spent; and, as an added encouragement to dealers to stock more records, all record prices have been raised. There has been a noticeable Christmas boom of record buying.

Irving Mills, whose new record company, which has produced hundreds of wonderful swing records in the States, has still not yet arranged for a European outlet for his catalogue—an amazing anomaly, since two of the best-known British labels have no

with his all-British coloured unit at the Florida, while Joe Daniels, Harry Roy's former drummer, formed his own combination and is doing well.

Finally, a brief word about the world of records. The major event of the year was the purchase of the Crystalate Company by Decca for £200,000, which,

(continued in next column.)

American attraction and are simply crying out for swing material.

Looking at the year in retrospect, there are several states of affairs which must be straightened out before long. Otherwise we shall witness the tragic spectacle of British dance music going slowly but surely to the dogs.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

SIMULTANEOUSLY with my wishes for a happy new listening year to readers comes an announcement regarding the New Year plans for dance-music programmes which in themselves seem to provide assurance that these wishes will be realised.

Prominent among these plans is John Watt's projected expansion of afternoon gramophone Variety broadcasts, which in future will be produced more after the style of 'live' programmes and, in the hands of Leslie Perowne and George Gordon, will be planned and produced on an elaborate scale by means of scripts, compères, and so forth.

Among the programmes to be handled by George Gordon are 'Americana', a fortnightly programme to be devoted to American stars from every side of the entertainment world, and, in alternate weeks, 'Today's Favourite', a similar programme to be devoted to British artists. 'Sound Track' and 'Show Tunes', devoted to music from films and the theatre respectively, will also be produced in alternate weeks.

Leslie Perowne's productions will include 'Here They Are Again', a weekly recital of revivals of old popular tunes, and several swing-music record programmes, mostly on Friday afternoons from 4 to 4.30. The first of these, devised by James Holloway, will be a tour of the Paris night clubs under the title 'Boulevard Rhythm'. This will be heard next Friday (January 7).

The mid-evening dance band broadcasts will be categorised as before. John Watt's belief that there is a large section of the public not very amiably disposed towards dance-band vocalists ('Possibly', he adds, 'because they have been labelled crooners') has convinced him that there is still a demand for non-vocal programmes, and he will continue to allow for three each week in the new year—John Burnaby's 'BBC Ballroom', Douglas Lawrence's 'Thé Dansant', and one late-night session from an outside broadcasting point.

The programmes on the National wavelength from 11.30 to midnight will continue to be devoted to recorded dance music, and have been planned as follows for the first quarter of 1938: On Mondays, 'Record Session', a recital given over entirely to one particular orchestra each week; on Tuesdays non-vocal dance music; on Wednesdays, the popular 'Swing Time' feature, which has already been in operation for some months; on Thursdays, a programme of current tunes; and on Fridays, 'Hot From the Press', consisting of the latest record releases.

Another important series of record recitals will bring to the microphone some of the best-known British instrumentalists, who will devise programmes illustrating the work of the leading artists on their own instruments. Alto saxophonists and clarinetists will be dealt with by Freddy Gardner, and the tenor saxophone programme will be in the hands of Buddy Featherstonhaugh, while for the trumpets it is hoped to secure the services of Roy Fox. Leslie Perowne is now lining up a list of other personalities to devise programmes for piano, guitar, trombone, and other instruments.

There will also be several programmes of swing records not issued in this country, including a recital (by the writer of this article) of the new works of Duke Ellington.

MELODY MAKE JAN 1st 1938

COMPLETE GUIDE TO SWING RECORD RELEASES for JANUARY, 1938

Three Shilling Discs

Beiderbecke, Bix, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., 1928). *Goose Pimples*; Bix Beiderbecke (leader and cornet); Bill Rank (trombone); Don Murray (clarinet); Adrian Rollini (bass sax); Frank Signorelli (piano); Howdy Quicksell (banjo); Chauncy Morehouse (drums). (For backing see Trumbauer). Parlophone R.2465.

Berigan, Bunny, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., May, 1937). *The First Time I Saw You*; Bunny Berigan (leader and trumpet); Cliff Natalie, Stephen Lipkin (trumpets); Ford Leary, Frank D'Amico (trombones); Sid Perlmutter, Henry Freeman, Clyde Rounds (altos); George Auld (tenor); Joe Lippman (piano); Tom Morgan (guitar); George Wettling (drums); Arnold Fishkin (bass); Ford Leary (vocal). (June, 1937) *Roses In December*. Personnel as above with vocal, Ruth Bradley. H.M.V. B.8680.

Carroll, Eddie, and His Swingphonic Orchestra: (London, December, 1937). *Night Ride* (comp. Sid Phillips); *Blue Danube Swing* (arr. Sid Phillips). Eddie Carroll (leader and piano); Jimmy Macaffer (first trumpet); Arthur Mouncey (second trumpet); Bruce Campbell (trumpet and trombone); George Chisholm, Freddy Welsh (trombones); Les Gilbert, Jerry Farley (altos); Benny Winestone, Benny Greenwood (tenors); Archie Slavin (guitar); Sid Hieger (drums); Doug Lees (bass). Parlophone R.2464.

Carter, Benny, and His Orchestra: (The Hague, Holland, August, 1937). *Skip It* (comp. Benny Carter); (for personnel see *My Buddy*). *The First Time I Saw You* (for personnel see *Lazy Afternoon*). Both in Guide for December 1, 1937. Vocalion S.126.

Dorsey, Tommy, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., July, 1937). *Night And Day*; *Smoke Gets In Your Eyes*. Tommy Dorsey (leader and trombone); Andy Ferretti, George Erwin, Lee Costaldos (trumpets); Walter Mercurio, Les Jenkins (trombones); Bud Freeman, Skeets Herfurt, Johnny Mince, Fred

Stulce (saxes); Howard Smith (piano); Carmen Mastren (guitar); Dave Tough (drums); Gene Traxler (bass). H.M.V. B.8681.

Goodman, Benny, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., July, 1937). *Changes*; *Minnie The Moocher's Wedding Day*. (For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937.) H.M.V. B.8683.

Lunceford, Jimmie, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., July, 1937). *Raggin' The Scale*; *For Dancers Only*. (For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937.) Brunswick 02531.

Shaw, Artie, and His New Music: (N.Y., July, 1937). *The Blues*, Parts 1 and 2. (For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937.) Vocalion S.124.

Siday, Eric, and Reg Leopold. (Two Violins and Rhythm). (London, July, 1937). *Honeysuckle Rose*; *Jed and Elmer*. Sam Gelsley (guitar); Max Bacon (drums); Don Stutely (bass). Parlophone R.2466.

Thornhill, Claude, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., June, 1937). *Stop! You're Breakin' My Heart*; *Gone With The Wind*. Claude Thornhill (leader, arranger, piano and xylophone); Charles Spivak, Manny Klein (trumpets); Jack Lacey (trombone); Toots Mondello, Ed Powell, Jess Carnoel (altos); Babe Rusin (tenor); Chauncy Morehouse (drums); Artie Bernstein (bass). Vocalion S.125.

Trumbauer, Frankie, and His Orchestra: (N.Y., 1928). *Trombology* (comp. Frankie Trumbauer). Frankie Trumbauer (leader and C melody sax); Bix Beiderbecke (cornet); Bill Rank (trombone); Don Murray (clarinet); Doc Ryker (alto); Paul Mertz (piano); Eddie Lang (guitar); Chauncy Morehouse (drums). (For backing see Beiderbecke). Parlophone R.2465.

Two Shilling Disc

Waller, Fats, and His Rhythm: (N.Y., September, 1937). *Our Love Was Meant To Be*; *You've Got Me Under Your Thumb*. (For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937.) H.M.V. BD.5310.

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FEATHER FORECAST AND NEWS

WHEN 'SMACK' HENDERSON BORROWED A BAND BECAUSE HIS WAS ON A GIG

THE spectre of time marching on, this festive New Year spirit, is making me feel like a feather in the freeze, as I shiver to think how easily one becomes a veteran in this business. Nineteen-thirty-eight, and I've been having my say in this sheet since nineteen-thirty-three. So much has happened to jazz in that short time that the gulf seems wider than it really is.

I have been at one of my favourite pastimes, rambling through old pages of the paper and wondering what was happening in the business just five years ago. One of the first sentences that arrested my eye was Comrade Hammond's laconic announcement: "Jack Teagarden is joining Whiteman's orchestra; but I doubt if he will stay there long." That was five years ago, and Teagarden is still with Whiteman.

Furious Casa Loma Furore

Just five years ago the Casa Loma furore was at its most furious, even to the point when Stanley Black brought his photographic mind to bear upon the record of White Jazz and proceeded to copy it down in its entirety as a Christmas treat for "M.M." readers. "Mike" had some surprising views at that time, too. I wonder whether to-day he would agree to tolerate "the most shocking and amateurish displays in this band" (Cab Calloway's



we find Danny Polo, just back from the Continent, newly tied up with Ambros Bert Firman leaving town for the Sporting Club, Monte Carlo; Roy F. at the Café Anglais, Eddie Carroll replacing Lew Stone at the Monseigneur keyboard in order to leave Lew free to conduct. All these bands were probably killing their audiences with *How Deep Is The Ocean?*; *Love Is The Sweetest Thing*; *Me Minus You*; *Underneath The Arches*; *Let's All Sing Like The Birdies Sing*; and *Nightfall* (not Benny Carter's; there's no copyright on titles).

George Elrick was the only male member of a trio playing in the intervals at the Strand Theatre for the run of "Night Of The Garter." George was already being featured as a vocalist in addition to playing drums and vibraphone.

Five years ago most of the greatest white swing men were still working in commercial bands, for there were no permanently-formed white swing combinations in existence. Thus we find Gene Krupa, Joe Sullivan and Babe Rusin working in a group directed by the late Russ Colombo; and Eddie Lang, the Dorsey Brothers, Manny Klein and Bernstein under Lennie Hayton's direction, accompanying Ruth Etting in radio work.

"solely on account of the charm of Cab Calloway himself, upon whom I dote." And the famous Charleston Chasers' recording of Teagarden's original *Basin Street Blues* was dismissed by him as "not a particularly good record." Benny

Goodman's playing, he declared, "lacks rhythm, ideas and attack, and the net result, aggravated by a peculiarly unpleasant, slimy, squeaking tone, is nothing short of ridiculous."

It was at this period that Tommy Dorsey had just brought out his original *Getting Sentimental Over You*, which he has been playing a thousand times a year ever since. Louis Armstrong had just gone home from his first European trip. Jack Hylton and his Band had been refused permission, at the eleventh hour, to enter Russia.

Amongst the other British orchestras

reputation in the last year or so. Below: Stanley ("Photographic Mind") Black, is still as enthusiastic and efficient an arranger as ever.



Above: Jimmy Dorsey and his boys, who have built up a fine

Benny Carter had lent his band to Fletcher Henderson for an evening while Fletcher's own boys were out on another booking. Hawkins, Higginbotham and Rex Stewart were all in Smack's own band and had just waxed the famous session that has never since been equalled by any band under Fletcher's name: *Honeysuckle Rose*, *New King Porter Stomp*, et al.

One point particularly strikes me. None of the records acknowledged at that time to be great has dated in the slightest degree. It is consoling to us veterans to think that however much time may have battered at the careers of the white jazz elite, jazz itself as made in 1933 would pass very nicely indeed in 1938.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

HORIZON FOR 1938

Leonard Feather takes a look at the past and the future

JUST twelve months ago in these pages, at the conclusion of my "Horizon for 1937," was the declaration that "if the oracle fails you I promise never to make any predictions again." Of the twenty-seven tips for forthcoming soloists and bands destined for fame in the ensuing twelve months, sixteen justified my faith in them, five have remained more or less at a standstill and may yet develop the promise they have shown, while the other six let me down by sliding back into obscurity.

Whether or not this record qualifies me as an Old Moore of Music, the statistics give me sufficient confidence to feel like venturing on another series of predictions.

Once again let us deal with the bands first. In 1937, Basie and Shaw advanced into public favour in the manner that was ex-

pected of them, while Marsala has just begun to do so, with an encouraging contract from MCA, plans for enlargement and a Transatlantic broadcast relay next week.

Bands Coming Along to Success

Very few coloured bands emerging lately have indicated sufficient promise to merit inclusion here, but EDGAR HAYES is advancing along the best Harlem lines, and ERSKINE HAWKINS, with his gang of Alabama State College boys, have proved themselves a well-trained unit in the Lunceford manner and may have something of a future.

1937 has been such a chaotic year for many leaders that we find such idols as Hines, Jimmy Dorsey, Redman, Henderson, Pollack and Russell either organising entirely new bands or effecting drastic changes in their personnel. Of these HENDERSON has once again produced a combination that should get along, while BEN



GLENN MILLER, trombonist and arranger, has started his own unit and seems slated for big things.

POLLACK and the LUIS RUSSELL group under Louis Armstrong are certainly well worth watching.

One or two white musicians have started their own units, and on their past reputations, it is safe to say that they have an even chance of getting somewhere. Prominent amongst them are GLENN MILLER, the trombonist and arranger, and TOOTS MONDELLO, one of the finest white alto men. Amongst the British bands, KEN JOHNSON has provided the first approach to a really classy coloured group, while if the EDDIE CARROLL combination lives up to its start at the Piccadilly Theatre, it may provide some relief from the monotony of commercial British bands.

TRUMPETS.—HARRY JAMES, formerly with Pollack and now one of Benny's Goodmen, is a certainty for 1938 stardom, and BOBBY HACKETT, of Marsala's band, whose tone has been compared to Bix's, may provide a surprise.

A Group Worth Watching

TROMBONES.—Last January there arrived in London from Glasgow a timid, pale wee fellow, twenty-one years of age, who was later to prove to be the greatest British swing star of the year. GEORGE CHISHOLM, acclaimed by Benny Carter, Jimmie Lunceford and all the swing men who have heard him, has provided us with more of a kick than any of the new American trombone men, an achievement almost unprecedented in local jazz. He should go far in 1938.

Americans likely to attract attention are the previously unappreciated SONNY LEE, with Bunny Berigan, and WARD SILLOWAY, with Bob Crosby.

ALTO SAX.—This instrument is clearly on the wane so far as swing music is concerned. The only outstanding new man is PETE BROWN, of the Onyx Club, a magnificent technician and stylist. If JOE MARSALA cares to feature himself on alto he should also find ample recognition.

TENOR SAX.—Berigan's GEORGE AULD and Basie's LESTER YOUNG are the most original of the new tenor stars, and the latter's team-mate, HERSCHEL EVANS, also cries out for attention.

On the British side there are ALFIE KAHN and REG DARE, both, I believe, out of the country at present.

CLARINET.—Look out for HANK D'AMICO, that very individual stylist with Red Norvo, JOE DIXON, Bunny Berigan's boy, and a promising new Harlemit, EDMUND HALL.

PIANO.—The SMITHS have it. HOWARD, with Tommy Dorsey, and WILLIE "THE LION," on recordings, both seem likely to attract increased attention. Look out also for BOB ZURKE, the new Sullivan, in the Bob Crosby gang.

It is too late to make any predictions about EDDIE MACAULEY, who,

though completely unknown this time last year, has set the seal on his sensational rise to fame by collaring the first British place in the piano section of the MELODY MAKER Referendum.

GUITAR.—Nothing very much has happened in this department to indicate any stars on the horizon, though I fancy the work of FREDDIE GREEN, with Basie, and the boy who is over here with the Mills Brothers, NORMAN BROWN.

New Star Among Bassists

BASS.—Still another of Bunny Berigan's stars, HANK WAYLANI, with a tone and style that seem to follow the noble example of Kirby and Bernstein, this new name should be a big name before long. So, if he returns soon enough from his Egyptian obscurity with Willie Lewis, should the formidable WILSON MYERS.

DRUMS.—Artie Shaw is an expert at finding good drummers. Watch his latest discovery, CLIFF LEEMAN. Look out, too, for Basie's JOE JONES.

and, among the Englishmen, the discovery of the Danny Polo recordings, DUDLEY BARBER.

VIOLIN.—EDDIE SOUTH is still almost unknown and unappreciated in this country, though he is broadcasting and recording in France. It is high time that he attained complete recognition as the equal of any swing violinist, white or coloured.

VOCALISTS.—An easy and obvious tip for one unquestionable success in 1938 is MAXINE (Loch Lomond) SULLIVAN. The only white girl who has impressed me is TEDDY GRACE of Mal Hallett's Orchestra. On the male side look out for Henderson's clarinetist JERRY BLAKE, Basie's JAMES RUSHING, and, if he continues to record, the delightful LEO WATSON. In England there is still nobody who

12 Jan 1937 Melody Maker

U.S. STARS ROLL UP TO AID XMAS CHARITY

New York News From Dick C. Lander

IT is many months, possibly years, since such a line-up of star talent was assembled for any public performance comparable with the galaxy brought together for the monster midnight charity show in aid of the Christmas Basket Fund, sponsored by the Negro Theatre Guild, held at the Apollo Theatre, Harlem, on Friday, December 17.

Such names as Chick Webb, Ella Fitzgerald, Willie Bryant, Louis Prima, Rudy Vallée, Noble Sissle, Cab Calloway, the Nicholas Brothers, Mitzi Green, Joe Marsala, Putney Dandridge, Maxine Sullivan, Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton, Baron Lee, and Bojangles Robinson serve to indicate not only the willingness of both white and coloured artists to assist in these great charity performances, but also the astonishing variety of talent currently concentrated in New York City.

STREET OF SWING

Even Fifty-Second Street seems to have woken out of its lethargy to re-establish itself as the Street Of Swing, with the Hickory House, the Onyx, the Famous Door (where Louis Prima and Art Tatum have opened successfully) and, as the latest addition, the Club Maria, a new resort on the site of the Original Famous Door, which booked Wingy Mannone for its opening attraction.

Lionel Hampton is reported to be writing a so-called "Swing Symphony" using the sounds of a newspaper printing-works as his inspiration. He hopes to introduce it at the Benny Goodman

concert at the Carnegie Hall on January 16.

The Savoy Ballroom signed up Erskine Hawkins and his 'Bama State Collegians for Christmas week. The same swing spot also gave Mezz Mezzrow and his Mixed Band its first booking since the Harlem Uproar House fiasco, which shows that it is still possible that this group may be able to keep together.

FROM THE WEST

News from the West Coast reports that Joe Venuti appeared for a short season at Sebastian's Cotton Club in Los Angeles, and another of that city's night clubs, known as Topsy's is scheduled to present Red Nichols, commencing on New Year's Eve. Bunny Berigan is also expected in California and will be seen at the Palomar Ballroom in a few weeks' time.

Stuff Smith has written a new number rather removed from the hot style associated with him, a ballad called *It's Wonderful*, which has been taken by a publisher and will be fitted with lyrics by Al Stillman.

Talking about violinists, there is an interesting story going the rounds about Rubinoff.

It seems that one Adam Morgan, serving the sixth year of a twenty-year sentence for bank robbery, heard Rubinoff on the prison radio and decided to study the violin.

Rubinoff was persuaded to give him an audition, and was so impressed that the prisoner and his two accomplices in the robbery have been granted parole to take effect as soon as they can get work.

Morgan was immediately offered a job with an orchestra. All right—take it or leave it!

Melody Maker 8 JAN 1937

Mabel Scott Scores At Trianon

MABEL SCOTT, the young coloured singer who has recently been featured at the Florence in Paris, has arrived in London and has opened at the Trianon.

On her visit to England last year, when she was seen at the San Marco and took part in two films ("Dreaming Lips" and "Calling All Stars"), Mabel Scott appeared as a solo act.

This year, however, she has brought with her an accomplished pianist, Bob Mosley, who is featured in solo work as part of the act. Mosley, who is twenty-three, has spent four of his five years in the profession as a member of the orchestra directed by Lou Redman, a brother of the more widely-known Don Redman.

Mabel Scott's career will be of great interest to swing fans, since she spent two years, interrupted only by her last European trip, as vocalist on tour with Jimmie Lunceford's Orchestra, and was also over a year with Charlie Johnson's Orchestra at Small's Paradise in Harlem.

Born twenty-two years ago in Richmond, Virginia, she made her professional debut in New York in 1930, then went back to school, graduated, and two days later started work again.

In addition to being a delightful artist with an unusual and vivacious personality, Mabel Scott is a charming and cultured girl who deserves a long and successful stay over here, which, judging by the enthusiastic reception at her Trianon opening, she is very likely to earn.

Artie Shaw Tackles 24-inches of Blues

Hot Records Reviewed
By "ROPHONE"

CURRENCY GUIDE

- ★★★★ Pounds
- ★★★ Shillings
- ★★ Pence
- ★ Day-before-payday

Artie Shaw and His New Music.
"The Blues" (Parts I and II).
(***Vocalion S.124.)

THIS idea, of which to my knowledge Shaw's is the first instance on record, should have been carried out years ago. The claims that its simplicity is holding jazz back cannot eradicate the fact that the twelve-bar blues has always been like an armchair at the fireside to real hot musicians; so, as long as they continue to enjoy playing blues (and they will always play their best when the theme has an appeal for them), blues records will continue to be made and will continue to thrill those who under-

stand the basic sincerity and unpretentiousness of jazz of this kind.

To embark on a double-sided blues, then, is an experiment that might have been undertaken by any recording outfit in the past twenty years, and one which Shaw and his boys approached with obvious enthusiasm. The treatment is unorthodox to a certain extent, notably in the framing of the routine round the pianist, Les Burness, and the strong drum rhythms throughout, with a frequent six-eight effect. Burness has an addiction to thirds and sixths which makes his style quaintly attractive, but the bland dominant and tonic with which he concludes each side strike me as a rather out-of-place touch of humour.

Exciting Drumming

The drumming, though, adds enormously to the excitement, and, though prominent, is well enough balanced to allow the rest of the rhythm section its due.

Needless to add, the key is B flat—why does the blues invariably sound more at home in this than any other key?—and here is the order of the solos:—two trumpet, two tenor by Tony Pastor (the second really grand), and on the second side two trombone, three clarinet. I don't know which trombonist this is, but whether Mr. Arus or Mr. Rodgers was responsible he is yet another of Artie's finds, and, when identified, must be added to my mental notebook of the jazz élite.

On the minus side of the account are the chorus pinched from Armstrong's *Savoy Blues*, quite unnecessary, and the chorus with polka accompaniment, quite banal. But the net result is emphatically on the plus side.

Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra with Maxine Sullivan.

"Stop! You're Breakin' My Heart."
"Gone With The Wind."

(***Vocalion S.125.)

This girl Sullivan is just a dream, that's what. She has a chorus and a bit on each side of this record, and steals the honours from under such distinguished noses as those of Messrs. Manny Klein, Arthur Bernstein, Toots Mondello, Babe Rusin, Chauncey Morehouse and Jack Lacey. For a pick-up band this is a good combination. The trumpet work of Klein, if it be really he, is more than a surprise, as I always imagined him as a fine brass-section leader but nothing more.



CLAUDE THORNHILL

who heads a fine pick-up band to accompanying the one and only Maxine Sullivan.

Gone With The Wind gets a wee bit dull in the second chorus, though if you enjoy Tommy Dorsey playing straight you'll go for Jack Lacey, too. *Stop, etc.* offers all-too-brief evidence of the superiority of Mondello as a white alto ace. Maxine's tone and phrasing beggar description. As a sample I'd like you to catch the way she accents the word "breakin'" both in the first and the last quarters of her chorus.

Hallmark of Carter Genius

Benny Carter and His Orchestra.
"Skip It" (***).

Benny Carter and His Orchestra with Coleman Hawkins.

"Pardon Me Pretty Baby" (**).
(Vocalion S.126.)

In the same style as *I'm In The Mood For Swing*, though the performance is not quite so clean, *Skip It* bears the hallmark of Carter genius, a chorus for four saxophones. Though it's not quite the reed section of the old Club

Harlem Orchestra, it still has Benny on lead alto and a pretty nice blend; after which George Chisholm gives a reposeful, perfectly phrased sixteen-bar solo, Freddy Johnson takes over rather ineffectually before Benny's final alto contest with the ensemble.

Jam Ensemble Is Messy

Pardon Me is less successful than the previous fruits of the Dutch sessions. Chisholm, Jimmy Williams and Johnson all happen to be below their best form, and the jammed ensemble in the first chorus is messy. The best part is a chorus split between Benny on trumpet and Hawkins, in which Hawkins' final phrase is (if I may coin a phrase) simply terrific.

Edgar Hayes Quintet.

"So Rare" (***).

"I Know Now" (**).

(Brunswick 02495.)

Lukewarm swing, served by clarinetist Rudy Powell and rhythm section, with vibraphonic interludes by Kenny Clark in which you can almost count your clichés before they're hatched, and plenty of crooning for the suburban taste (yokel choruses, one might say). *I Know Now* is never more than neutrally pleasant, but *So Rare* has a better vocal and some of Hayes' most salutary piano.

XMAS SURPRISE IS BETTER LATE THAN NOT AT ALL—especially when it is Joe Marsala

ROSEMARY LANE OF THE AIRLANES ★



JUST about the best Christmas surprise I could have hoped for has arrived in the shape of a letter from Alistair Cooke with the more than gratifying news that Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans are to be broadcast to London in a special swing concert from the Hickory House, New York City, on January 8.

Up to the present my crusading for Marsala has had comparatively little point in view of the infrequency with which his recordings have been released in this country. The broadcast, which is no doubt the result of Joe's recent adoption by the MCA, who have been concerned in practically all the Transatlantic relays, should help to pave the way not only for the enlargement of Marsala's public, but also to show that the virtual hegemony of Benny Goodman in the realm of clarinetists is something of a fallacy. Moreover, the material in this programme, by way of a change from the concessions made in previous relays, will be exclusively non-commercial, with an assurance of plenty of blues in B flat as well as *Singin' The Blues* and some of Joe's specialties, such as *Muskrat Scramble*, *Jazz Me Blues* and *Clarinet Marmalade*.

Since practically all the individuals in this programme will be unknown to the majority of you, I might recall that the personnel runs like this: Leader and clarinet, Joe Marsala, who also plays swell alto and recently.

trumpet; Joe's twenty-eight-year-old brother, Marty; cornet, doubling guitar, Bobby Hackett. (He had a band of his own at a theatre club in Boston, was sud-

FEATHER FORECAST AND NEWS

Piano, the twenty-one year-old marvel Joe Bushkin, who made a few

"Joe says he has the purest tone since Bix," my correspondent points out, "which sounds silly until you hear him."

Rosemary Lane, half of the Lane Sisters and for a long time associated with Fred Waring, has followed Connie Boswell's example and launched out on her own, co-starring with Dick Powell in the "Hollywood Parade" radio programme.

records with Bunny Berigan and Sharkey; guitar, Ray Biondi, another Italian Chicagoan; drums, Buddy Rich, a newcomer who has only been playing for about nine months; bass, Artie Shapiro, the only New Yorker in the band, and one of the world's finest swing men on his instrument.

Purest Since Immortal Bix

"Joe's is the only band in New York playing the old Chicago style," says



★ Joe Marsala himself, snapped as he leaves the Hickory House after a strenuous jam session. ★

Description of Hickory House

"I'll begin by describing the Hickory House, the crowd, the band, and will introduce the numbers. . ."

I have told you all this so that all of you can keep your Saturday night free.

Particularly gratifying is the reflection that the recognition now being offered to these boys is the climax to many months of hardship, scuffling for jobs, playing in deserted clubs and having to fight hard for payment. Just a year ago, when I last saw the Marsalas, they did not know where the next job was coming from, had no management, and, had it not been for the genuine team spirit and mutual good musical taste which bound these boys together through thick and thin, the combination might have dissolved forever on any one of several occasions.

Reception permitting, Marsala's will be the biggest thrill the B.B.C. has offered us for a long time.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Alistair Cooke, "and of late it's surprising how many of the great ones have wanted to join the band. As it is, all sorts of people drop in to his Sunday Swing Sessions, and beg to play. "This broadcast which I am competing on the 8th is specially done for the B.B.C. I am hoping that from it there will be enough mail from England to make it worth while a company here making some records of Joe. At present nobody will record him because he refuses to do a commercial arrangement.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE transatlantic swing broadcast arranged for tomorrow, Saturday, January 8, will present a band of newcomers to the air-waves, Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans. This should be a rare treat, for not only is Marsala's unit one of the most advanced swing combinations in the States, but it also possesses a unique personality and personnel which qualify it as the only band in New York today playing in the genuine old Chicago style of compact improvisation. This style of small-band performance has been accepted by a wider range of musical brows than any other jazz form.

The band will be relayed direct from the Hickory House Club, and the programme will be strictly non-commercial, made up of such swing fare as the evergreen 'Jazz Me Blues', 'Blues in B flat', and 'Clarinet Marmalade'.

For months these boys fought what seemed to be a losing battle for united success; often accepting jobs in half-deserted night clubs; often with no job at all, but determined to stick together. Now this special broadcast is but one indication of the success that has crowned their efforts.

Alistair Cooke, who is presenting the programme, will describe the club, the crowd, and the general scene as well as announcing the items. In the personnel will be Marty Marsala, brother of the leader, playing trumpet; Bobby Hackett on cornet and guitar; Joe Bushkin, twenty-one-year-old pianist; Ray Biondi, guitar; Artie Shapiro, bass; Buddy Rich, drums; and Joe Marsala, leading on clarinet.

* * * *

Another band which is to make its broadcasting bow next week is Ken Johnson's, which will be heard in a connoisseurs' programme on Regional next Tuesday from 9 to 9.30.

The most interesting aspect of this broadcast will be the fact that Johnson's is the first all-British coloured orchestra ever to reach the front of this country's dance orchestras.

Ken Johnson went on an extensive quest for talent before assembling this present group from musicians he found in Trinidad, British Guiana, and Barbados. He himself was born in Georgetown, British Guiana, in 1914, the son of a doctor. As a youth he came to England for his education, studied medicine at London University, and five years ago took up dancing as a hobby which soon became his profession.

After working as assistant to the noted dance-director Buddy Bradley, Johnson went to the U.S.A. for a year, taking part in Hollywood film shorts and touring with the band of Fletcher Henderson as conductor and dancer. On his return to England in 1935 he took the plunge into band-leading.

* * * *

Here is the personnel of his present orchestra, which was formed less than a year ago and has been playing at the Old Florida in Mayfair: Wally Bowen (first trumpet), David Wilkins (solo trumpet), Freddie Gagenblade (trombone), Carl Barriteau (first alto sax, clarinet), George Roberts (second alto sax, baritone sax, clarinet), David Williams (tenor sax), Errol Barrow (piano), Joey Deniz (guitar), 'Pops' Clare (bass), Tommy Wilson (drums), and Don Johnson—no relation—as vocalist and guitarist. Ken Johnson only conducts, but admits that he 'fools around on a fiddle and drums' as spare time musical practice.

Buckingham Palace Goes Jazz

Teddy Joyce Assembles Feminine Band a la Spitalny . . . Semi-Pros Unionize . . . Other London Notes

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON, ENG.—Buckingham Palace was the scene of an event which made jazz history last month when a dance orchestra was engaged to play at a State Ball. The use of a civilian orchestra as opposed to the military bands always employed at previous events of this kind was a great honor for Dalton Marshall, forty-year-old Yorkshire pianist, whose orchestra played the music at this ball, which was held in honor of the visiting King of the Belgians. Incidentally, the first two numbers played were American, both by the late George Gershwin: *Shall We Dance* and *Beginner's Luck*.

A Break for the Girlies

Teddy Joyce has been given a big break by the B.B.C. in the shape of a contract for a series of special forty-five-minute broadcasts, the first of which are to take place on January 14, 18 and 24. The inclusive fee for each broadcast is £700, which is big money by B.B.C. standards.

Joyce is assembling a big line up of girl instrumentalists (7 strings, 5 saxes, 7 brass, flute, harp and 4 rhythm); a choir of 8, a new trio of Irish girl singers, and guest artists including, probably, Barbara Blair and Dinah Miller. Arrangements will be written by Bob Busby, who was a corner man with Jack Payne's Orchestra for some years.

Joyce is talking of this venture as a challenge to American girl bands and his idea is to present a counterpart of Phil Spitalny's act.

Collapses on Stand

Emilo Colombo, sixty-year-old violinist and former Tchaikowsky protégé, who for the last sixteen years ran a large orchestral service in London, after his flight from the Russian Czarist Court, died at the May Fair Hotel after collapsing on the bandstand. Colombo, who had played before practically all the royalty in Europe, was one of the best known contractors for light orchestras and dance bands in this country.

Vivian Duncan's orchestra at the Café Anglais failed to click, and was succeeded by a new combination under the direction of Len Bermon, one-time vocalist and drummer with Henry Halls band.

Competish for Ambrose

Jack Harris and his orchestra, which has been endeavoring to provide competition for Ambrose, is opening in vaudeville at London's Holborn Empire on January 3. Booking was arranged by Jack Hylton. Hylton's orchestra, by the way,

is touring without its leader, the baton being in the hands of compère Eddie Pola.

Semi-Pros Unionize

Over two hundred semi-professional band leaders convened in London from all over the country and agreed unanimously to form a semi-pro Dance Band Directors' Association in alliance with the professional association already in operation. This move towards unionization is considered the most important move the semi-pros have ever made for their own benefit.

George Elrick, comedian vocalist who was touring under Hylton's management, using Lew Stone's band, has now given up the latter group to form a combination of his own, composed of three reeds, trumpet and three rhythm.

Another New Band

Another new band which shows signs, on the strength of its personnel, of becoming one of the most important groups over here, is that assembled by Eddie Carroll for Firth Shepherd's show at the Piccadilly Theatre, which contains many of the best-known men in this country, the full line-up being: Jimmy Macaffer and Arthur Mouncey (trumpets); Bruce Campbell (trumpet and trombone); Freddy Welsh, George Chisholm (trombones); Les Gilbert, Jay Farley (altos); Benny Greenwood, Benny Winestone (tenors); Eddie Carroll (piano); Archie Slavin (guitar); Sid Hieger (drums); Doug Lees (bass).

Arthur Young, one of Scotland's most brilliant and versatile pianists, has suddenly appeared in the limelight again after a year's absence on the Continent, and is now musical director for the International Broadcasting Co., which produces a large number of the English-language sponsored transcriptions from continental stations.

Sidney Lipton has introduced the flügelhorn to the West End in his Grosvenor House orchestra. . . . Roy Fox is dickering for a residential London job after all those years of touring in vaudeville.

Top Tunes in England

Leading songs in this country at press time on the air: *Little Old Lady; Goodnight to You All* (English, Publ. Macmelodies); *Afraid to Dream; That Old Feeling; Whispers in the Dark; Let Us Be Sweethearts Again* (English, Publ. Gilbert); *The First Time I Saw You; Vieni Vieni; Home Town* (English, Publ. Peter Maurice); *Smile When You Say Goodbye* (English, Publ. Lawrence Wright).

Coming Band

Gerry Morton opened two weeks ago with his own band at New York's swank Plaza Hotel. Morton, who under his right name of Mort Kahn, is the pianist who drew such unmitigated praise from METRONOME even before his arrival in New York a couple of years ago. Needless to say, a great future is predicted.

Sensational Band Minus Saxes & Piano!

THE second batch of French "Disques Swing," which I have just received, are worthy of a few comments, even if their prohibitive price of 25fr. plus postage means a limited market for them over here. (Details from "Disques Swing," 251, Faubourg St. Martin, Paris.)

SW 7 is a Reinhardt solo effort on *St. Louis Blues*, florid but effective, and *Bouncin' Around*, a composition of the Belgian trumpet player and band-leader, Gus Deloof, with accompaniments by Louis Gaste, guitar, and D'Hell-emmes, bass, which are satisfactory.

Dickie Wells provides a smashing surprise with a band composed of himself on trombone with three trumpets, guitar, bass and drums, on SW 6. You don't miss the saxes, and you certainly don't miss the piano, which may prove my constant suspicion that this is the most dispensable instrument in the recording rhythm section, even with a full band. Coleman, Dillard and Collins make a wonderful trumpet trio. This band should have been called Dickie Wells and His Hell's Bells. Two choruses of terrific riffing, some of it familiar from Teddy Hill's Cotton Club show work over here, bring *Between The Devil* to an end in a blaze of brass glory. *Bugle Call Rag* is almost as great. Great stuff, this brass.

Django, who does a good job, while *Sweet Georgia Brown* is strengthened by the presence of Ernest Myers on bass. This is one of the few real thrills I have had from records in the past month.

Which makes it even pleasanter to be able to burst forth with the news that the B.B.C. has at last hooked Eddie for a relay from Paris, which has been fixed for Saturday, January 29, Regional from 9 to 9.30. Mark it down.

* * *

Before leaving Eddie I cannot resist quoting from an appreciation of him which appeared in "Hot Jazz," and which is reproduced letter for letter:—

"Eddie South is one of the most accomplished musicians to be found . . . his technique surpasses infinitely the one of a Venuti, his intonations are extremely moving. The most striking point in Eddie's playing

is his perfect, TOTAL easiness, providing from the combination of an incredible natural and the astounding technique mentioned above. . . . His prodigious technique and his captivating tone suffi in holding interest." (Sic is right!)

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

FEATHER FORECAST AND NEWS

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED JANUARY 14, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

UNLESS you have ever been caught in a whirlwind, you will find it difficult to imagine the nature of an interview with Teddy Joyce. This two-hundred-volt, three-hundred-words-a-minute personality, by New York out of Toronto, presents a strangely incongruous picture in the modern Kensington flat where he lives with his father: one feels that he belongs in one of those high-pressure American backstage films.

This perpetual agitation, coupled with an equally restless imagination, will be reflected in the three new-style Variety-and-dance programmes arranged by Joyce for today, January 14 (National), Tuesday, January 18 (Regional), and Monday, January 24 (National), in which he will conduct and compère an all-feminine combination including a twenty-four-piece orchestra, a choir, Barbara Blair, the musical-comedy star, and Dinah Miller, one of the most stylish of English girl singers.

In the two and a half years since he was last on the air, Joyce's activities have been many and widespread, reaching their peak this month with the responsibility of running three orchestras at once, one male, one female, one juvenile. Teddy Joyce's Girl Friends, the group to be heard in the broadcasts, include several new instrumental discoveries, including trumpeters Vera Marsland and Louise Selkirk, the latter being the hot soloist; others in the personnel are Mabel Willis Brown, red-headed first violinist, doubling viola, Elsie Ford, blonde double-bass, and Ivy Benson, who once described for this column the life of a typical girl jazz musician.

Several of the principal instrumentalists come from Wales and Scotland, and the trio of girl harmony singers hails from Ireland.

Teddy Joyce first arrived in this country just four years ago, after a varied career of singing, dancing, and band-leading in the U.S. and Canada. His signature tune, 'The world is waiting for the sunrise', recalls an old association, for its composer is Ernest Seitz, a pianist who gave music lessons to Joyce at the Conservatory in Toronto.

Bob Busby has written the orchestrations for these ambitious programmes. The band is composed of six strings, five saxophones, seven brass, flute, harp, and four rhythm.

* * * * *

Another Canadian band-leader will be on the air this week, when, from the West of England, a dance cabaret will include Billy Bissett and his Canadians, now playing in a Bournemouth hotel.

* * * * *

Several interesting record recitals are planned for this week. On Monday evening there is a programme of traditional blues music devised by Charles Chilton; Maurice Brown and Leslie Perowne have collaborated on a history of the dance which, next Wednesday afternoon, will span the centuries from the pavane through the minuet to the waltz, the turkey trot, ragtime, the Charleston, and possibly even the Big Apple.

On Friday afternoon James Holloway will follow up his Parisian disc presentation with a similar wax tour of the New York night clubs, entitled 'Broadway Rhythm'.

* * * * *

Mention of the Welsh musicians in Teddy Joyce's band reminds me that you can hear an all-Welsh orchestra, the Craigside Rhythm Band, from the Welsh Region on Monday, featuring the three brothers Seager playing sax, piano, and bass.

Still More Exciting

SW 8 is more exciting still, being the first record for many years by Eddie South, and proving him indisputably one of the great jazz violinists of today as a melting-pot of all the requisites of his job; style, swing, tone, attack (amazing!) and real musicianship which enables him to play with the utmost ease and assurance. On the blues he is accompanied solely by



Eddie South

MELODY MAKER

JAN 15 1938

Ex-Fletcher Henderson Trumpet Star Dies In Tragic Circumstances

ONE OF THE MOST TRAGIC STORIES IN THE HISTORY OF SWING MUSIC HAS JUST COME TO A PITIFUL CONCLUSION, WHEN, FORGOTTEN EVEN BY THE FEW WHO HAD APPRECIATED HIS ART YEARS AGO, JOE SMITH, THE COLOURED TRUMPET PLAYER, DIED IN A LUNATIC ASYLUM ON LONG ISLAND.

Smith will be remembered by veteran fans as soloist on many of Fletcher Henderson's greatest records, and accompanying Bessie Smith, who so admired his playing that when Henderson brought any other trumpet player into the studio, even including Louis Armstrong, she would raise violent objections.

Described by John Hammond as "my favourite of all trumpet players," Joe Smith faded into obscurity a decade ago, after leaving his last important job with McKinney's Cotton Pickers. He had been ailing since 1930, and hardly played at all in recent years. His brother, Russell, is still playing first trumpet with Fletcher Henderson.

RED HOT DANCE NEWS

Bob Crosby's split with Rockwell O'Keefe and adoption by M.C.A. seems likely to result in many complications. The former booking office has declared its intention of going to the Civil Courts to defend its legal rights, insisting that the charges against it of mismanagement are unjustified.

The fact that the band is a co-operative one has been closely connected with the legal complications that have ensued.

British listeners might note that Crosby's Band will be broadcasting to Britain on January 31.

From Los Angeles and Chicago respectively comes news about two famous musicians who have taken the plunge into business affairs.

Bill Harty, who is still managing Ray Noble, has opened a talent booking office on the coast in connection with Frank Kelton; and Paul Mares, famed trumpet player of the original New

Orleans Rhythm Kings, has opened up a barbecue (hot dog emporium) in the windy city.

Chick Webb and his orchestra, currently in New York, may open at Sebastian's Cotton Club in Los Angeles towards the end of February. Chick, following the fashion, has recorded two twelve-inchers for Decca: *I Want To Be Happy*; *Hallelujah*.

Watch out also for his version of *The Man I Love*, with some sensational trumpet playing by Bobby Starks arranged by Kenneth Anderson, a discovery whom he recently signed in Chicago.

From the coast comes news of Frankie Trumbauer, who strongly denies the rumour that he is retiring from active musicianship, has been experimenting with a new electric instrument which looks like a standard upright piano but has a tone between a harpsichord and a guitar.

COMPLETE GUIDE TO RECORD RELEASES for MID-JANUARY

Three-shilling records

Andrews Sisters (Vocal Trio with Orchestra) (N.Y., October, 1937): *Why Talk About Love*; *Just A Simple Melody*. Brunswick 02541.

Fisher (Freddie's) "Schmickel-fritz" Band (Chicago, Autumn, 1937): *Nobody's Got The Blues But Me*; *When My Baby Smiles At Me*. Freddie Fisher (leader, clarinet, tenor, ocarina); Nels Laasko (cornet); Stanley Fritts (trombone); Paul Cooper (piano); Ken Trisko (drums); Charlie Koenig (tuba and bass). Brunswick 02539.

Foursome, The (Vocal Quartet with Instrumental Accomp.) (Los Angeles, September, 1937): *Sweet Potato Swing*; *Nobody's Sweetheart*. Marshall Smith, Del Porter, Ray Johnson and Dwight Snyder. Brunswick 02535.

Hayes (Edgar) and his Orchestra (N.) (N.Y., October, 1937): *Shindig* (vocal; Bill Darnell); *Queen Isabella* (no vocal). For personnel, see Guide for November, 1937. Brunswick 02540.

Henderson (Fletcher) and his Orchestra (N.) (N.Y., October, 1937): *What's Your Story* (comp. Henderson); *Let 'Er Go* (comp. Larry Clinton). Fletcher Henderson (leader and piano); Dick Vance, Emmett Berry, Russell Smith (trumpets); Ed Cuffee, John McConnell, Al Wynn (trombones); Jerry Blake (alto, clarinet and vocalist); Hilton Jefferson (alto); Elmer Williams, Ben Webster (tenors); Laurence Lucie (guitar); Pete Suggs (drums); Paul Crosby (bass). Vocalion 125.

Miller (Glenn) and his Orchestra (N.Y., June 1937): *Sleepy Time*; *Community Swing*. (Last title comp., and both arr., by Glenn Miller.) Glenn Miller (leader and trombone); Charles Spivak, Manny Klein, Stirling Bose (trumpets); Jesse Ralph, Harry Rodgers (trombones); George Siravo (alto); Hal McIntyre (alto and clarinet); Jerry Jerome, Carl Biesecker (tenors); Edward Smith (piano); Dick McDonough (guitar); George Simon (drums); Ted Kotsaftis (bass). Vocalion S. 127.

Pollack's (Ben) "Pick a Rib" Boys (Los Angeles, Summer, 1937): *If It's The Last Thing I Do*; *You Made Me Love You*. Ben Pollack (leader and drums); probably with Mugsy Spanier (trumpet); Galen Gloyd (trombone); Benny Kanter (clarinet); Jack Stacy (tenor); Bob Laine (piano); Gary McAdams (guitar); F. Palmer (bass); Peggy Mann (vocalist). Brunswick 02538.

Webb (Chick) and his Orchestra (N.) (N.Y., November, 1937): *Just A Simple Melody*; *Holiday In Harlem*. Chick Webb (leader and drums); Mario Bauza, Bobby Starks, Taft Jordan (trumpets); Nathaniel Story, Sandy Williams (trombones); Chauncey Haughton, Louis Jordan, Wayman Carver (altos); Teddy McRea (tenor); Tommy Fulford (piano); Bobby Johnson (guitar); Beverley Peer (bass); Ella Fitzgerald (vocalist). Brunswick 02536.

Wilson (Teddy) and his Orchestra (N.Y., November, 1937): *Things Are Looking Up*; *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (both comp. Gershwin). Teddy Wilson (leader and piano); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Vido Musso (tenor); Prince Robinson (clarinet); Allan Reuss (guitar); Swing Roo (drums); Walter Paige (bass); Billie Holiday (vocalist). Vocalion S.128.

Two-shilling record

Polo, Danny (Clarinet Solo), with Eddie Macauley (Piano). London, October, 1937: *Mr. Polo Takes A Solo*; *Money For Jam* (both comp. Polo). Dudley Barber (drums). Decca F.6578.

One-and-six record

Gardner (Freddy) and His Swing Orchestra (London, December, 1937): *You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming*; *That Old Feeling*. Freddy Gardner (leader, alto, tenor and clarinet); Billy Farrell, Archie Craig (trumpets); Ted Heath, Paul Fenoulhet (trombones); Pat Dodd (piano); George Elliott (guitar); Barry Wicks (drums); Dick Ball (bass). Rex 9207.

MELODY MAKER JAN 15, 1938

5-X

JIMMIE LUNCEFORD'S

(Says our Hot Record Reviewer "ROPHONE")

SOUNDS LIKE NO OTHER BAND IN THE WORLD

HORTICULTURISTS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Orchid
- ★★★ Rose
- ★★ Geranium
- ★ Dandelion

Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra.

"Raggin' The Scale."

"For Dancers Only."

(***Brunswick 02531.)

LUNCEFORD can claim one of the rarest Orders of Jazz Merit: he sounds like no other band in the world. Like Goodman, he has evolved a style of his own, bringing all the copyists in his wake, but still stands a shoulder or so above his imitators, who have not even had the good taste to omit Lunceford's weaker points from their imitations, preferring to concentrate on high-note trumpet tricks and other important

accoutrements of the Lunceford style.

In *Raggin' The Scale* you hear none of the band's weaknesses save a few bars of unison cliché work at the end. High-note trumpet is absent. The brass section has yumph. The arrangement is full of correctly applied ingenuity (as opposed to cleverness), as, for example, the background to the trumpet solo towards the beginning—note particularly the harmonic variations between bars 11 and 12.

Couple of Trumpet Yelps

For Dancers Only descends (or maybe I mean ascends) to a couple of trumpet yelps, and is crammed with *Christopher Columbus* and other familiar licks. But some chefs know how to make even a hash tasty. This time composer Sy Oliver can be let off with a warning.

(P.S.—Watch your pitch, you cats!)

Benny Goodman and His Orchestra.

"Changes."

"Minnie The Moocher's Wedding Day."

(***H.M.V. B.8683.)

Goodman is right back up there, in the King Porter clouds of two years ago. This return to the original peerless form and atmosphere of the band is something to shout about. No more third-rate pops and mediocre vocalists, please Benny! Numbers like *Changes* and this revamped Henderson arrangement (cf. Parlo. R2031) of *Minnie* make such far better Goodman-fodder. Benny and the ensemble hog the wax, but they deserve it. Play this record to shreds and learn all about swing bands and swing clarinet; or if you won't learn, just listen anyway.

Eddie Carroll and His Swingphonic Orchestra.

"Night Ride."

"Blue Danube Swing."

(**Parlophone R.2464.)

Don't judge this first record of Eddie's new band too harshly; it is not his fault that both arrangements belong to a hackneyed genre entirely unsuited to a band with such possibilities and with such soloists. The fault is Parlophone's for selecting his material. Sid Phillips' ideas on how to swing the *Blue Danube* are fine, maybe, as a novelty for commercial bands,

and at one time I myself was impressed by *Night Ride*; but a star combination like Carroll's deserves some real arrangements in the groove to launch it.

In section work, brass and reeds show a very happy co-operative sense of style; but the soloists are wasted, except for a few bars here and there. You would hardly suspect that Benny Winestone, George Chisholm, Bruce Campbell and Jay Farley are around. If they are given the chance and if some suitable arrangements are produced, this band may become the first pretender to the British Goodman throne.

Three points, then, for next time:— (a) Parlophone must let Carroll select his own material, (b) the rhythm section must be brought much nearer the mike, (c) people like Chisholm should have a whole chorus each instead of eight bars.

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.

"Night And Day."

"Smoke Gets In Your Eyes."

(**H.M.V. B.8681.)

I don't usually believe those claims from people who claim they can tell what's coming eight bars ahead, but in this instance the claim might well be substantiated. Tommy does just what we have learned to expect from him with these two deliberately commercial performances. Eminently musical, and licensed for people over sixty.

Short and Bright Intervals

Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra.

"The First Time I Saw You" (**).

"Roses In December" (*).

(H.M.V. B.8680.)

Know what a hot-water bottle feels like with cold water in it? That's the effect of these tepid twain by Bunny, complete with polite vocals and expensively short bright intervals. File on H.M.V. for neglecting scores of superior unissued Berigans in favour of this.

Frankie Trumbauer and his Orchestra.

"Trumbology."

Bix Beiderbecke and his Orchestra.

"Goose Pimples."

(***Parlophone R.2465.)

Tram shows off with a lot of multiple-tongueing, but gets in some



BENNY GOODMAN
right back up in the clouds
again, says our critic

real music, too, accompanied by Bix, Lang, Rank, Mertz and Morehouse. The Bix side is far superior, with jammed ensemble that seemed old-fashioned when originally issued, but, since the recent renaissance of this style, now seems to have been a decade ahead of its time. Rollini's bass sax gives the proceedings their unforgettable personality. Bix never plays a single note too soft, loud, soon or late. If you want to support reissues, here you are; but the original coupling with *Jazz Me Blues* by the same gang on R.127 made a far better bargain. *Trumbology* was also previously put out on Parlophone—R.3419, backed by *For No Reason At All In C*.

Casa Loma Orchestra.

"Swing Low, Sweet Chariot."

"Casa Loma Stomp."

(*Brunswick 02497.)

The original *Casa Loma Stomp* was issued on Parlophone R.890 in May, 1931, when Mike wrote of it: "The band demands our attention, and amazes us with the fire and precision of its ensemble, the attack and phrasing of

both brass and sax sections and the determined rhythm." Of the tenor player he said: "His tone and phrasing are not unlike those of the great Hawkins"; and of the ensuing ensemble: "It is full of beans and works up to a terrific chorus for three saxes. . . . The last half minute or so of this record is almost overpowering. To say that it is a record worthy of Ellington is the highest praise I can give it."

"Mike's" Wild Enthusiasm

"Mike's" wild enthusiasm in those days at least had the excuse that the Casa Loma was offering something new in jazz styles, but even at that date I doubt whether it was of any value, and with the passing of nearly seven years it has become positively archaic. This new recording is actually weaker in ensemble than the original version. As for the tenor player, he is no more like Hawkins than he ever was, and the only crumbs of comfort are taken from the clarinet and trumpet players (who also do fair work on the reverse).

And to think that this is the opus that brother "Mike" described as "in answer to my maiden prayers"!

INSIDE REASONS WHY THE

GRAMOFAN GETS SPECIAL RELEASES HELD UP UNTIL TUNES ARE DATED



The sax section and brass of the Hudson-de Lange Orchestra get going



RECORD fans who are constantly berating the gramophone companies for their lack of prudence in the couplings of English releases of American recordings, or for the inexplicable delays and failures to release certain records, should be interested in the story behind the news that Gershwin's famous *Porgy and Bess* score has just been released in this country.

For nearly two years, ever since the original American production of the play, the British public has been denied the pleasure of listening on the radio or records to the delightful melodies from this opera, and

the records by Bing Crosby, Billie Holiday and others of *I Got Plenty Of Nuttin'*, *It Ain't Necessarily So*, *Summertime*, and the rest. As in dozens of similar cases, the tunes have been withheld in order that they should not be dated and outworn in the event of an English production of the show. So the months have slid by, the show has never been brought over, and the songs have gathered

dust on the publisher's and the record companies' shelves.

This is an aspect of the music business that it almost unknown to the fan; yet it has a big bearing on these questions of couplings and releases. Frequently a number is held up though the chances are a million to one against the production over here of the show from which it originates; thus a beautiful pop song called *This Is My Last Affair* was held back for nearly two years before it was realised that there was no earthly point in keeping the farce up any longer.

Most Amazing Case of All

The most amazing case of all is that of another Gershwin tune, *Liza*, which was written for the New York *Show Girl* of 1929, and which, but for a few persistent enquiries, might have languished for ever, but finally saw the light here only last year.

In the West End it is considered smart to circumvent these bans by smuggling advance copies from America, and "society" derives an esoteric pleasure from dancing to *The Lady Is A Tramp*; *It's De-Lovely* and other forbidden fruits. The Berlin hits from *On The Avenue* crashed Mayfair nearly six months before their official British release to coincide with the film.

New Way to Go To Town!

A correspondent has sent me a Parlophone catalogue in which is listed a record by the Washboard Serenaders under the title *Dear Old Southend*.

Somebody seems to have found a new way to go to town!

* * *

An American contemporary has been conducting, at great length, what might aptly be described as a "Reeferendum," explaining that

"because of the widespread use of marijuana among musicians" they have interviewed doctors, psychiatrists and both the addicted and the abstemious musicians, with a view to giving an authentic picture of the weed and its effects.

This subject is not one on which to dwell in these pages, but it should interest and amaze the average, bourgeois-living fan, who obtains his music on wax plates in a shop and knows no worse debauchery than a Saturday night beer booze, to learn that "no jam session is worthy of that exalted title without a stick or two of 'tea' to pass around," and that American musicians played a large part in the national dissemination of Mexican muggles.

Feather Forecast and News

Personally, in meeting many American musicians who don't care a hoot about tea others who indulge very casually and occasionally, and others who light up from morning till night, I have found that those who avoid its use are by no means inferior in musical inspiration to those who smoke, and that the effect varies according to the constitution of the smoker. I have known the weaklings to succumb after just a puff or two of cigarettes impregnated with the drug, while the more robust seem impervious to endless hours of smoking.

The article quotes the "Dad of All The Vipers" as declaring that after a lifetime of viling he has been okayed by his insurance doctor as the best of risk though it is certain that for weak individuals the effect might have been habit-forming and deleterious.

Anyway, let's get outa here. The atmosphere's getting too smoky.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

HOW MANY OF THESE RECORDS HAVE YOU GOT?

During the last six months of 1937 the following have received the comparatively rare four-star recommendation from our critic, "Rophone."

The stars are not a guide to comparative artistic merit. They indicate which records are most likely to be worth the average reader's attention.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED JANUARY 21, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

LIKE so many of the signature tunes, Ambrose's famous 'When day is done', of which he has had twenty-five different arrangements made during the nine years he has used it, has a curious and somewhat involved origin. It was first published early in 1924 in Vienna under the title 'Madonna' and was the work of a young Viennese writer, Robert Katscher. Later that year it was brought to England as 'Panama', and was recorded under this title by Debroy Somers with the Savoy Orpheans.

During his European tour, Paul Whiteman heard the tune on the Continent in the original 'Madonna' form, took it to the United States and presented it to an American publisher, who furnished it with a new set of English lyrics with the title 'When day is done', written by G. 'Buddy' de Sylva, of the de Sylva-Brown-Henderson team which evolved 'Black Bottom', 'Birth of the Blues', 'Sonny Boy', and 'Little Pal'. In this third form it was issued in 1926, later to be started here by Jack Hylton, the 'Panama' version being abandoned.

Robert Katscher will be best remembered as the writer of the *Wonder Bar* numbers, including 'Elisabeth'. He visited London to assist in the English production of this revue. Subsequently Hollywood lured him to write for films, but after a few months' experience of screenland his temperament dictated a mutual cancellation of the contract, and he returned to Vienna. In the meantime 'When day is done' has become one of the evergreens of American jazz, with a sale of over a million copies.

* * * *

One of the most difficult of musical instruments, and consequently one of the most rarely used for swing improvisation, is the violin. Throughout the entire generation in which jazz has lived, only one 'hot fiddler' has achieved international fame—Joe Venuti, heard with Paul Whiteman's Orchestra in the *King of Jazz* film, and best known for his hundreds of recordings with his guitarist partner, the late Eddie Lang.

Next week, however, the BBC will be killing two *canards* with one stone by presenting an artist who will dispel the fallacy that the violin is becoming a thing of the past in swing music as well as the belief that coloured instrumentalists lack finesse. Eddie South, the Negro star, who will be heard with his orchestra from Paris on Saturday, January 29 (Regional, 9.0), has been described in America as 'The Dark Angel of the Violin'.

Born in Louisiana thirty-four years ago, Eddie South commenced his musical studies at the Chicago College of Music when nine years old. He started his professional career in 1920, and first went to New York in 1926, organising his own orchestra shortly afterwards.

Between 1927 and 1930 he toured Europe, and completed his studies in Budapest and Paris. After his return to the States he toured with his efficient little orchestra, playing opposite Whiteman and in many restaurants not accustomed to employing coloured bands. Last summer he returned to Europe to play in the Paris exhibition, and recently took Willie Lewis's place at the Florence restaurant.

The other musicians in his combination, who will probably take part in the broadcast with him, include David Martin, piano; Everett Barksdale, guitar; Ernesto Marrero, drums; and Paul Cordonnier, string bass.

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| Dorsey (Tommy) and his Orchestra.
<i>Beale Street Blues; Stop, Look and Listen.</i> H.M.V. 12in. C.2938. | Mills Brothers with Louis Armstrong.
<i>Darling Nellie Gray.</i> Brunswick 02445. |
| Dorsey (Tommy) and his Clambake Seven.
<i>Twilight In Turkey.</i> H.M.V. B. 8596. | Norvo (Red) and his Orchestra.
<i>Jivin' The Jeep; Remember.</i> Vocalion S. 91. |
| <i>After You.</i> H.M.V. B. 8670. | Polo (Danny) and his Swing Stars.
<i>More Than Somewhat; Stratton Street Strut.</i> Decca F.6518. |
| Goodman (Benny) Quartet.
<i>Smiles.</i> H.M.V. B.8630. | Sullivan (Maxine) and her Orchestra.
<i>I'm Coming, Virginia.</i> Vocalion S.116. |
| Hampton (Lionel) and his Orchestra.
<i>Whoa, Babe!</i> H.M.V. B.8581. | <i>Annie Laurie; Blue Skies.</i> Vocalion S.122. |
| <i>Rhythm, Rhythm; China Stomp.</i> H.M.V. B.8597. | Waller (Fats) and his Rhythm.
<i>San Anton.</i> H.M.V. BD.5215. |
| Hayes (Edgar) and his Orchestra.
<i>Edgar Steps Out.</i> Brunswick 02448. | Wilson (Teddy) and his Orchestra.
<i>There's A Lull; It's Swell of You.</i> Vocalion S.96. |
| Holiday (Billie) and her Orchestra.
<i>Let's Call The Whole Thing Off; They Can't Take That Away From Me.</i> Vocalion S.95. | <i>This Year's Kisses; He Ain't Got Rhythm.</i> Vocalion S.101. |
| Jam Session.
<i>Blues.</i> H.M.V. B.8580. | <i>Coquette; The Hour Of Parting.</i> Decca J.1. |
| Kirk (Andy) and his Clouds of Joy.
<i>In The Groove.</i> Brunswick 02441. | <i>You Let Me Down.</i> Decca J.2. |
| McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans.
<i>Liza; Sugar.</i> Parlophone R.2379. | <i>My Last Affair; Easy Living.</i> Decca J.4. |
| | <i>I'm Coming, Virginia.</i> Decca J.6. |

TWO NEW VOCAL ACTS TO CHALLENGE BOSWELL-MILLS SUPREMACY

**Hot Records
Reviewed
by
"ROPHONE"**

Andrews Sisters (vocal trio) with Orchestra.

"Why Talk About Love?"
"Just A Simple Melody."
(*Brunswick 02541.)

The Foursome (vocal quartet) with Instrumental Accompaniment.

"Sweet Potato Swing."
"Nobody's Sweetheart."
(**Brunswick 02535.)

HOW odd that after seven years of Boswell-Mills supremacy, two new acts should arrive simultaneously on records which seem to constitute a challenge. Certainly the Andrews Sisters have the best blend and common understanding of style and phrasing since the Boswells. The usual recourse to familiar licks does not seem to rob the arrangements of their charm. The second chorus of *Why Talk About Love?* is an example of excellent trio harmony work, and the quick pick-up of the trumpet soloist who follows is no less pointed a paragon of how to keep up the interest slickly even to the point of apt overlapping. On second-rate records you often find the soloists leaving an awkward gap because they feel obliged to wait for their predecessors to finish.

**Brilliant
Arrangements**

The arrangements weld sisters and musicians together intelligently, and the band does nicely. Only complaint about these two sides is that they're a little too closely related in general treatment. This is emphasised when the coda of one side becomes the intro of the other.

Steamboats, tin whistles, or just ocarinas? The Foursome might be anything; vocal and/or instrumental, white or coloured (but I'll bet just one sweet potato against their spade origin). The material is stylish here, trite there; never

disarmingly original in spite of the impudent tone and insoluble identity of the instruments.

* * *

The Mills Brothers.
"Little Old Lady."
"Caravan."

(*Brunswick 02452.)

It is hard to believe that Hoagy Carmichael, that writer of sensationally "different" tunes, could pen such an effort as *Little Old Lady*, which follows formula slavishly.

There is little to choose between this and *Caravan*, so altogether the above coupling should have unlimited appeal; the fact that the arrangements are uninspired, that the boys' intonation is

and Dudley Barber to do a little light mugging, and the above two extra sides are the outcome. Their free-and-easy origin is well reflected in the style, and also, alas, in the under-recording of the drums. *Mr. Polo Takes A Solo* bears a remarkable resemblance to an old chord sequence which you should recognise. Danny's work is completely relaxed, without the slightest forced effect or technical display. Just a hundred per cent. style. Grand stuff.

Money For Jam is a far less successful show; Danny seems to be pulling his punches, as if somebody is standing behind with an axe; and the tempo drags quite noticeably towards the last chorus. Nevertheless, Macauley's chorus, and the passage he shares breaks in with Danny, can hardly offer cause for complaint.



Mabel Scott and her pianist Bob Mosley—tipped for gramophonic honours in the near future.

doubtful, and that they sound like a British quartet trying to imitate the Mills Brothers, must be dismissed as irrelevant, and perhaps irreverent.

No musical instruments or mechanical devices used on this recording other than mechanical mentalities.

* * *

Danny Polo (Clarinet Solo) with Eddie Macauley (Piano).

"Mr. Polo Takes A Solo." ***
"Money For Jam." **
(Decca F.6578.)

After the Polo band session was over, Danny stayed behind with Macauley

Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra.

"Things Are Looking Up."
"Nice Work If You Can Get It."
(*Vocalion S.128.)

The first Wilson release since the Jam Album. Welcome back, Teddy and Billie. *Nice Work* is self-descriptive, with some of the nicest work coming from the leader and from Billie in her softer, more restrained mood. Note the way she twists the words and music of *Nice Work* each time, particularly in the last eight.

Things Are Looking Up is a less interesting piece of Gershwin than its

APIARISTS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Queen Bee
- ★★★ King Bee
- ★★ Worker
- ★ Drone

film-mate, and is treated with rather too much respect. Buck Clayton gave me a shock by using an introduction that convinced me I had put Berigan's *I Can't Get Started* on the turntable.

Has it ever occurred to you that Teddy Wilson's impeccability is helped not a little by the piano he uses in the Brunswick studio? It is obviously an instrument with just the right crisp tone for his style. Points like this escape the enthusiasts, who wouldn't care if Teschmaker played on a converted tin whistle with a matchbox lid for a reed.

* * *

**Corny Riff
On The Tonic**

Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra.

"What's Your Story?"
"Let 'Er Go."
(*Vocalion S.125.)

Let 'Er Go, by Larry Clinton, is a patchwork of *Copper-Coloured Gal* and Clinton's own middle-part of *Spooky Takes A Holiday* (the corny riff on the tonic). *What's Your Story?* is a far more acceptable piece, Henderson's own, but on the strength of the solo work the first side is of more interest. Tenor (Ben Webster), trumpet (probably Dick Vance), and even Israel Crosby on bass, all have their moments, though the honours go to Jerry Blake for his clarinet and vocal work on both this and the backing. He saves the disc from mediocrity, for Fletcher's band has lost the personality of yore, and, though the material (mostly block-scored) is by no means bad, it is not worthy of such a distinguished old name. Blake has a good voice and an appealing, if not pronouncedly hot, style.

* * *

**The Pause
That Refreshes**

Fats Waller and His Rhythm.

"Our Love Was Meant To Be."
"You've Got Me Under Your Thumb."
(*H.M.V. BD.5310.)

For a reviewer, Fats is Coca Cola. The Pause That Refreshes. For the proletariat, interested solely in spending its pocket-money wisely, he is a variable investment. This month the stuff is too commonplace to be commendable for a permanent place in your library (although the first side is an Alex Hill-Fats opus), but within the boundaries of the feeble tunes it's no less delightful than ever for a few hearings.

Tell me, H.M.V., what's the hold-up on *Paswonky* and *Black Raspberry Jam*?

DO YOU KNOW AMERICA'S FAVOURITE TRUMPETER?

DID you know who is America's favourite trumpet player? Give you ten guesses and you still won't get it. Armstrong? Not a chance. Berigan? Wrong again. Bix? Red Allen? Cootie? Eldridge? No, they all stumble hopelessly in the wake of a young man named Harry James.

Harry James, according to the latest musicians' referendum in the United States, is the nation's most popular swing trumpet man to-day. His astonishing seizure of the top place in the department where last year he had not a single vote (and the MELODY MAKER referendum ignored him no less completely) is rivalled in unexpectedness only by the advent in the piano division of Bob Zurke, who runs second only to Teddy Wilson.

James's case epitomises that of the artist who, though possessed of the same merit for some time past, has only lately had the fortune to be heard with a referendum-winning band. In his case it was the transfer from one Benny to another that brought him recognition. If he were still with Pollack instead of Goodman he would certainly not have outdistanced Berigan and Armstrong in the voting.

This country knows very little about Harry James. A good-looking, blondish guy with personality in his playing, he was signed up by Goodman just a year ago. Although his rather purer tone and his downward-gliss effect make it possible generally to distinguish him from Ziggy Elman on the Goodman discs, he can be spotted unmistakably (since he is the only trumpet player) on a number of discs he has made with

Feather Forecast and News

Teddy Wilson, the best examples being *Swell Of You* and *Lull In My Life*, *How Am I To Know* and *I'm Coming Virginia*. He was also on a couple of good Pollacks issued here, *Jintown Blues* and *Spreadin' Knowledge Around*.

His Own Recording Band

Soon Mr. James will be better known over here, and in the event of another "M.M." referendum may jump suddenly into the picture, for he has assembled a fine recording group under his own

name on American Brunswick, with Jess Stacy and boys from Basie's band. Amongst the titles on his first session was his own composition, *Life Goes To A Party*.

Give Mr. James your attention. He didn't earn the first place for nothing.

The aforementioned Mr. Zurke, America's second favourite pianist, can also make his first substantial impression on the British jazzmind very soon—next Monday, in fact, when he will be on the air from New York with Bob Crosby's Orchestra. Zurke was the successor in this combination to Joe Sullivan, whose recuperation is now nearly complete.

Other new personalities whom you

will hear in the Crosby band (unless, of course, atmospheric conditions follow the regrettable precedent of the last few American relays) are Bill Butterfield on trumpet, and one of the original Pollack old-timers who has just rejoined the group, Charlie Spivak.

Maybe She Didn't Know

Curious Characters, No. 57: The elderly Scottish lady in a gramophone shop who asked for a record of *Loch Lomond* by Maureen O'Sullivan.

And No. 58: The B.B.C. telephone girl who, in answer to an enquiry regarding a jam session programme (this is a true story), asked if it was something to do with the women's cookery alks.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED JANUARY 28, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE most famous of all co-operative dance bands will be relayed on Monday in the Regional programme at 8.0 The story of Bob Crosby's Orchestra is a romantic one of a rapid climb to fame on the ladder of America's swing vogue.

When Ben Pollack's Orchestra, a pioneer band which brought out such stars as Benny Goodman and Jack Teagarden, was dissolved a few years ago, some of the members decided to form an incorporated band. As a personality to front the group young Bob Crosby was suggested. He was at that time singing with the Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra. A good personality and not unlike his elder brother Bing in vocal style, he knew the extent of his musical abilities as well as the particular musical ambitions of the men in the band, and was content to leave the technical musical side of the organisation to Gil Rodin, one of the saxophonists. A corporation was formed with Rodin as president, Crosby as vice-president and members of the band as stockholders. In this unusual manner the Bob Crosby Orchestra was born.

Crosby's band has a unique personality in its swing performance, having revived the old 'Dixieland' style (extemporaneous polyphonic music with a rhythmic background, in easy, syncopated style that originated in New Orleans saloons, picnics, and street parades thirty years ago), and remodelled it in the form of written arrangements. The increased size and scope of the modern dance band has not hindered Crosby's men from retaining the original spirit of Dixieland days with the percussive qualities and rhythmic relaxation of the first jazz era.

Crosby and his girl singer, Kay Weber, lend the commercial touch to the performance, while the boys themselves concoct the special swing arrangements such as 'Dixieland Shuffle', 'Gin Mill Blues', 'Pagan Love Song', 'Just Strolling', and others which characterise the Dixieland style.

The personnel includes Bill Butterfield, Charles Spivak, and Yank Lewson, trumpets (Lewson takes the solos); Warren Smith and Ward Silloway, trombones; Gil Rodin and Bill Kearns, saxes; Julian Matlock, alto sax, clarinet solos, and arranger; Eddie Miller, tenor sax, clarinet; Bob Zurke, piano; Hilton Lamare, guitar; Ray Bauduc, drums and arranger; and Bob Haggart, drums and arranger.

If you happened to be working in the City some fourteen years ago, you might have seen a good-looking youth dashing out of the office of a firm of exporters every afternoon, hurrying home to change clothes and identities for his *alter ego* of the evening as dance-band leader at the New Cross Palais. This was Eddie Carroll, making his entry into the musical world. By way of jobs with Al Starita, Hal Kemp, Lew Stone, and Henry Hall, Carroll has followed a devious route before arriving back at the original occupation of band-leader.

Married ten years next month, now in his thirty-first year but much younger in appearance, Eddie Carroll is one of the few London leaders with a well-defined musical 'platform'. The few breathless days he spent in New York, after travelling as leader of the band which Henry Hall guest-conducted on the maiden voyage of the *Queen Mary*, afforded him inspirations which he still preserves.

REC'D
JAN 29 1938
J.W. ...
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RIGHT IS MIGHT

and Edgar Hayes Has The Right Idea

HOT RECORDS REVIEWED
by
"ROPHONE"

Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra.
"Queen Isabella."
"Shindig."

(**Brunswick 02540.)

RIGHT is might, and Edgar has the right idea with this band, even if the axes have a lot of rehearsals head before they can play together or balance properly—in the last eight of chorus two of *Queen Isabella* it sounds as though one of the reed parts is missing. Edgar has taken the line of least resistance with his piano style, lapsing into the one-note technique which is being worn in all the smart sets this season, but he does it well.

What One Would Expect

Since everybody else has been re-writing *Christopher Columbus* for him you can hardly attack Choo Berry for doing so himself, and the aptly named *Queen Isabella* is pretty much what you would expect, though not enough like the original to be tiresome. (Maybe this is due to the lucubrations of Mr. Thomas, Mr. Denniker and Mr. Davis, all of whom take their pound of flesh in the division of the royalties. Strike me purple, four composers for one rewrite!)

Shindig has a vocal, but not a

bad one; and it moves on swiftly to matters of more moment. Sounds like an arrangement by Joe Garland, who probably also contributed the good tenor work.

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.
"Holiday In Harlem" (**).
"Just A Simple Melody" (***)
(Brunswick 02536.)

The term "routine performance" must be interpreted according to the band to which it refers. In the case of many bands it means downright dullness; in Chick's it means a fair dash of Harlem's best ingredients, though without any motive for wild excitement. Ella walks through both sets of stupid lyrics with intelligence.

Poor Recording A Drawback

The main drawback with Chick's commercial jobs (and most of his output than ever is currently falling into this class) is the conventional nature of the routines—straightish first chorus, bridge passage, Ella's vocal, another bridge, a half-hot chorus, and maybe a little riffing, then out. In this instance there is a further drawback in the poor recording or intonation of the saxes.

Freddy Fisher's "Schnickelfritz" Band.
"Nobody's Got The Blues But Me."
"When My Baby Smiles At Me."
(*Brunswick 02539.)

From the vast sales and press they have had in the States I imagined



Bob Crosby seems to be giving the one-two to "Nappy" Lamare, his guitarist.

these to be riotous burlesques. The first side is nothing of the sort, being merely an indifferent attempt at a semi-swing record. The backing is deliberate corn with barnyard clarinet, Harry-the-Horse trombone and Clyde McCoy trumpet. Good for a laugh, but not for three blinkin' bob.

Freddy Gardner and his Orchestra.
"You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming."
"That Old Feeling."
(**Rex 9207.)

Freddy has a good idea here; a British band to sell swing to the bazaar-record-buying masses. A sort of half-way house of swing. But to go all out on this idea it would be better not to stick so religiously to the tune after the first chorus, particularly of *You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming*, which is still being bandied around in the last chorus.

Economy rather than novelty was probably the idea of excluding a reed section, but the arrangements by Roy Martin play Freddy against the brass neatly, and the deficiency is fairly well covered up. There is plenty of alto and tenor work of the type we have come to expect from Freddy.

Weak spots are the trumpet by Archie Craig, the drum breaks and the rhythm section as a whole.

Glenn Miller and his Orchestra.
"Sleepy Time Gal."
"Community Swing."
(**Vocalion S.127.)

I have hardly yet forgiven Glenn Miller for the unspeakable hot arrangements he perpetrated while with Ray Noble—repetitive, old-fashioned, sluggardly. With a band of his own to interpret his ideas he seems to have perked up a trifle, but his own compo-

sition, *Community Swing*, is still packed to the last millimetre with the same old stock phrases and tiresome unison stuff. Surprisingly, though, this new band puts over a performance that comes near to saving the show. Hal McIntyre is a good new clarinet man. *Sleepy Time Gal* is less cornily scored, with a first chorus that does right by the tune, for which I have always had a soft spot.

Like about fifty-seven other bands at the time of writing, this one has possibilities that sadly need further development.

Ben Pollack's "Pick A Rib" Boys.
"If It's The Last Thing I Do."
"You Made Me Love You."
(**Brunswick 02538.)

Where the 'rib-picking comes in I can't imagine, since I had pictured this as a colourful description of xylophone playing, and there's no xylophone here. It's an eight-piece bunch from Pollack's regular band, with compe-

tent solos by clarinet. Benny Kanter, tenor (probably Happy Lawson), and cornet lead, somewhat below his old form, by Muggsy. Peggy Mann spoils both sides with vocals that don't matter. The ensembles are so rough that I feel chapped.

An interesting rarity is the inclusion of a European in an American swing disc. Bob Laine's piano is good enough to hide his Scandinavian origin.

Frank Froeba and his Orchestra.
"Nothing Can Stop Me Now."
"Don't Save Your Love."
(*Brunswick 02530.)

Quite a few pleasant spots of unwontedly Hines-like work from Mr. Froeba. The rest of both sides, particularly the vocals, are uninspired.

FROTHBLOWERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Tun
- ★★★ Barrel
- ★★ Stein
- ★ Thimble

4.0 THE MUSIC AND
 QUINTETTE OF
 RAYMOND SCOTT
 on gramophone records
 Presented by Leonard Feather

SIGNATURE TUNE: by Leonard G. Feather

THE NEW MAN at the MAY FAIR

A NEW figure in the gallery of West End band leaders is Michael Flome, whose appointment last October to direct an orchestra at the May Fair gave him the biggest opportunity of his career. He studied violin and piano during his schooldays, and on entering the profession changed over to saxophone, on which he now leads the band at the hotel, though for broadcasting he confines himself to conducting, which he considers more than a full-time job.

Special features of Flome's programmes are his Viennese-waltz selections (requests for which, surprisingly enough, come as frequently from younger listeners as from the waltz generation); his charming announcer and singer, Paula Green, and his ex-Carroll Levis star, Sidney Gowan, whom he first heard as one of Levis's discoveries. This young singer's trial broadcast with Michael Flome in December brought a sufficiently indicative fan mail to justify his inclusion as regular broadcasting vocalist with the orchestra.

Michael Flome is twenty-eight years old. He has had a variety of experiences in the musical profession, two of the most remarkable of which he recalled to me. One was his attempt to make himself understood with an all-Belgian band which he had been appointed to direct at le Zoute. At the outset only two of the members had the slightest knowledge of English, and rehearsals had to be conducted either in dumb show or through telepathic musical understanding.

Continental musicians, according to Flome, have multi-lingual aspirations; when he left Belgium he had not learned a single word of French, the whole band having persuaded him to teach them English.

His second vivid memory was that of a flood which turned tables into rafts at an Embankment

restaurant where he was playing a few years ago. After conveying several feminine guests to safety he eventually escaped on a barge.

The fact that most National dance-band programmes come from London should not be construed as an indication that British musical talent is only to be found in the capital. Listeners who have been enjoying the programmes of Jack White and his Orchestra should note that only two Londoners are permanent members of the band.

Jack White himself, who plays alto sax and arranges, comes from Liverpool, as do his two brothers, Tommy, his drummer and manager, and Jay, his tenor saxophonist and guitarist.

Jack White was a member of Henry Hall's old orchestra in the Gleneagles days, when Hall himself played trumpet and piano. Later, White formed his own band and played in Liverpool, Manchester, and Brighton. For the past eighteen months he has been alternating with Joe Loss on the bandstand at the Astoria in London. Apart from his music he seems to have more strings to his bow than most leaders one meets, possessing everything from the qualifications of a fully-fledged motor engineer to a good golf handicap and a medal for life-saving.

Many months have passed since the first Raymond Scott tune went over the air in England, but Scott's original recordings with his Quintet of these pieces are still comparatively little known. These, including 'Twilight in Turkey', 'Powerhouse', 'The Toy Trumpet', 'Reckless Night on board an Ocean Liner', and 'Dinner Music for a Pack of Hungry Cannibals', will be heard in a record recital I am presenting on the air today, Friday, February 4, at 4 p.m.

"Melody Maker" Feb 5th 1938

"ST. LOUIS BLUES" ON THE AIR

A BROADCAST with an unusual basic idea which should be of exceptional interest to musicians has been arranged for Thursday next, February 10, when a programme entitled "St. Louis Blues" will be aired in the Regional programme.

The author of this play is a producer and experimental radio dramatist named Irving Reis, and taking as his theme the immortal blues melody by Handy, composed in 1914, he has used the tune to link together the various episodes of his programme.

The scene is laid in a broadcasting studio where a bored announcer and a tired "balance and control" man, having faded in to a Harlem restaurant, wonder whether anybody is listening to the broadcast.

In the form of the composite film stories, various episodes will then be included, such as the stories of two eloping lovers in a car, the passengers on a sinking ship and the pilot of an aeroplane lost in a storm, all of whom are listening to the Harlem broadcast.

TAKING THE COUNT

"Count" Bill Basie is the latest of the jazz "aristocracy" to catch the ear of the swing fan, yet he has been battling his way upwards for a long time

by **LEONARD FEATHER**

*"Good Morning]Blues, Blue; How Do You Do !
Good Morning Blues, Blues How Do You Do !
Babe, I Feel All Right, But I've Come To Worry You !"*

NINETEEN - THIRTY - ONE. These odd mocking blues lyrics, sung by James Rushing, figure in a strangely fascinating record I have discovered on Victor, *That Too, Do*, by Benny Moten's Orchestra, one of his scores of titles from the Victor catalogue. Moten shares the label credits for the composition with Durham and Basie. Never heard of 'em.

one

Five years roll by. Early one morning of July, 1936, in Kansas City, Louis Armstrong and I, going the rounds of the night spots, land at a dive called the Reno Club, where we find a ten-piece band directed by Bill Basie. Basie, a thick-set, earnest-looking figure, rises from the keyboard to chat with us and talks of his hopes of earning wider recognition than the local broadcasts to which he has been confined. The MELODY MAKER carries my comment: "They have put in some hard work, have some advanced orchestrations by Basie, and deserve some real recognition." The boys in the band are Joe Keyes, Dee Stewart and Carl Smith (trumpets); George Hunt (trombone); Buster Smith and Jack Washington (altos); Lester Young and Slim Freeman (tenors); Clifford McTier (guitar); Mack Washington (drums); Walter Paige (bass).

TWO

After a trip to Kansas City, spent mostly at the Reno Club, Comrade John Hammond picks on Basie as the latest

object of his musical affection, comes out with a fanatical encomium in the Press, and in August manages to get the Music Corporation of America interested to the point of making this the only coloured band on its books since Noble Sissle. This means Basie can build his band up, spend money on a big library of arrangements, and enter into the swing nobility of Dukes, Earls and Barons by becoming "Count" Basie. Hammond stands in an M.C.A. office listening to transcriptions of Basie's broadcasts, an ecstatic gleam in his eye; and when the ecstatic gleam gets into Hammond's eye even the most intractable of booking office, dance hall or record company managers finds it difficult not to weaken.

three

Basie has at last rid himself of the shackles of Kansas City. With the enlarged band, including an extra alto (Cauchu Roberts) and a second trombone (Dan Minor), and strengthened by several replacements, including Jack Washington on alto, Herschel Evans on tenor, Buck Clayton on trumpet, Claude Williams on guitar and violin, and Joe Jones on drums, in November he crashes the Grand Terrace in Chicago, home of Hines and Henderson. John Public complains that Basie does not



"Count" Bill Basie

yet seem to have tuned up, and the reception is not too favourable; but give him time for more rehearsal. . . .

During this sojourn Basie and four of his boys do a trial session of four records for Vocalion, which are eventually to be acclaimed as superb of their kind.

FOUR

Basie reaches the ultimate goal of the aspiring big-timer, New York. His Christmastide opening at the Roseland Ballroom, a white dance-hall, is no more satisfying than that accorded him at the coloured hall in Chicago, and once again it is pointed out that if only the boys all knew A from A flat and A sharp, they would pack a hell of a kick. In fact, the stuff is there, but it's not yet mellow.

It is illuminating to note the changes that have been wrought in Basie's piano style. In the days of *Moten Swing* he was more fierce, almost another Hines, with an exceedingly rhythmic right hand and a fondness for the Eastern

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TAKING THE COUNT

continued from page 37

extremity of the keyboard. Nowadays he seems to have developed a single-note technique and, possibly owing to the cleft in his attentions caused by the added responsibility of watching and directing the band, he seems to put little effort into his playing, the left hand being either weak or deliberately unused (as in the Quintet's *Lady Be Good*).

five

Once again Hammond gets to work on his protégé, and Jack Kapp signs Basie up for Decca. At the first session in January, *Daisy Chain* gives a good idea of the group's potentialities. Particularly fine is the work of Wilbur "Buck" Clayton, whose style seems to bear witness to an orderly musical mind, the symmetry of phrasing and absence of fluffs being significant. Perhaps he is even the type of soloist who can retain a phrase or an entire solo in his head if it pleases him on the original creation. This might account for his use of the same ending on two of the records he made with Teddy Wilson, *Mean To Me* and *Why Was I Born?* His style, never strident and always particularly effective when muted, has a sort of strangle-me-if-you-will vibrato that makes him easy to recognise.

Carl Smith's trumpet, heard on the Quintet titles, is more erratic and less calculating than Clayton's. It is impossible to judge his work on the wax evidence, as he had never recorded before the Quintet session and was nervous and tired. However, on all the recent Basie recordings the trumpet solo work can be assumed to be by Clayton.

SIX

Basie breaks the colour line in February by playing at the William Penn Hotel in Pittsburgh; but even the privilege of being the first spade band to work there doesn't seem to inspire him, for as yet he has fallen short of the big success that was expected.

Amongst the critics, however, interest is aroused in the band's soloists, with the two tenor men particularly vying for attention. Lester Young immediately earns comment for his curious, thin tone and blandness of expression, contrasting well with the more orthodox deep tenor tone of Herschel Evans, whose style approximates more to the "Choo" tradition. (A good example of Evans' best work is *Heaven Help This Heart Of Mine*, by Mildred Bailey. In Basie's own waxings he is featured on

Smarty, while Lester Young takes the solo on the backing.)

seven

Basie makes some more revolutionary personnel changes, putting in a swell guitarist, Freddie Green; Ed Lewis and Bobby Moore, on trumpets, replacing Joe Keyes and Carl Smith; Earl Warren in place of Roberts; and the unique Billie Holiday as vocalist. Billie cannot record with the band on Decca owing to her Vocalion contract, but uses several of Basie's boys in her own vocal sessions and joins them also on a number of Teddy Wilson's titles. Basie's third session at last gives evidence that the band has seen the light and found a common understanding on the subject of pitch.

EIGHT

From strength to strength goes the Basie personnel. His old Kansas City colleague of Moten days, Eddie Durham, joins up as arranger, trombonist and guitarist, while Moore cedes his place to a youngster named Charlie Shavers, recently with Lucky Millinder. The brass section is now five strong, with a brand new trombone section comprising Durham, Benny Morton and Quintin Jackson. Gradually the band is becoming established in the roll of honour occupied by past bands in a similar tradition—Henderson's, Redman's, Kirk's.

nine

Basie's newest record brings his voluminous vocalist, James Rushing, to the microphone in an old-time blues. The label credits the composition to Durham. I receive the record, and memories stir as I hear once again the resurgent blues strain—

"Good Morning Blues, Blues How Do You Do !

Babe, I Feel All Right, But I've Come To Worry You !"

So, after six years' running round like a squirrel in a cage, Basie is back where he started—but with a difference. The blues, the lyrics and the spirit behind them may be the same, but the band has moved with the times, and within twelve months Basie has assailed the portals of fame, edged himself in and, thanks to Hammond's backing and his own dogged perseverance, any obstacles to his further progress are permanently and emphatically—

OUT



RECORD WITH A STORY

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

Max Abrams and His Orchestra.
 "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans."
 "Ain't Misbehavin'."
 (*Parlophone R.2474.)

HERE is a story behind this record. Max Abrams, as most know, is not only drummer with the Savoy Orpheans but a teacher of drumming with a large following. His drum tuition records have sold extensively, including (so his last royalty statement told him) over eight hundred sets in Japan!

Here obviously was a line worth developing, and Parlophone conceived the idea of doing so by getting Max to record his drum lessons accompanied by a small hot band—the idea being to give the student drummer an idea of how to play with a band.

"But," they said in effect, "as it is only an experiment, it will have to be a commercial test session—that is, it will only be paid for if the record is issued."

Max agreed to take this gamble, but was told that he could only have an hour of studio time. Owing to the rush, the records came out nothing like Max intended. His idea was to have the drums very much over-recorded, so that pupils could clearly distinguish the beats, and have the record issued with an explanatory note and the

THE XYLO MAN
 Lionel Hampton, ace toned-percussion rhythmist, turns out some good stuff this month.

actual music of the drum part. To his astonishment the record was issued in the New Swing Style series, without any explanation that it was a tuition record, and making no reference to the drum part which he intended should be available. Furthermore, the drums are nothing like prominent enough for tuition purposes. As it is, the record is neither tuition nor swing. In trying to appeal to both the student and the fan, Parlophone has fallen between the two stools.

SHIPBUILDERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Liner
- ★★★ Schooner
- ★★ Trawler
- ★ Junk

The record is bad from both points of view. People like Frenchie Sartell, Billy Munn and Dave Shand are capable of much better things than this, and it is a shame to put out their "drum accompaniments" as a swing record.

Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.
 "Vieni, Vieni."
 "Little Rock Getaway."
 (**Decca F.6584.)
Benny Goodman Quartet.
 "Vieni, Vieni."
 "Handful of Keys."
 (**H.M.V. B.8689.)
Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
 "When You and I Were Young, Maggie."
 "Bob White."
 (**H.M.V. B.8691.)

Nice ensemble in first chorus of Crosby's *Vieni, Vieni*, but clarinet and trombone let out one or two notes a moment too soon or too late, and trumpet has no tone to his name and nothing much to say. Miller's tenor gets off best.

Benny treats the tune in even more orthodox style than Crosby, with tiresome reprises of the melody. Hampton almost completely lacks swing in the second chorus. After Teddy, not quite at his best, comes Krupa with his slam-bang-thump-wallop-grunt, after which there are two choruses, one on a riff and one jammed, which are worth twice all the rest of this side.

The backings of these two records are more or less jazz piano concertos, *Little Rock Getaway* being third-hand Waller (by Zurke out of Sullivan) and *Handful of Keys* second-hand ditto (by Wilson). It is odd to hear Wilson denuded of his personality, and his impression of Fats' well-known solo opus (H.M.V. *Connoisseurs' Album* B.4347 or Continental H.M.V. B.4902) reminds you that Fats weighs two hundred pounds, that Teddy is just a little guy, and that the touch and attack are in ratio. Theodore should stick to his own guns. Goodman and Hampton turn in excellent choruses.

Great Disciple of Fats Waller

Mr. Zurke ranks with Sullivan amongst the greater Waller disciples. In this adaptation of Joe's solo from Brunswick 02099 he uses a great deal of the original composition, but also borrows phrases from Waller's own private repertoire. Maybe it's not good jazz ethics, but the effect can hardly be grumbled at. Young Zurke is also extraordinarily ambidextrous. The only serious complaint against the new version is the bombastic *tutti* chord at the end, which is the equivalent to the "Voilà!" of an acrobatic turn after its most exhausting feat.

The Goodman band disc, of which the first title was made in 1936, has nothing sensational to offer. Lovely first chorus in *Maggie*, scored by Mundy, unpleasing trumpet by Elman, and scoring which degenerates into Hudson-DeLange style towards the end. Verse and chorus by Martha Tilton takes up too much of *Bob White*.

Novelty That Doesn't Last

Andrews Sisters.
 "Nice Work If You Can Get It."
 "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen."
 (**Brunswick 02552.)

The novelty of swing vocal acts is as lasting as the enamel on five-shilling cigarette lighters. I doled out a few kind words about the Andrews Sisters on their first issue last month, and would have had the same welcome ready for this if it had happened to be the prior release; but four sides of their work are already enough to show that they probably have a stock of favourite phrases and ideas which will crop up month after month. As for *Bei Mir*

Bist Du Schoen, this is bei mir just another tune, no matter how abstruse its origin.

My favourite spot in this coupling is the coda in *Nice Work*, in which the girls seem to say "Rip-baw, that's nice work." It looks stupid on paper, but it's nice work if you can hear it.

Chick Webb and his Little Chicks.
 "I Ain't Got Nobody."
 "In A Little Spanish Town."
 (**Brunswick 02545.)

Let-down of the month. When I first heard the opening chorus of *Spanish Town* I almost imagined myself watching Don Barrigo's famous version of *Tiger Rag* played on two tin whistles at once, for the combined effect of Chauncey Haughton's clarinet and Wayman Carver's flute is tonally similar, and, from the point of view of team-work, actually inferior to Don's one-man act. The arrangements are extremely feeble, and Chick's drums are caught in a vellum, vellum weak moment. The saving grace is the piano of Tommy Fulford, whose rather split-tenthy left hand is partly compensated by some nice ideas in the right. But Haughton and Carver, both in duet work and separately, should be ashamed of such corny phrasing. Go into the woodshed and think out a few ideas, boys, while we suspend sentence on you.

Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra.
 "Annie Laurie."
 "Frisco Fog."
 (**Brunswick 02549.)

Maxine Sullivan seems to have started something in the nature of a Scottish swing vogue, but Lunceford's version, despite some fine ensemble passages, is rendered almost null and void by some of the solo work. Both the tenor and the trombone, who sounds like a cockeyed imitation of Dickie Wells at his worst, play conspicuously out of tune.

The trumpet squeals are not led up to logically, and have no place in the set-up except as a florid effect.

Frisco Fog is less a composition than an exercise in hackneyed and repetitive minor sixths.



Feather Forecast and News

Eddie South Holds Audience Spellbound in Farewell Concert

WHILE so much talk of violinists, of swing music concerts and of the Hot Club de France is still in the air, it might be apposite to point out that the MELODY MAKER was not the only organisation to unite these elements last week. On Thursday, the Hot Club de France presented Eddie South and his four-piece accompaniment in a farewell concert prior to his departure from Paris to play a four-week theatre engagement in Amsterdam.

So many imaginative stories have been circulated about the ardour of Continental swing fans that a description of the evening may surprise you. The reception was more enthusiastic than eclectic, and when Garland Wilson came on as an interpolated act, his high-speed demolition of *Tiger Rag*, complete with solo choruses by the drummer, had a much bigger hand than his excellent interpretation of the blues.

Magnificent Technique

The Ecole Normale de Musique, a wide but shallow hall with a circular stage, shocking acoustics and no amplification, is scarcely the best place in which to learn to appreciate Eddie South's genius. Yet, from the moment when he plunged into *Lady Be Good* right through the long programme of items selected on the spot, and in most cases not even announced, I was spellbound by the magnitude of his technique and style. It is a double tragedy that not only has South been unable to reintroduce himself to the British public during his current tour, but he has also been meeting with a series of catastrophes in the shape of night clubs on the verge of bankruptcy, three illnesses in his family and other



BETTY ALLEN

22-year-old American singer, imported by Ray Ventura to sing with his band.

misfortunes. When his engagement in Holland ends he may be free to give a concert or two in England before returning to America. I hope some

astute manager here will cotton on to this opportunity before it is too late.

* * *

The Hot Club Quintet may have put

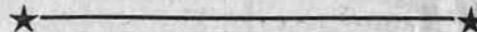
the idea into your head that French swing music is pretty much limited to violins and guitars, and that there are no French combinations of normal instrumentation that are worthy of comparison with the American article. Last week I attended one of the *thés dansants* at Chez Ray Ventura, on the Champs Elysées, where the so-called French Jack Hylton has his own spacious restaurant and his very large and efficient orchestra.

This band at its best is a revelation. There is none of that jumpy rhythm and synthetic enthusiasm common to even the better Continental bands. The brass section is particularly capable, and can certainly be compared with almost any English parallel. It includes an outstanding soloist who now has rather better opportunities of shining as an individual than he did during his years with Hylton: little Philippe Brun, whom I prefer to any other European trumpet player (and McQuater's instrument, please note, is a cornet).

Imported Blonde

Betty Allen, the twenty-two-year-old Californian blonde whom Ventura has just imported, is a pleasantly vivacious visual asset. Prior to the sojourn with the Hudson-Delange Orchestra, which was her last job before she left America, she was a musical comedy star, having played in George White's "Scandals," "Take A Chance," in which she replaced Ethel Merman, and other prominent Broadway shows.

Ventura has been recording for Pathé and it is hoped that English Columbia will release some of his best output, commencing March 1. Ventura's brass section, with Alix Combelle on tenor and other notabilities, recorded Philippe Brun's composition *College Stomp* for the French "Swing" label, in addition to two numbers by Gus Deloof, former Belgian band leader, who is now one of the Ventura brass team.



REHEARSAL



The boys have break for a spot of (very) light refreshment.

No. 5
of a Series
in which
**ANDY
GRAY**
takes you
behind the
scenes to
see the stars
rehearsing



Above: Danny I man and Norman
Below: George Macauley, and T



THIS week I am going to take you to a rehearsal for a jam session recording. "What!" I can almost hear you say: "A rehearsal for a jam session? Nonsense!"

But not so fast. Is it?

Finnily enough, there is usually more preparation for a jam session than for an ordinary

commercial band rehearsal. At a commercial rehearsal once over the spots correctly and everything is fine.

But at a jam session — and especially a jam session that is to be waxed—it isn't as simple as that. The piece is played over first from a rough arrangement and then it is played around with and improvised. Maybe it is tried over five, ten, twenty times with different tone colours and instrumental blending before the result is satisfying—that is, if real swing men are playing it.

Just to prove it, come with me this week to the Decca Recording Studios and hear Danny Polo and his boys gutbucketing their way to fame.

It is rather a strange journey from the "M.M." offices in Tudor Street to the Decca Studios, which take the entire top floor of a large, four-storied, City warehouse. Although the distance is not great, on the way you pass two cold storage firms and enter the warehouse through a centuries-old graveyard. The whole atmosphere is as far away from hot music as Lombardo's schmaltz is from Goodman's swing.

That is until you get right inside the studio. Then the cold storage houses and bone yard are soon forgotten. Your foot starts beating rhythm the minute you hear the tempestuous trills of Danny Polo's clarinet, the rip-roar licks from Tommy McQuater's trumpet, the rhythm from Dudley Barber's drum-sticks, Dick Ball's bass, Eddie Macauley's piano and the guitars of Eddie Freeman and Norman Brown, the coloured guitarist with the Mills Brothers.

Gives the Chicago Flavour

Add to this George Chisholm's trombone (an addition which gives the Chicago flavour) and Sid Raymond's tenor sax and what have you? That's right. England's reply to America's swing supremacy!

The boys were lifting *Don't Try Your Jive On Me* and going out of the world on it. Len Feather, who is supervising these sessions, brought the boys down to earth again with a thud by announcing: "Ten seconds too much, boys."

Ten seconds! What's ten seconds between friends? And with such grand music. Unfortunately, it means a fraction of an inch over the inches allowed

usual to have at least three solos of sixteen bars on a side. Solos of fewer bars are not so effective, although Norman Brown made good use of eight bars in *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*.

I noticed that a contrast was always sought when solos were arranged. For instance, after a loud Tommy McQuater spell, Eddie Macauley's quieter piano work made a fine contrast.

But the star of this outfit is undoubtedly Danny Polo. He broke new ground by taking a chorus on alto sax in *Jazz Me Blues*. This was the first time Danny has ever recorded an alto sax solo. Judging by its reception in the recording booth, it won't be the last.

However, good as Danny's alto solo was, I still prefer his quiet, clean-cut clarinet work.

But, just as a band puts over a vocalist by its instrumental background, so, too, does a swing ensemble put over a soloist by its backing up. That is why there was lots of trouble taken in fixing just the right proportion of volume for soloist and ensemble.

There were three mikes: one for the band, one for the guitars—perched on high stools, and one for the piano.

Before the session was ready for the wax, the various instruments changed places several times. Dudley Barber, who uses wire brushes on his cymbal more than sticks on his side-drum, moved his kit to three different spots before it was right. Likewise, burly Dick Ball had to try several positions for his bass.

And Danny Polo, George Chisholm, Sid Raymond and Tommy McQuater changed places four times before they lined up; trumpet (nearest the piano), alto sax, trombone and clarinet.

Another difficulty to be surmounted during rehearsal was the rather ragged entry of the boys after a solo. To rectify this, they came in on the 'bird crotchet of the sixteenth bar, thus allowing a beat for one or two hesitators. This did the trick and resulted in clean, fast "take-ups."

It certainly was non-stop. When the ensemble finished rehearsing, the individuals went on playing, working out new licks and polishing up old ones.

Most enthusiastic about non-stop rehearsals seemed to be Tommy McQuater, George Chisholm and Sid

... and. In front of each player was a rough and ready arrangement of the number, some written in pencil, some in ink. It looked as if each jammer had written his own skeleton arrangement, but on enquiry Len Feather assured me he had done them all himself.

All I can say is that Len must be a multi-handed writer!

When I said that each of the boys had an arrangement, I should have said all but Eddie Macauley, who, judging by his almost continual smile, must be one of the happiest musicians in the country.

I asked Eddie where his arrangement was. His bright eyes twinkled as he replied: "I had a part, but I gave it away. I don't need it on paper when I have it in here," he explained, pointing to his head.

That that was no idle boast was shown when Eddie subsequently took a sixteen-bar solo in *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*.

Here is the routine followed by this swing unit: first, the boys go over the number from the makeshift orchestrations and get the general idea of the melody and rhythm of it. Then they forget about the orchestrations and try over something similar, adding individual colouring in tone and attractiveness in composition.

Each department works out its own idea and then they all go through the piece. It usually sounds dire first time through. A compromise is sought and the best of the improvisations are chosen.

Solos are next handed out. It is

Complete Guide to Record Releases for February 1st

Three-shilling discs

Abrams, Max, and his Rhythm Makers: (London, November, 1937.) *Way Down Yonder In New Orleans* (comp. Creamer-Layton); *Ain't Misbehavin'*. Max Abrams (leader and drums); Frenchy Sartell (trumpet); David Shand (alto); Billy Munn (piano); Alan Ferguson (guitar). Parlophone R.2474.

Andrews Sisters (Vocal Trio with Orchestra): (New York, October, 1937.) *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (comp. Gershwin); *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen*. Brunswick 02552.

Basie, Count, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, August, 1937.) *Our Love Was Meant To Be; Time Out*. For personnel see Guide for Mid-December, 1937. Brunswick 02543.

Carroll, Eddie, and his Swingphonic Orchestra: (London, December, 1937.) *Dinah: If I Had You*. For personnel see Guide for January 1. Parlophone R.2473.

Casa Loma Orchestra: (Hollywood, July, 1937.) *Smoke Rings; Always*. For personnel see Guide for mid-December, 1937. Brunswick 02547.

Clinton, Larry, and his Orchestra: (New York, September, 1937.) *The Big Dipper*. Larry Clinton (leader); Charles Spivak, Ricky Traettino, Bob Cusamano (trumpets); Alex Polasey, Cliff Heather (trombones); Toots Mondello, Tony Zimmero, Fletcher Hereford (altos); Babe Rusin (tenor); Arthur Brodsky (piano); Ken Benford (guitar); Ray Michaels (drums); Artie Bernstein (bass). For backing see Dorsey, Tommy. H.M.V. B.8692.

Dorsey Brothers and their Orchestra: (New York, 1929.) *My Kinda Love* (vocal. Bing Crosby), Tom Dorsey (trombone), Jimmy Dorsey (saxes and clarinet), Manny Klein, Leo McConville, Fuzzy Farrer (trumpets), Glenn Miller (trombone), Arnold Brillhart, Herb Spencer (saxes), Arthur Schutt (piano), Eddie Lang (guitar), Stan King (drums), Hank Stern (bass). *Am I Blue?* (vocal chorus). Personnel unknown. Parlophone R.2475.

Dorsey, Tommy, and his Orchestra: (New York, October, 1937.) *Dipsy Doodle* (comp. Larry Clinton). For personnel see Guide for January 1, with Emil Hagen replacing Walter Mercurio

on trombone. For backing see Clinton, Larry. H.M.V. B.8692.

Goodman, Benny, and his Orchestra: (New York, September, 1937.) *Bob White* (vocal, Martha Tilton). For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. (New York, December, 1936.) *When You and I Were Young, Maggie*. Personnel as above, excepting Irving Goodman instead of Harry James (trumpets); William Depew instead of George Koenig (alto). H.M.V. B.8691.

Goodman, Benny, Quartet: (New York, September, 1937.) *Vieni Vieni; Handful Of Keys*. Benny Goodman (leader and clarinet); Lionel Hampton (vibraphone); Teddy Wilson (piano); Gene Krupa (drums). H.M.V. B.8689.

Herth Mill (Rhythmic Organ) with Willie ("The Lion") Smith (piano), O'Neil Spencer (drums): (N.) (New York, Autumn, 1937.) *Dipsy Doodle; That's A Plenty*. Brunswick 02548.

Holiday, Billie (Vocal), and her Orchestra: (M.) (New York, Summer, 1936.) *Summertime* (comp. Gershwin). Bunny Berigan (trumpet); Artie Shaw (clarinet); Joe Bushkin (piano); Dick McDonough (guitar); Cozy Cole (drums); Pete Peterson (bass). (Spring, 1937.) *Who Wants Love?* Buck Clayton (trumpet); Buster Bailey (clarinet); Lester Young (tenor); Claude Thornhill (piano); Freddie Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Paige (bass). Vocalion S.130.

Lunceford, Jimmie, and his Orchestra: (N.) (Hollywood, November, 1937.) *Annie Laurie; Frisco Fog*. For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. Brunswick 02549.

Mercer, Johnny, and his Orchestra: (Los Angeles, Autumn, 1937.) *Murder of J. B. Markham; Last Night On The Back Porch*. (Vocals by Johnny Mercer and Six Hits and A Miss.) Probably Manny Klein (trumpet). Rest of personnel unknown. Vocalion S.577.

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: (Paris, June, 1937.) *Hot Lips; Ain't Misbehavin'*. For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. H.M.V. B.8690.

Shaw, Artie, and his New Music: (New York, September, 1937.) *Fee Fi Fo Fun* (no vocal) (comp. Shaw-Avola); *Sweet Adeline*. (Vocal Tony Pastor.) For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. Vocalion S.131.

Victor, Frank, and Harry Volpe: (Guitar Duets.) (New York, Summer, 1937.) *Swingin' The Scale; Pagan Fantasy* (both comp. Victor Volpe). Brunswick 02545.

Webb, Chick, and his Little Chicks: (N.) (New York, September, 1937.) *I Ain't Got Nobody; In A Little Spanish Town*. Chick Webb (leader and drums); Chauncey Haughton (clarinet); Wayman Carver (flute); Tommy Fulford (piano); Beverley Peer (bass). Brunswick 02545.

Two-shilling discs

Armstrong, Louis, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, July, 1937.) *Red Cap; Alexander's Ragtime Band* (comp. Berlin). For personnel see Guide for mid-December, 1937. Decca F.6583.

Crosby, Bob, and his Orchestra: (Hollywood, November, 1937.) *Vieni, Vieni; Little Rock Getaway*. Bob Crosby (leader and vocalist); Charlie Spivak, Yank Lawson (trumpets); Warren Smith, Ward Siloway (trombones); Gil Rodin, Bill Kearns (saxes); Matty Matlock (clarinet); Eddie Miller (tenor); Bob Zurke (piano); Hilton Lamare (guitar); Ray Bauduc (drums); Bob Haggart (bass). Decca F.6584.

Waller, Fats, and his Rhythm: (N.) (New York, Autumn, 1937.) *More Power To You; A Hopeless Love Affair* (both vocals Fats Waller). For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. H.M.V. BD.5314.

One-and sixpenny discs

Mannone, Wingy, and his Orchestra: (New York, Autumn, 1937.) *Laugh Your Way Through Life; I've Got My Heart Set On You* (both with vocal choruses by Wingy Mannone). Including Joe Marsala (clarinet). Regal MR.2659.

Memorial Album

Smith, Bessie (vocal), with piano and orchestral accompaniments: (N.) Accompanying units include Louis Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Buster Bailey, Coleman Hawkins, etc. Full particulars on special leaflet. Separate records 3s. each or complete album of eight 10-in. double-sided 24s. Parlophone R.2476 to 2483.

Swing Drummer Forms New

Coloured Band

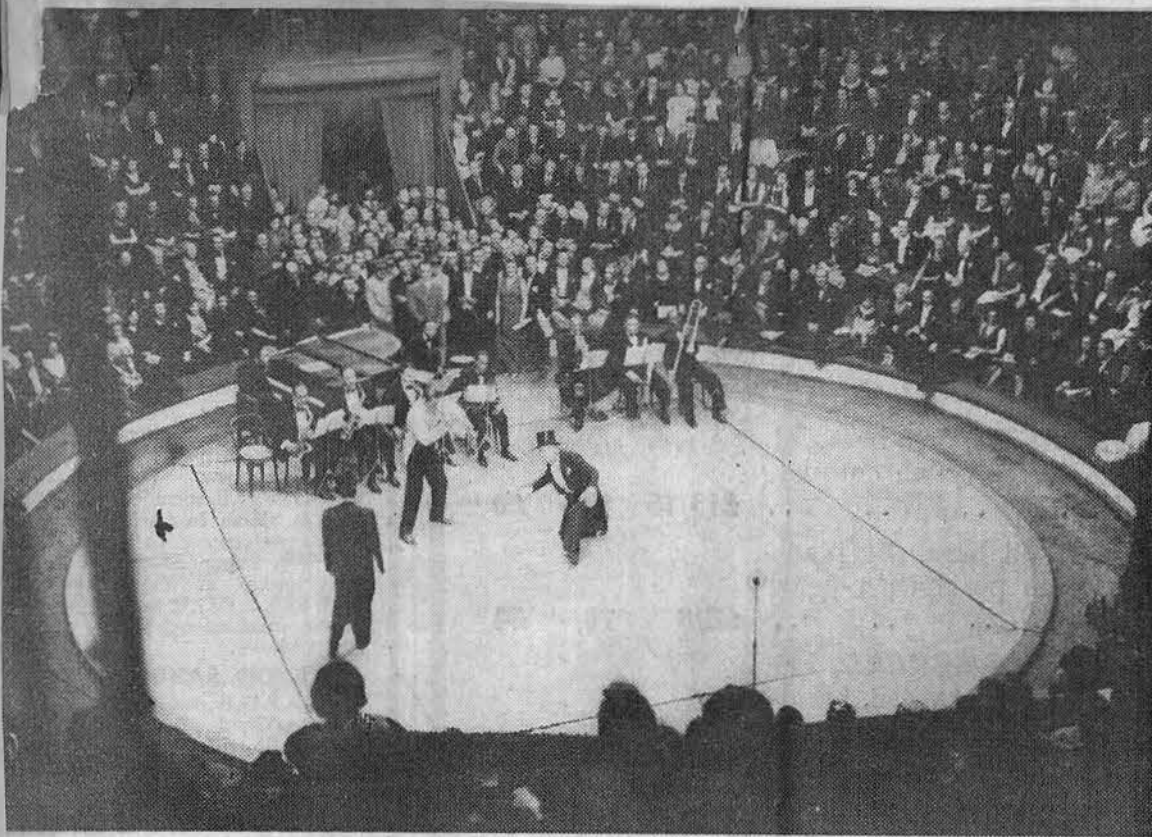
AL CRAIG, well known as one of this country's foremost swing percussionists, has been hard at work during the past few weeks rehearsing a new combination with which he hopes to spring a big surprise shortly.

This is a thirteen-piece band, mostly coloured, which Al has assembled with the co-operation of Louis Hardcastle, formerly of the Eight Black Streaks. Hardcastle, with his son "Lulu" and Charlie Wood, will form a dancing trio for the stage show, to be known as the Three Dudes.

Wally Read, alto and clarinet man, has written a number of arrangements for this group and has great ambitions for the future of the combination. He has done arrangements for Payne, Joyce, and other big West-end bands.

Others to be heard in the personnel are Arthur Dibbin (trumpet and vocals) and Leslie Hutchinson, who will be the solo trumpet man.

Al Craig is opening with this group on Monday at the Regal, Southend, and will be bringing them back for a London opening very shortly.



Feather Forecast and News

ANOTHER ALBUM of JAM ON THE WAY

Freddy Taylor and his orchestra accompanying Maurice Chevalier in a special item at the Cirque Medrano.

"The Swing Music Murder," by Harlan Reed, in which much excitement revolves around the homicides that take place in the neighbourhood of Lance Grandy and his Swing Swing boys.

The book should certainly be a killer.

* * *

Curious coincidences, continued:—Have you noticed the remarkable resemblance in structure and melody between the recently released Gershwin number *A Foggy Day* and the pop tune of a few years ago entitled *Dinner at Eight*?

Benny Goodman has recorded a double-sided version of *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen*. The fashion for two-part jazz records, which has become evident during the past few months, may be in some measure due to the development of the pseudo-highbrow attitude towards swing music since the vogue started. The superficial alliance with classical records effected by an extension of the ordinary three-minute limit may give some sort of dignity to jazz, but for record dealers I imagine it does nothing more than halve the selling value of the disc by only having one title.

I can think of very few numbers—and *Bei Mir* is certainly not one of them—that have sufficient original content to justify any more than the usual absorption of wax. The blues is an exception to the rule, of course. But after those ten unendurable minutes of *Sing Sing Sing*—which has, by the way, been voted the best arrangement of the year in America—I feel that the old-fashioned three-minute course is the safest to pursue in any circumstances.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

JAM the bearer of good tidings. Two good tidings, to be precise. And both of them concern Red Norvo. The first is that unless there is a last-minute hitch in the works, and unless reception proves too faulty, and unless he develops measles at the eleventh hour, Red Norvo and his Orchestra, with Mildred Bailey, will be on the British air Monday, February 28. Make note in that MELODY MAKER diary.

The second is that Norvo's previous recordings (I dislike the use of this high-flown adjective, but it applies here), with Teddy Wilson and Harry James and a bass player, under the name of

Teddy Wilson's Quartet, will be included in a second album of Jam Music, to be issued in the Decca lists next month.

First Time In History

Yes, believe it or not, the first Jam Album was evidently not so limited in its appeal as might have been suspected, so for the first time in jazz history an album is going to be repeated within four months of the original issue.

The second volume will not be so exclusively Wilson, I am told, but in addition to the Wilson-Norvo sides there will be Teddy's latest

piano solos and some more of the orchestral titles with Billie Holiday.

It may interest you to know that although the issue of albums of jazz records has been a popular practice over here ever since the first H.M.V. Connoisseurs' Album of Hot Rhythm Music some five years ago, this sort of thing was almost entirely unknown in America until Victor brought out its twelve-inch Symposium of Swing last summer. All the British albums have been compiled in England, and the idea of selling hot records in bulk like that would never have occurred to the American companies.

* * *

So swing has even invaded the novel. A new mystery story has just appeared in New York entitled

RADIO TIMES FEB 11 1937

SIGNATURE TUNE....By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

JAZZ connoisseurs can prepare for something unusual and esoteric in the way of record recitals when John Goldman presents his musical lecture on 'The Coloured Influence on White Jazz' on Monday (Regional, 8 p.m.). Goldman is interested in jazz as folk music. Starting in 1925, he built up a collection of records which now numbers over three thousand, and it is from these that he has obtained all his knowledge and experience of jazz. The study of this music is purely a hobby with him, for he is a film director, having collaborated with Robert Flaherty on the production of *Man of Aran*. Recently he was associated with the productions of *Turn of the Tide* (as location director and script writer), *King Solomon's Mines*, and *Owd Bob*. He is now working on a production of his own which will depict London working-class life.

In his recital Goldman intends to show how swing music incorporates a new form of intonation and sound different from that which is usually accepted in European music; and how certain musical conventions apply to jazz that could not be accepted in standard music.

* * *

Listeners who have been listening to the Wednesday evening 'Band Waggon' broadcasts should spare a kind thought for Phil Cardew, whose work as organiser and as orchestrator to the combination assembled for these programmes

is a monumental task. Born in London thirty-four years ago, he spent three years studying architecture and intended making this his profession, but with the strengthening of a hereditary interest in music he entered successfully for an L.R.A.M. degree as an outside student.

His early professional jobs in the capacity of musician were as saxophonist to the Piceadilly Revels Band, the Kit-Cat Orchestra, and Fred Elizalde's Orchestra. It was in the latter group that the brilliant musicianship and arranging of Elizalde inspired him to write arrangements himself. In 1931 he renounced the saxophone permanently in favour of pen and manuscript paper.

Recently he has become interested in practical musicianship again, but from a very different angle. Believing it to be good discipline and experience for any musician, he has been playing clarinet in a symphony orchestra composed of young students and amateurs.

* * *

Next Friday, February 18, in the National programme from 4 to 4.30, can be heard a programme which I have devised in the hope of proving that Duke Ellington still has today the most advanced and musically interesting dance orchestra in the world. The programme will include a number of records never released or broadcast in this country.

"ROPHONE,"
Our Hot Record
Critic, has a
**GREAT
URGE**
to use the
WORD
"GREAT"
for **BILLIE HOLIDAY'S LATEST**



Bobby Stark . . . trumpet with Chick Webb . . . reaches for a high one

Billie Holiday and her Orchestra.
"Summertime" (****).
"Who Wants Love?" (**).
(Vocalion S.130.)

I SEEM to have used the phrase "Billie Holiday's greatest record" so many times that it is beginning to lack conviction, but *Summertime* is another great temptation. Not only Billie, but the accompanists, the words and the music, all combine to establish an interpretation of the title so realistic that you have to loosen your collar.

The recording dates from Billie's first session, its original mate being the memorable *Billie's Blues*. It was, they tell me, recorded on the hottest afternoon of New York's record-breaking heat-wave in summer, 1936, so that the artists had climatic as well as musical inspiration.

The calculated monotony and subtle change from the minor to major key of *Summertime*

makes this the greatest Gershwin tune of the entire *Porgy and Bess* score. The fact that Bunny Berigan, Artie Shaw, Joe Bushkin, Dick McDonough, Cozy Cole and Pete Peterson participate will give you an idea of the accompanimental value.

Berigan grows out a lovely introduction and is heard to advantage throughout, while Shaw also upholds the mood established from the first note of the disc.

Don't bother me now with *Who Wants Love?*, which, by comparison at any rate, is just another Holiday record, even with Buster Bailey, Lester Young and Buck Clayton to help it. *Summertime*, when you know it, turns out to be one of the few records of its kind that may outlive by years the material on which it was founded.

Artie Shaw and his New Music.

"Fee Fi Fo Fum" (***).

"Sweet Adeline" (**).

(Vocalion S.131.)

Shaw's guitarist, Al Avola, wrote *Fee Fi Fo Fum*, though, if he wrote the first phrase of the first chorus it must have been a case of re-incarnation. The best parts of this generally rather likeable piece are not the arranged passages, but the solos by Mr. Burness at the keyboard and by Artie, who turns to his own and highly effective use the increasingly overworked trick of placing a heavy anticipatory accent on the last beat of the bar before.

**Bar Room
Masterpiece**

The bar room masterpiece on the back turns out to make quite a fitting battleground for rhythmic purposes. The rhythm section could have been strengthened and the arrangement does not make the best of the number, but there is a particularly noteworthy feature in Artie's own clarinet work; firstly the way he fills in between the phrases of a good vocal by Tony Pastor, but lastly and mostly his solo chorus about an inch from the start of the record.

This is so perfectly (and I mean

TRANSPORTATION GUIDE

- ★★★★ Limousine
- ★★★ Coupé
- ★★ Push Bike
- ★ Pram

about Basie's piano, with its tinkly one-note exposition of scrappily isolated phrases, but in the coda the effect of his right hand tenths creates a

fine climax.

If the reverse were not a pop tune with a commercial vocal, this would be a four-star coupling.

**Chief Cliché
Collector**

Larry Clinton and his Orchestra.

"The Big Dipper."

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.

"The Dipsy Doodle."

(**H.M.V. B.8692.)

If there is one person whom I dislike more than another in jazz at the moment, it is Larry Clinton, on whose head the mantle of Will Hudson as cliché-collector-in-chief seems to have fallen. Now, if you had a mantle fall on your head, I expect you would suffer from concussion, and you wouldn't be prepared for any extended lucubrations, so let's be kind and just say that the above two Clinton compositions, even the titles of which are similarly modelled, are aimed at the less initiated swing fan.

Dipsy Doodle has an intro dating back to 1492 and a chorus strongly reminiscent of the *Love Bug*. Clinton's own band and the Dorsey group do as well as can be expected with this material. Edythe Wright sings the doodle's idiotic lyrics.

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.

"Alexander's Ragtime Band."

"Red Cap."

(**Decca F.6583.)

An intro better suited to a newsreel; first chorus shockingly arranged with bleating first alto; vocal at the nadir of Louis's ability, and a swell trumpet chorus—that's all there is to *Alexander*, in which the improvement I noted lately in Luis Russell's band is no longer to be observed.

Red Cap is the latest addition to the series of sagas of lower-middle-class jobs for which *Shoeshine Boy* started a vogue. It means pullman porter. Louis does nothing that he has not done ten times better in scores of earlier records.

**Revolution In
Lyric Re-writing**

Johnny Mercer and his Orchestra.

"Murder Of J. B. Markham."

"Last Night On The Back Porch."

(**Vocalion 577.)

I recommend this, with the reservation that they mustn't make any more like it, for it is again the type of thing which is grand once or twice, but might easily become boring. Mercer, the songwriter and singer who was Teagarden's buddy on some Whiteman records, has a six-piece swing choir and a nice little band with him there. Most of the passages feature him as soloist with figured backgrounds, ingeniously scored.

The *Back Porch* revival is almost a revolution in lyric re-writing, with a champion line in "I kissed her on the sofa in the presence of the chauffeur." For budding rhymesters this side is an astonishing object-lesson on the liberties you can take with our fair language. "Tower of Pisa" with "Champs Elysées" is a specimen that particularly tickles me, but there are many other similar gems.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED FEBRUARY 11

3.55 Interval

4.0 New Records of
© DUKE ELLINGTON

presented by Leonard Feather

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

RECENTLY there has been a vogue in dance-music circles for the adaptation of traditional folk songs. Maxine Sullivan, the soft-voiced young coloured girl, started this fashion with her recordings and broadcasts of 'Loch Lomond' and 'Annie Laurie', both of which were heard by British listeners when she sang them in a 'Broadway Matinée' programme in November.

It is only natural that this challenge should be taken up by the Scots themselves. A few weeks ago George Elrick, who has been running his own band with conspicuous success since leaving Henry Hall's BBC Dance Orchestra, commissioned Gene Rodgers to arrange a special medley under the title 'Sing to me the old Scotch songs'. Rodgers, besides being a brilliant arranger and pianist, is half of the coloured comedy team of Radcliffe and Rodgers.

This new orchestra of Elrick's has a lunch-time broadcast next Friday, February 25. In the personnel are Harry Lewis and Cliff Cadman, alto saxes; Eddie Farge, tenor and baritone; Archie Craig, trumpet; Sid Kreeger, piano and arranger; Sid Bartle, drums; and Sam Molyneux, string bass.

George tells me he has been experimenting with a new vocal novelty in which the band whistles its part harmonies, instead of playing them on their instruments, as a background to their solo singing. He may try it out next Friday.

* * * * *

Kai Ewans, with his Danish swing orchestra, contributes this week's addition to the Continental series of 'Connoisseurs' programmes on the same Friday, February 25 (Regional 7.30). Ewans is the young clarinettist and arranger who made a hit

in a similar series of programmes given by the BBC last year.

* * * * *

The fashion of linking up dance-music programmes by some connecting strain in the titles of the items will be given a novel twist in a programme entitled 'Night and Day' by Harry Leader and his orchestra on the National wavelength on Wednesday at 5.20. In addition to incorporating a number of popular melodies which have the word 'Night' or 'Day' in the title, the idea will be extended to cover the whole nature of the programme, the arrangements for which have been written by Harry Leader himself.

Leader, who must surely have been predestined for his place in the dance-music world (it is noteworthy how many dance-band personalities have surnames such as Singer, Fiddler, Musikant, and so forth), has had three careers, the first as an ordinary dance musician, the second as a business man when, temporarily retiring from jazz, he had his own office in the City in 1931, and the third dating from his come-back in 1932 in the appropriate guise of band leader. 'First Time Here' gave him his initial broadcast in 1934.

His present band, which he has had for just over a year, includes two vocalists, Bert Green, the trumpeter, and Alex Morris, the guitarist. Leader is also featuring a fourteen-year-old London vocal prodigy, Bernard Miller.

* * * * *

Vera Marsland has pointed out that I credited Louise Selkirk as the trumpet soloist in Teddy Joyce's all-girl broadcasts. Actually Louise Selkirk dropped out of the band before the broadcast took place, and Vera Marsland is the first trumpeter.

MELODY MAKER 19 Feb 1938

Feather Forecast and News

SPECIAL "CONNOISSEURS' LIST" CREATED FOR SWING SURPLUS

A MAJOR problem confronting the H.M.V. people over here is the enormous amount of swing material at their disposal, only a small proportion of which they have room for in their lists. I am pleased to report that this difficulty has been largely overcome by the creation of a special connoisseurs' list of records which, though not listed in the usual way or stocked by all dealers, can be ordered at the usual price of three shillings. Up to the present twenty-four such records have been issued. Although it is impossible to go into every one in detail, I should like to pass a few comments on those that are of particular interest.

Four Sides By Mezzrow

The four sides made by Mezz Mezzrow and his Orchestra, under the supervision of the Hot Clubs of America, contain many good things and many disappointments. The titles are *Blues In Disguise* and *That's How I Feel To-day*, on B.8656; *Hot Club Stomp* and *The Swing Session's Called To Order*, on B.8646. Of these the first three compositions are credited to Mezzrow and Edgar Sampson and the fourth is a very uninspired opus by Larry (*Spooky Takes A Holiday*) Clinton.

Higginbotham's trombone is probably the best feature on these sides. Mezzrow's clarinet betrays the fact that he was badly out of practice and you can sense him reaching for notes



These four sisters, Dorothy, Gladys, Evelyn and Hazel Jones, have left the Rangerettes, a well-known U.S. girls band, to enter a convent in San Antonio, Texas.

of which he misses quite a few. But, despite his technical handicap, he plays a fine solo in *Blues In Disguise*. The rest of the band comprises Sy Oliver, trumpet; Happy Cauldwell, tenor (very weak); Sonny White, piano; Bernard Addison, guitar; James Crawford, drums, and Pop Foster, bass. The better coupling is B.8656.

Mezz is also stated to have taken part, although he cannot be heard, in *Stompology*, one of four sides by Lionel Hampton's Orchestra. The other three sides (*My Last Affair*, on B.8561, and *Mood That I'm In*; *Sunny Side of The Street*, on B.8639) all have vocals by Lionel who, in each case, manages to bungle the lyrics and convey the general impression that he doesn't

understand them. Johnny Hodges is brilliant in *Stompology* and *Sunny Side*, and Lionel's vibraphone makes all four titles worth while.

Bunny Berigan does a nice job on *Mahogany Hall Stomp*, B.8661, which is coupled with a somewhat trite

arrangement of *Swanee River*. There are also two commercial sides by Berigan: *All God's Chillun Got Rhythm* and *The Lady From Fifth Avenue*, B.8638. Benny Goodman's Orchestra offers a good coupling of *Riffin' At The Ritz* and *Walk Jenny Walk*, B.8640, both dating from 1936.

If you have a sufficiently high opinion of the general timbre of Tommy Dorsey's Clambake Seven you will agree with me that it is worth while overlooking the commercial vocals on *Rhythm Saved The World* and *Alibi Baby*, B.8650. Dorsey's full band sounds curiously like a single accordion in *Maple Leaf Rag*, B.8643—an effect which I noticed in his BBC broadcast and which is evidently due

EVEN
FEATHER
COULDN'T
HAVE FORE-
CAST THIS!

less to reception than to the odd style of the arrangement. It's a good record, though. The backing is *Jamboree*, which is very vocal.

Adrian Rollini and His Taproom Gang make an agreeable noise in *Bouncin' In Rhythm* and also (apart from Wingy Mannone's singing) in

Weather Man, B.8660. Adrian brings out his bass sax. Joe Marsala plays some good clarinet, and the atmosphere is pleasantly taproomy.



February 12, 1938



Solo at the mike, with Eddie Free-
Brown on the guitars.
Chisholm, Sidney Raymond, Eddie
Tommy McQuater.



Raymond, who tried for novel effects
over and over again, while the others
took a break at the gin bar or on the
census table at the other end of the
studio.

It took about an hour to polish up a
number ready for recording, but I can-
not tell you how the final efforts
sounded, for I left when the rehearsal
was over. But if a test of performance
is judged on effort at rehearsal, the
result should be good.

perfectly in the literal sense this
time) constructed, phrased and
intonated that in these days when
the ear is accustomed to overlook-
ing slips here and fluffs there it
might seem almost impossible to
believe that this was improvised,
did it not carry the imprint, in its
musical character, of the genuine
jazz idiom.

However emotionally one can be
carried away by *Teschmaker*, *Rus-
sell*, *Mezz et al.*, nobody but *Shaw*
or *Goodman* could qualify for this
particular compliment.

Trombonist- Plectrist

Count Basie and his Orchestra.
"Time Out."
"Our Love Was Meant To Be."

(***Brunswick 02543.)

The transfer of Eddie Durham to
this band works out as Basie's
benefit and Lunceford's loss. The
trombonist-plectrist, who appears
in *Time Out* in the triple rôle of
composer, arranger and guitar
soloist, knows how to give his work
character, atmosphere, and the
right balance between solo and
ensemble work. High spots are
bars 17-20 of Lester Young's tenor
chorus, the Clayton trumpet solo,
and the fine counterpoint of unison
saxes against brass figures in the
last chorus. I'm doubtful only

BONIST TURNS TRUMPS AS AN ARRANGER

Hot Records Reviewed . . . by "Rophone"



George Chisholm, trombonist outstanding and now in the running for pen honours

Quintet of the Hot Club of France.

- "Hot Lips."
- "Ain't Misbehavin'."

Frank Victor and Harry Volpe (Guitar Duets).

- "Swingin' the Scale."
- "Pagan Fantasy."

(*Brunswick 02545.)

Satisfactory, but not stimulating. Dorsey Brothers and their Orchestra (1929).

- "My Kinda Love."
- "Am I Blue?"

(*Parlophone R.2475.)

Milt Herth (Organ), Willie Smith (The Lion) (Piano), O'Neal Spencer (Drums).

- "That's a Plenty."
- "Dipsy Doodle."

(*Brunswick 02548.)

Soporific, but not satisfactory.

Wingy Mannone and his Orchestra.

- "Laugh Your Way Through Life."
- "I've Got My Heart Set On You."

(*Regal MR.2659.)

Why waste such a good rhythm section, and a clarinetist like Joe Marsala, on such material as the first title? Backing is better, but still not enough.

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.

"More Power to

You."

- "A Hopeless Love Affair."

(*H.M.V. BD.5314.)

Perhaps the main source of satisfaction in this month's Waller is that one is hardly conscious of the presence of anyone but Fats. Fats plays, Fats sings, that's that. That's Fats. There may be a few other folks around, but purely in the background; and since both these numbers are slow, Fats sings and plays them at his best.

Casa Loma Orchestra.

- "Smoke Rings."

GANGSTERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Big Shot
- ★★★ Torpedo
- ★★ Con Man
- ★ Squealer

SPECIAL REVIEW

THE BESSIE SMITH ALBUM

BY "ROPHONE"

DON'T run away; this article is not going to be another exhibition of the feckless fanaticism that has constituted a great deal of the nonsense written in Bessie Smith's praise by those who instinctively adulate anyone who is unappreciated, hard to take, or dead. (Bessie is all three.)

When Bessie Smith was alive Parlophone neglected her almost completely. Now that she is dead, here they come with sixteen sides all at once, which you can have in an album for £1 4s. on R.2476 to 2483.

It will not be necessary to explain here why very few people are going to be able to lap up so much of Bessie all at once. A cat can lap up milk ad lib., but swing cats have peculiar constitutions. There is no doubt to any reasoned mind that these sixteen sides are more alike than any sixteen sides by any other artist in jazz. The differences are relatively small. Many of the sides are plain twelve-bar blues, and since the lyrics will be incomprehensible to most of you, this reduces them all to a common level.

number, with lyrics that might well be biographical, judging by the stories of Bessie's life recently printed in these pages. The tuba provides that extra foundation so noticeably missing from the other titles.

Another good coupling is R.2476, because *St. Louis Blues* and *Reckless Blues* are not only swell numbers, but offer something rich and strange in the way of atmosphere by means of the organ accompaniment; because the recording seems to be acoustic, and is kinder than the electric recording, with which you are inclined to be hit between the ears; and lastly, because both Armstrong and Bessie do some of their greatest work ever in *St. Louis Blues*. This side, by the way, was

issued with a different coupling, *Cold In Hand Blues* (sans organ) on R.2344 only a few months ago! The present coupling is preferable.

The only two sides in the whole album that are not played in slow tempo, and the only two more or less pop tunes, are *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and *Hot Time In The Old Town*. They show that the blues was Bessie's idiom and Bessie's tempo, and that anything else was a misapplication of her art.

Swing fans who have never before learned to regard jazz as folk music will have a great deal to learn from Bessie Smith. It is only to be regretted that the lesson has come so many years late.

Test of Endurance

In order to test my own endurance I started by playing the album right off without a pause. It took fifty-four minutes, and by the finish I was bored. Instead of turning Bessie on like an electric stove in winter, one must turn to her when the mood requires it, and on such occasions two or three sides will generally be an ample dose. It is impossible to be in the mood for this music at all times, just as it is impossible for anyone but a Negro to get out of Bessie's singing just what she put into it.

Apart from the similar structure of the compositions, there are tricks in her style that become too familiar. In the twelve-bar choruses, when the melody generally lands on the third (bars 3 and 7), she will probably reach it via the fifth and flattened third, sometimes with a trill from the fifth on to the sixth. The accompaniment will probably furnish a four-bar intro and will undoubtedly finish on the blue seventh. It is so much a formula that they could all do it in their sleep.

Jazz-journalistic Coat Peg

Since this may be for many of you the first real chance of hearing to a substantial degree the work of someone who has been unknown to you hitherto except as a jazz-journalistic coat-peg, here are a few warnings which may help to ward off the shock of a first audition: Bessie's voice is very, very loud, and you will at first think it raucous. It is actually not raucous, for, as "Mike" explained, it is controlled, rich, and always in tune, with a vibrant sincerity that can only be appreciated (by us) after careful assimilation. The accompaniments, as far as the rhythm sections are concerned, are entirely lacking in swing, but there is superb work occasionally by Armstrong and Joe Smith on cornet.

Nobody should dismiss the album without buying at least one record, and as a purely personal preference I give R.2481. *Back Water Blues* is just the blues, and 100 per cent. typical Bessie, while Jimmy Johnson, one of the world's most original pianists of his day, is heard again in the rôle of the perfect accompanist. On the reverse, *Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out* is a very good

77

* * *

PUTTING on a Duke Ellington record at Broadcasting House the other day the announcer paused to explain that the curious noise was not caused by the needle slipping in the groove, but was a swing speciality.

You could have knocked us down with a Leonard G. Feather.

* * *

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED FEBRUARY 25, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

RED NORVO and his Orchestra, with Mildred Bailey as featured vocalist, will make their bow to British listeners in the next transatlantic broadcast, which is due on Monday, on the Regional wavelength at 8 p.m. This programme will offer a complete contrast in styles to previous American presentations, for the Norvo combination possesses a soothing and at times almost somnolent quality that is as unique as it is refreshing.

Jazz enthusiasts will remember the sensation caused by Norvo's first 'record' appearance in his own composition 'Dance of the Octopus' in 1934, which heralded the arrival of a novel xylophone style, since widely copied. In his youth Norvo intended to be an engineer, but a chance visit to a vaudeville show, where he saw a xylophone act, developed in him a sudden longing to master the instrument which has since made him famous.

* * *

Mildred Bailey is Mrs. Norvo in private life. One of the first feminine stars to gain an international reputation for her rhythmic and tuneful singing, her popularity has been on the increase ever since Paul Whiteman discovered her over a decade ago. Her brother, Al Rinker, was a member of Whiteman's original Rhythm Boys trio with Harry Barris (who has won fame for many noted song compositions, including 'I surrender, dear') and Bing Crosby. It was Al who introduced his sister—doing moderately well as a vaudeville singer—to Whiteman, on whose broadcasts she soon became famous as 'The Rocking Chair Lady', her signature tune being Hoagy Carmichael's 'Rockin' Chair'.

Subsequently Mildred recorded with such famous musicians as Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, and the Dorsey Brothers.

* * *

Mention of Paul Whiteman above reminds me that there is a short record recital on Wednesday at 5 p.m. devoted to his recorded interpretation of Ferdey Grofé's 'Grand Canyon Suite', a 'symphonic jazz' work of the school that sprang into being as a result of George Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue'. Grofé was the original pianist with the Whiteman band and claims to have been the first to introduce orchestrations and scores into the dance band. Gershwin's 'Rhapsody in Blue' was one of the thousands of works he scored for Whiteman during his association with the band from 1920 to 1934. He is now a band leader in his own right.

* * *

The weekly Monday-night gramophone record session at 11.30 p.m., which is devoted to a different band leader each week, will present this week an interesting and varied selection of the past and present recordings of Ambrose.

* * *

Lew Davis, who is presenting 'Listen to the Trombone' in the series of programmes devoted to gramophonic instrumental analyses, has for many years been Britain's best-known performer on this instrument, having played for seven years with Jack Hylton and subsequently with Lew Stone and then Ambrose, whom he left last autumn in order to join Jack Harris.

Among the famous jazz trombonists whose works he will present (all on recent recordings) are Miff Mole, Jack Teagarden, Tommy Dorsey, J. C. Higginbotham, Lawrence Brown, and Jack Lacey.

MELODY MAKER 26 FEB 1938

COMPLETE PERSONNEL GUIDE FOR MARCH RECORDS

Three-shilling discs

Armstrong, Lil, and her Orchestra: (N.) (New York, July, 1937.) *Lindy Hop; When I Went Back Home* (both vocals Lil Armstrong); Shirley Clay (trumpet); Prince Robinson (tenor); Buster Bailey (clarinet); James Sherman (piano); Arnold Adams (guitar); Weisman Braud (bass); Manzie Johnson (drums). Brunswick 02553.

Foursome, The: (Los Angeles, September, 1937.) *When The Midnight Choc Choc Leaves for Alabam.* For particulars see Guide for Mid-January. Brunswick 02554.

Teddy Grace (Vocal with Orchestral Accompaniment): (New York, August, 1937.) *I'm So In Love With You; I'm Losing My Mind Over You.* Slat's Long (clarinet); Frank Froeba (piano); Frank Victor (guitar); Haig Stephens (bass); Stan King (drums). Brunswick 02555.

Hayes, Edgar, Quintet: (New York, August, 1937.) *Love Me Or Leave Me;* (New York, October, 1937) *When You And I Were Young, Maggie.* For personnel see Guide for Mid-December, 1937. Brunswick 02556.

Herman, Woody, and his Orchestra: (New York, June, 1937.) *Doctor Jazz; Dupree Blues* (both vocals Woody Herman). Woody Herman (leader, tenor, clarinet); Clarence Willard, Kermit Simmons (trumpets); Neil Reed (trombone); Joe Bishop (flugel horn); Murray Williams, Don Watt (altos); Saxie Mansfield, Bruce Wilkins (tenors); Horace Diaz (piano); Chick Reeves (guitar); Nick Hupfer (violin); Walter Yoder (bass); Frank Carlson (drums). Brunswick 02558.

James, Harry, and his Orchestra: (New York, November, 1937.) *Life Goes To A Party; When We're Alone.* Harry James (leader and trumpet); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Eddie Durham (trombone and arranger); Earl Warren, Jack Washington (altos); Herschel

Evans (tenor); Jess Stacy (piano); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Paige (bass). (All N. except James and Stacy.) Vocalion S.133.

Norvo, Red, and his Orchestra: Los Angeles, Autumn, 1937.) *Worried Over You; Tears In My Heart* (both vocals Mildred Bailey). For personnel see Guide for November, 1937. Vocalion S.132.

Pollack, Ben's "Pick a Rib" Boys: (Los Angeles, Summer, 1937.) *The Snake Charmer; Alice Blue Gown.* For personnel see Guide for Mid-January. Brunswick 02557.

Webb, Chick, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, December, 1937.) *Strictly Jive* (comp. Webb); *Rock It For Me* (vocal on last side Ella Fitzgerald). For personnel see Guide for Mid-January. Brunswick 02559.

Two-shilling discs

Hawkins, Coleman and Freddy Johnson: (N.) Tenor-Saxophone and Piano duets. (Amsterdam, Summer, 1937.) *Lamentation; Devotion.* Decca F.6597.

Polo, Danny, and his Swing Stars: (London, January, 1938.) *Don't Try Your Jive On Me; Mozartov.* Danny Polo (leader, clarinet and tenor); Tommy Mcquater (cornet); George Chisholm (trombone); Sidney Raymond (alto); Eddie Macauley (piano); Norman Brown (solo guitar); Eddie Freeman (guitar); Dudley Barber (drums); Dick Ball (bass). Decca F.6604.

One-and-six discs

Gardner, Freddy, and his Swing Orchestra: (London, December, 1937.) *I Want To Be Happy; Limehouse Blues.* For personnel see Guide for Mid-January. Rex 9225.

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ACE TROMBONE

Danny Polo and his Swing Stars.

"Don't Try Your Jive On Me" (***).

"Mozeltov" (***).

Eddie Carroll and his Orchestra.

"Dinah."

"If I Had You."

(***Parlophone R.2473.)

GENTLEMEN, I give you the star of the month—George Chisholm. Not only does he tear off his greatest recorded chorus to date in *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*, thus raising this Polo title to a level higher than anything on the previous session, but he also crashes through with amazing success as an arranger in Eddie Carroll's *Dinah*.

Without any of the usual theoretical training, with no-

UP T

thing but the instinctive flair of swing that his trombone playing betrays, he has turned out an orchestration that enables the band to sound more like a first-class American swing outfit of similar size than anything previously made in Britain, even including anything Ambrose has made. I hail Chisholm as the first British arranger who has exactly the right idea, and no pretentious ambitions toward programme music or any of the flamboyant effects that have spoiled the efforts of others over here.

Band Deserves Plenty of Credit

The band itself deserves plenty of credit, too. It is disastrous that this group has since dissolved. The reed and brass sections have real attack; only the rhythm lacks what it takes, and that probably through under-recording. The clarinet solo by Jay Farley, with lovely tone, is a particular surprise.

If I Had You, arranged by Carroll himself, is the same thing on less successful lines, starting well but tending to monotony owing to the close adherence to this not very extraordinary tune.

To revert to the Polo jive, in addition to the excitement of George's chorus, one must note the increased fullness of the ensemble in the excellent first chorus, and the use of a five-piece rhythm section with two guitars as in the old Condon-Bland days. I need hardly add that Danny's own solo is grand.

Swinging Jewish Folk Songs?

The old Jewish ditty, *Mozeltov*, makes a good minor-key sixteen-bar swing chorus. Danny takes his first recorded tenor solo. His ideas are there, but the technique is weak. Chisholm again walks away with the honours. Throughout the last half of this side is worked a neat fade-out effect by means of successive solos on piano, guitar and lastly bass by Dick Ball, with a startling all-in fortissimo two-bar ending.

Mozeltov to you, Mr. Chisholm!

U.S. TOP-OF-THE-POLL TRUMPETER'S RECORD

DOG FANCIERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Pedigree
- ★★★ Thoroughbred
- ★★ Good Points
- ★ Mongrel

Harry James and his Orchestra.

"Life Goes To A Party."

"When We're Alone."

(***Vocalion S.133.)

HERE at last is the recording debut as a star in his own right of Harry James, who has been elevated on to a dangerous pinnacle by out-voting Armstrong, Berigan and all, in the *Down Beat* Referendum. It is hard to expect anyone to live up to an honour of this sort, but on his showing here James has clearly established a claim to a high rating, if not as high as all that, among the world's trumpeters.

Life Goes To A Party is his own composition, which he has featured with Goodman's band and presents here with a nine-piece combination. The saxes play raggedly and out of tune. It is fortunate that they have little to do as a unit and that the ensemble as a whole has considerable punch.

Points to note are the nice harmonic ideas of Jess Stacy in his rather too single-note piano solo (I particularly like the passage around bar 12); the sense of form and climax in Herschel Evans' excellent tenor chorus; and, in the two trumpet choruses that follow, Harry James' ability to build up an atmosphere almost in the manner of Louis' *Mahogany Hall Stomp*. Aided by exciting figures in the background, Joe Jones' drumming and Stacy's occasional intrusions, all of which cut into one another without any confusing effect, James really sends himself, the orchestra and the listener. I'm sorry about the mechanical fade-out at the end. I thought only British bands resorted to that sort of trick nowadays.

Goodman's New Slide Man

When We're Alone is as near as dammit to *Whisper Sweet*, but contains good things by Stacy and Evans, and an eight-bar muted trumpet solo by Buck Clayton. Vernon Brown, Goodman's new trombonist, played on this date and wrote the arrangements.

The welding of Goodman and Basie talent in this disc bodes further treats. Harry James has got something here.

Woody Herman and his Orchestra.

"Dupree Blues."

"Doctor Jazz."

(***Brunswick 02558.)

This much can be said for the above coupling: it gives you a chance at last to hear what the Herman band is really like, the previous titles released here having been rather unkind to him. Woody's band has a Dixielandish personality akin to Bob Crosby's, and Woody himself, as I keep pointing out, is an agreeable cross between Teagarden and Bing.



HARRY JAMES

Dupree Blues gives him some nice material to work on; the band does nicely enough, and the solos are passable. Neil Reid plays a neat trombone. *Doctor Jazz* has rather too many clichés to be a commendable arrangement, but here again you will like Woody's vocalising.

Teddy Grace (Vocal).

"I'm So In Love With You."

"I'm Losing My Mind Over You."

(**Brunswick 02555.)

Miss Grace made her debut so promisingly with *Rock It For Me* (02475) that this coupling lets us down. She sings nicely, but somehow just fails to rock it. Of the accompanists, the rhythm section is heavy, the clarinetist (Slat Long) interesting and remarkably like Joe Marsala.

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.

"Rock It For Me."

"Strictly Jive."

(***Brunswick 02559.)

If you had Teddy Grace rock it for you, take warning that Ella Fitzgerald must have her place in an adjacent rocking chair, her version being no less indispensable to any self-respecting collection. It's a one-woman show, vocal from start to finish, and Ella has that intangible lift and ease in her phrasing that will ruin your blood pressure. My only fear is that her current mannerism of sticking in a couple of extra aitches

to pad out certain phrases may become tiresome. (Spre-he-head around, ple-he-henty tight, ho-ho-ho-ho-rock-it-for-me.)

Strictly Jive, even with Webb as composer on the label credit, sounds like the work either of a white arranger or a very indifferent coloured one. The saxes are strictly on the ribs, as are the many familiar licks in the score, though Taft's blowing helps to stir up the embers a trifle. Tolerable, but nowhere near the class of the backing.

Lil Armstrong and her Orchestra.

"When I Went Back Home"

(***).

"Lindy Hop" (**).

(Brunswick 02553.)

I like Lil's personality, and I cannot grumble at the tenor solo by Prince Robinson, the piano by James Sherman and the clarinet by Buster Bailey in *When I Went Back Home*. What I can and do grumble about is the balance in the rhythm section, which seems to be all drums. *Lindy Hop* is not the old pop of that title.

Red Norvo and his Orchestra.

"Worried Over You" (***)

"Tears In My Heart" (**).

(Vocalion S.132.)

Both slow, thoughtful, with a lovely chorus by Mildred, nice clarinet and xylophone; both just a trifle dull.

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

Champion rhyme in the first side is "quarrelin'" with "darling." Can you take it?

Coleman Hawkins and Freddy Johnson.

"Lamentation."

"Devotion."

(**Decca F.6597.)

Rhapsody in lavender. Hawkins deviates from strict tempo, piles the vibrato on thick and unctuous, wallows in sentiment. *Devotion* is the better side, if only because parts of it are in tempo, and some of these parts are lovely. The bits in between descend to sheer virtuoso banality.

Freddy Gardner and his Swing Orchestra.

"I Want To Be Happy."

"Limehouse Blues."

(*Rex 9225.)

This is by no means as good as Freddy's first release. The rhythm section is practically dead—listen to those last two bars of *I Want To Be Happy*—the arrangements haven't the slightest subtlety of phrasing, nor have the solos. At the end of Freddy's tenor on the first side (which was an appallingly corny tune to pick for this sort of interpretation, anyway) he pulls a fluff so conspicuous that it is surprising the record was released.

Edgar Hayes Quintet.

"Love Me Or Leave Me."

"When You And I Were Young, Maggie."

(**Brunswick 02556.)

Rudy Powell's clarinet varies from the stylish to the corny and even the out of tune. Vocal on the A side is fairly nice, second side weak. Xylophone and piano competent. Whole thing not important enough in these days of copious issues.

Ben Pollack's Pick-a-Rib Boys.

"Alice Blue Gown."

"The Snake Charmer."

(*Brunswick 02557.)

Still less important. *Snake Charm* is a garbled version of *Mozellon*, feel done. *Alice* has some shocking drumming.

★ ————— ★

MELODY MAKER 26 FEB 1938

EDGAR STEPS OUT

Edgar Hayes commences a European tour at Oslo on March 1, following it up with visits to Norway, Sweden, Holland, Belgium, France and Switzerland . . . but, owing to permit difficulties, not Great Britain

IT was in September, 1931, that a record of *Blue Rhythm* and *Blue Flame* by the Blue Rhythm Boys caused "Mike" (a younger and less blasé "Mike") to "sit back and gasp" at this new coloured group which had just succeeded Cab Calloway at the Cotton Club in Harlem.

The whole thing lifted him into the realm of sanguine superlatives, but the high spot, he conceded, was undoubtedly the piano solo. "This is by Edgar Hayes, who is the third of that great trio of Negro pianists—the other two are Earl Hines and Buck. Hayes' is a most peculiar and original style, of the hard-hitting variety, it is true, but what he does not do in octaves in his left hand is not worth worrying about."

In this aura of critical acclamation Edgar Hayes was introduced to the British jazz public.

Edgar Junius "Greeny" Hayes, though new to the New York sophisticates, had already seen many years of experience down South

where, as long ago as 1919, he was one of a five-piece combination organised by Fess Williams. He had a solid musical foundation for his career, having studied everything, from orchestration to the organ, during his years at Wilberforce University, whence he graduated, it is said, with an A.B. and B.M. degree. With the formation in 1931 of the Blue Rhythm combination as the third of Irving Mills' important ventures of this type, Hayes proved to be one of the cornerstones of the new edifice. His compositions, arrangements and solos became features of every appearance made by the band, so that eventually his name was mentioned on the billing.

Throughout the chequered career of the Blue Rhythm Band, under its various directorships by Sonny

Nichols, Baron Lee and Lucky Millinder, Edgar hammered away for this comparatively scant recognition. Perhaps before going on to his work with his own band, it might be better to examine a little of the work he did for the B.R.B.

BY
LEONARD
FEATHER

As a pianist he started off so spectacularly that opinions were violently enthusiastic. His forceful left hand and symmetrical, accurate right seemed to align him with Fats Waller, like whom he showed a tendency to prepare his solos in advance instead of improvising them. Now, with freak artists like Waller this sort of thing is accepted, but as Hayes' work became more generally known the critics turned against him, proclaiming him corny. The fact is more probably that Edgar is more interested in the music than in the swing of swing music, but that when he happens to combine both elements the results are still more than passively acceptable or actively corny; they are first-class jazz piano playing.

A good example of Hayes' better work as soloist is *House Hop*, which the B.R.B. waxed under one of its many noms-de-disque, Earl Jackson and his Musical Champions, on Panachord 25047. A slow and comparatively simple single-note arpeggio chorus here reveals a rarely shown facet of Hayes' pianistic ability. This disc, by the way, was reissued later as *Moanin'* by Mills' Blue Rhythm Band on

CONSEQUENT upon the imminent departure of Art Gregory and his Band to the Paramount Salon de Danse in Tottenham Court Road, revision of the Jack Payne sponsored show "Say It with Melody" becomes necessary. In this show Art Gregory's Band, Teddy Foster and Billy Scott-Coomber have been doing excellent business round the country. While the revision is going on, Billy Scott-Coomber has it in mind to try out his fate as a solo act. Indications are that he can stand on his own two feet very well, because there is certainly no dance band vocalist in the country with a better grip on an audience than has this famous Irishman who has been associated with Jack Payne for the last eight years. Billy has engaged as accompanist Jack Martin, the well-known Brighton musical instrument dealer and principal of the Brighton Piano and Accordion Club. He plays both piano and accordion exceptionally well. This change in Billy Scott-Coomber's plans breaks his ties with the Jack Payne office for the time being, and leaves the immediate future activities of Teddy Foster somewhat in doubt.

Billy Scott-Coomber
Goes Solo

ARTHUR ROSEBERT



they become so typical that it almost hurts, and that is where the clichés start slipping in; but, generally speaking, there is more to praise than to blame.

Here, then, are Edgar Hayes' boys as heard on their first recordings:—

Arthur Crawford ("Swift") Wethington, first alto and clarinet:—An old-timer from Chicago, who played with Louis Armstrong as a member of Carroll Dickerson's Orchestra in the "Hot Chocolates Revue" at Connie's Inn nearly a decade ago. Was with the Blue Rhythm gang throughout its career.

Rudy Powell, alto and clarinet:—Can be heard on clarinet on a host of Fats Waller recordings dating from 1935 to 1936; among those available on H.M.V. are *Oh Susannah*, *What's The Reason*, *Truckin'*, *Woe Is Me*, *Thief In The Night*. Was also with Rex Stewart's Orchestra on a Decca session (*Baby Ain't You Satisfied* and *Stingaree*) and made a couple of Brunswick titles with Teddy Wilson.

Records by Edgar Hayes' Band

Variety Record:—
 "Manhattan Jam."
 Decca Records:—
 (*Released on English Brunswick.)
 May 25, 1937:—
 "Caravan" (*02448).
 "Edgar Steps Out" (*02448).
 "Stompin' At The Renny"
 (*02520).
 July 27, 1937:—
 "Laughing At Life" (*02520).
 "High, Wide and Handsome"
 (*02482).
 "Satan Takes A Holiday"
 (*02482).

August 7, 1937:—
 "So Rare" (*02495).
 "Love Me Or Leave Me" } Quintet.
 "Blue Skies"
 October 11, 1937:—
 "I Know Now"
 (*02495).
 "Sweetheart" } Quintet.
 "When You And I were Young,
 Maggie"
 "Young, Maggie"
 "Old King Cole."
 "Queen Isabella."
 "Shindig."
 "Let's Love."



Leonard Davis, trumpet:—Has probably worked with more of Harlem's finest bands than any other member of the Hayes gang. Heard with Charlie Johnson's Orchestra some ten years ago; made some of Fats Waller's earlier Victor records. Worked with Don Redman for a while after the formation of Don's first band in 1931; was on the first discs by Benny Carter's famous Club Harlem Orchestra in the *Six Bells Stampede* session—which reminds me that he also took part in Spike Hughes' American sessions. More recently heard with Henry Allen and Luis Russell, touring with the latter under Armstrong until shortly before the Hayes band was formed.

Bernard Flood, trumpet:—Not previously known to headquarters. Led the vocal choral work in *Laughing At Life*.

Harry Goodwin, trumpet:—Established himself early in the Hayes band's career by registering a hit with his composition and arrangement *Edgar Steps Out*.

Old Timer Trombonist

Clyde Barnhart and R. H. Horton, trombones:—The latter was a member of Willie Bryant's Orchestra in 1934 and 1935.

David James, trombone:—This recent addition to the Hayes roll-call marks an interesting reunion, for the name of David James is found as one of the original five-piece Fess Williams' combination, with which Edgar Hayes worked just after the war.

Andrew Jackson, guitar:—Not very much is known about him, except that on the strength of his solid background work in the Hayes Quintet records he is an artist to be watched.

Elmer James, bass:—A well-known Harlem bassist, who was a team-mate of Benny Carter's in Chick Webb's Orchestra, and was heard on Benny's own recordings of *Dream Lullaby* and *Everybody Shuffle*. Also waxed with Bob Howard's and Henry Allen's Orchestras. Succeeded John Kirby in Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra and was latterly with Millinder.

Kenneth (Kenny) Clark, drums:—Is developing into one of Hayes' personality men, being responsible for the vibraphone solo work heard on several of his recordings, as well as having branched out in the vocal line.

Life Begins When You're In Love, Rhythm In My Nursery Rhymes. An individual stylist with a queer clarinet tone and plenty of what it takes.

Roger Boyd, alto:—A comparative newcomer, not previously featured with any well-known recording bands.

Joseph C. Garland, tenor, baritone, bass saxes and clarinet. His "Koky Joe," whose name inspired the opus of that title waxed by the band in which Garland was one of the leading lights. Was a prize-winning player at Shaw University. Has stamped the Hayes band with his personality and deserves a good deal of the general credit. Composer of *Brown Sugar Mine, Jazz Martini and Congo Caravan*, he has been writing busily for Hayes and has an original composition, *Stompin' At The Renny*, to his credit. Features himself on baritone most ingeniously in his own arrangements. Took part in Ellington's records of *Raisin' The Rent, Happy As The Day Is Long, and Get Yourself A New Broom* during Barney Bigard's illness.

MOST POPULAR EVERGREENS

ASCAP'S Analysis Gives "Sweet Sue," "Honeysuckle Rose," "St. Louis Blues"

Feather Forecast and News

and "Dinah" as most broadcast hot numbers



Something else Feather couldn't have forecast! Bill Harty (now in Hollywood) giving Mae West a lesson on the drums!

WONDER how many record fans could guess which are really the five most popular evergreens of jazz? I have just been looking over some figures used by the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers, in which are tabulated all the compositions that were performed more than ten thousand times on the NBC, CBS, and the other principal American radio networks during 1936.

The "Busker" commented on this last week, but I am particularly concerned with the "standard hot numbers," and this is the order in which they come: *Sweet Sue*, which is the seventy-fourth most-played tune in the year with 14,702 broadcasts to its credit; *Honeysuckle Rose*, which holds eighty-second place with 14,058; *St. Louis Blues*, which came two places later with 13,561; *Dinah*, one-hundred-and-sixth on the list

at 11,461, and, as a surprise to me and probably to you, the other evergreen, which came one-hundred-and-ninth, was *Melancholy Baby* with 11,375 broadcasts.

Notice that *Tiger Rag*, *Nobody's Sweetheart* and *After You've Gone* are nowhere in the running. Note that *Stompin' At The Savoy* was placed tenth in the list with 26,610; and *Christopher Columbus* thirty-first with 21,514.

Parisian Swing Records

"Rophone" will pardon me for encroaching on his territory again by turning this department into a record review, but there seem to be so many foreign or special releases which he hasn't the time to deal with that it would be a shame to neglect them.

I have received some more of the "Swing" records from Paris, and again they are of considerable interest. Their only persistent shortcoming is the fact that the same people keep on bobbing up in the different combinations, which hardly makes for variety. If you haven't had a good opportunity of finding out what a swell trumpet Bill Coleman is, you might do worse than send for the coupling in his own name, in which Grappelly and Joseph Reinhardt, with Myers on bass and Ted Fields on drums, help him to make

an interesting *Rose Room* and get the swing angle of *The Merry-Go-Round Broke Down* (S.9.). I had not expected to hear comedy effects on a record supervised and issued by these serious-minded young French jazz students. It is all the more a surprise as the humour is not really first-class here.

Bill Coleman is also on a coupling directed by a good tenor and clarinet man, named Alix Combelle, of *Alexander's Ragtime Band* and *Hangover Blues*. The spirit of the blues can hardly accuse this recording company

of neglect, as at least twenty-five per cent. of the recent output has been based on the twelve-bar formula.

Dicky Wells, whose blues has already appeared on one of these records, comes out with another version on S.10. This time it is a trombone solo throughout, accompanied by piano, guitar and drums. This has never been done before, and for the very good reason that it shouldn't be. Three minutes of completely formless solo work is too much to ask even of Dicky Wells, and a record is not the right place for that sort of thing.

Eddie South and Stéphane Grappelly, accompanied by two guitars and bass, play *Dinah* and *Daphne* on S.12. These are described as violin duets, though in fact the fiddlers take it in turns throughout, and, in the short passage when they do play together, it is a bit of a rough-house. The idea of teaming them on one record was an interesting one and both sides are very agreeable listening. It is not difficult to distinguish which parts are played by Grappelly, who adheres almost rigidly to the eight-quavers-in-a-bar style.

VARIETY 23 FEB 1938

Feather of London Here

Leonard Feather of Decca's London office arrived in N. Y. Feb. 17 and will remain in U. S. for six weeks traveling between Chicago, Hollywood and N. Y.

In charge of the company's pop music recordings, he will shop around here on combo biz and pleasure trips before returning to London.

ARRIVALS

Eileen Ford, Leslie Macdonnell, Mr. and Mrs. Meyer Davis, Zolton and Laszlo Vidor, Paul Hindemith, Billy Milton, Leonard Feather, Margaret Perry, Betty Balfour, Joan Brooks, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Rosenzweig, Michael Brooke, William Armstrong, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Mann, Mr. and Mrs. Ben Dova, Eleanor Spencer, P. Amareco.

Maxine ("Mike's Pet") Sullivan Planning Tour In England

New York News From Leonard Feather

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED MARCH 4, 1937

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

CLAUDE BAMPTON'S Blind Orchestra will be heard in an ordinary dance-music session on Wednesday (National 5.20). This is the band which, as discussed here some months ago, was formed under the ægis of the National Institute for the Blind. All the musicians are sightless except Bampton himself, who leads on alto sax, and Bob Dudley, the first trumpet.

Bampton's method of 'beating off', to set the tempo at the start of each number during his stage act, consists of whipping his baton sharply past the microphone four times, so that the sound is amplified and furnishes the necessary cue for the players.

How he manages to train these boys to play some of the intricate passages for, say, four saxophones or four brass in harmony, each following a different melodic line and phrasing exactly together, without the use of manuscript paper, is something only Bampton himself could describe, and which must redound to his permanent credit. Many of the arrangements are taken down from recordings by other bands and transcribed into Braille by the bass player. Since the last broadcast the team-work of the combination has improved, and the singing of Phyllis Frost, both as soloist and in the girl trio, is praiseworthy by any standards.

* * * *

There appears to be some remote and inexplicable link between jazz and the films. Recently you heard John Goldman, associate-producer of *Man of Aran* and other celebrated British pictures, in a talk on 'The Coloured Influence on White Jazz'. This afternoon, Friday, a recital devoted to the records and compositions of Ray Noble is to be presented by a newcomer to the ranks of recitalists, Ernest Dudley, who spends a great deal of his time writing for the films.

Incidentally, it seems regrettable that nobody yet has had the initiative to produce a full-length feature picture outlining the history of jazz. Beginning in the obscure pre-ragtime days down South, passing the turn of the century, and threading its way through early pre-war syncopation and war-time jazz to the internationally-famous jazz kings of today, this could make a story rich in glamour, personalities, and true-to-life incident. It would have to be done in America, one assumes, and it would have to be done on a lavish scale; but surely that would be no obstacle in Hollywood.

* * * *

Another short but worth-while presentation on records this coming week is Wednesday afternoon's 'Concert Arrangements of Jazz', at 5 p.m. This will please those who like their dance music on the massive scale, though I will confess that fifteen pieces seems to me the limit to which the size of a real dance orchestra should extend.

* * * *

In December last year, Eddie Carroll assembled a twelve-piece orchestra to play in the pit for a new-style Variety show in London. It was the first full-sized British band to be launched with an avowed swing policy. Unfortunately, the band lost its job through the failure of the show and was forced to disband. After this disappointment it is good news to learn that Eddie Carroll has arranged to reassemble the group, known as the Swingphonic Orchestra (a somewhat alarming appellation) for a broadcast on Monday at 8 p.m.

A number of the arrangements are written by Carroll himself and by George Chisholm, Britain's foremost swing trombonist.

EXCITING NEWS FOR BRITISH FANS IS THE POSSIBILITY THAT MAXINE ("LOCH LOMOND") SULLIVAN, AMERICA'S NEWEST SINGING THRILL, MAY FIND TIME FOR A TRIP TO ENGLAND BEFORE FULFILLING HER GOLDWYN FILM CONTRACT IN JULY. NO DEFINITE BOOKINGS HAVE YET BEEN MADE, BUT MAXINE IS STILL AT THE ONYX CLUB SINGING WITH JOHN KIRBY AND HIS BOYS, AND IS IN A POSITION TO CONSIDER ONE OR TWO OFFERS. [This news has been communicated to "Mike" and he is

making a slow recovery! — Ed., MELODY MAKER.]

Maxine recorded another session last week for Vocallon, the numbers being *You Went To My Head*, *It's Wonderful* (Stuff Smith's tune), and two standards: *A Brown Bird Singing* and *Dark Eyes*.

The long-standing rumours that Gene Krupa is leaving Goodman seem to be quite definite now, with Dave Tough the likeliest replacement. Tough is at present playing with Bunny Berigan's Orchestra, which I heard at a club dance yesterday (writes Leonard Feather).

BASIE IS BEST

Bunny and his Boys created a great impression, but when Count Basie took charge of the bandstand he made me forget Bunny's very existence, so magnificent is the Basie ensemble.

Billie Holiday has been fired from Basie's Band for reasons not directly connected with her singing, and the vocals are now handled exclusively by popular James Rushing.

Duke Ellington's son, Mercer Ellington, has burst forth as a composer in the latest Cootie Williams record release, *Pigeons and Peppers*. Pa Duke is currently in New York working on the numbers for the Cotton Club's new show, which opens early in March.

Johnny Mercer has written a delightful and original rumba called *The Week-end Of A Private Secretary*, which Mildred Bailey recorded last week with the reorganised and excellent Red Norvo Orchestra.

Mildred also did a fine session under her own name, using Jimmy Blake from Norvo's Band on trumpet, Chu on tenor, d'Amico on clarinet, Teddy Wilson, Alan Reuss, Dave Tough and Pete Peterson.

"PERFECTION"

RED NORVO
collects unstinted
eulogy from our
critic this week.

Says our Hot Records Critic "ROPHONE" of Teddy Wilson's Disc "Blue Mood"

Second Album of Jam Music. (Decca, seven records, 2s. 6d. each or with album 17s. 6d.) Teddy Wilson's Quartet. "Blue Mood" (Parts I and II). (***Decca J.10.)

Count Basie Quintet, with James Rushing (Vocal).

"Evenin'." Teddy Wilson's Quartet. "Ain't Misbehavin'." (**Decca J.13.)

I HOPE I shall be pardoned for plunging straight into an analysis of the above record without any preamble about the new jam album as a whole, with which I shall be dealing later. For the moment this record has me so excited that I can hardly write about anything else.

Blue Mood (released in America as *Just a Mood*, but changed here to avoid confusion with Benny Carter's composition) is twelve-bar blues throughout—no intro, no bridges, no coda—played by Red Norvo, xylophone; Teddy Wilson, piano; Harry

James, trumpet; John Simmons, bass. James takes four choruses, Wilson the next four (split up between the A and B sides) and Norvo three, James returning for the twelfth and last chorus.

So much for the hard facts. To scale the heights of rhetoric that would be essential to an adequate description of the beauty of the record is a task that I would not only be unwilling to undertake, but one which would turn this column from a record review into a panegyric. The Decca leaflet is much too cautious in describing this as "one of the greatest jazz records in the last ten years." I would go much farther than that. I would say that no jazz record at any time has given me greater pleasure or a greater thrill.

Wilson plays the blues of his lifetime; Norvo plays with the most terrific swing and excels anything he has ever recorded; Harry James reveals an astonishing propensity for the blues, playing his four choruses right off in the first side without allowing one's interest to wander for a second.

If it were not for one detail—the occasionally doubtful pitch of the bassist—this could be called literally a perfect record. At all events, it is as near to perfection as anything I ever want to hear.

Having got that load of blues off my chest, I can turn with equanimity to the rest of the album, which, one observes, is more varied in content than the previous one. Whereas in Vol. I thirteen of the fourteen sides were orchestral Wilson records and the other one a Wilson piano solo, the present album only contains four Wilson orchestral sides, the other material being composed of four sides by the Wilson-Norvo quartet, two piano solos (infinitely better, I'm glad to say, than the disappointing one in the last album), and four sides by entirely different jam combinations under other leaders.

Of this last group, the most interesting to me is Count Basie's *Evenin'*, by the same group whose *Shoeshine Swing* and *Lady Be Good* came out almost a year ago. The interest lies in the fact that when I first received a copy of *Evenin'* a year ago I could not see it at all. James Rushing's singing seemed too much on the rough side, and since the vocal occupies most of the record, there wasn't much left to enjoy.

Humbly I confess that Comrade Hammond at the time told me I was crazy; and after incessant playings I have come to realise that Rushing's singing has not only a gradual fascination, but perfect musical discipline



Bob Howard and his Orchestra. "I Can't Dance, I've Got Ants In My Pants." Teddy Wilson's Quartet. "Honeysuckle Rose." (***Decca J.12.)

The Bob Howard side dates from those early days when he used a good band, including Benny Carter, Tedd Wilson and Buster Bailey. Teddy left off with a nice chorus, Bailey has some good stuff, Benny is below par on trumpet, and perversely I find the most attractive feature is Howard himself whom I have usually found quite bore. He uses an entirely different routine and even alters the chord sequence of the number, but the main thing is that his personality registers. For *Honeysuckle Rose* (what, again!) my comments on *Ain't Misbehavin'* can be lifted *in toto*.

I will now skip the rest of the jam album until next week and turn to other things.

Artie Shaw and his New Music. "I've A Strange New Rhythm In My Heart" (***). "Free Wheeling" (**). (Vocalion S.134.)

As far as I am concerned you can keep most of this record as long as you leave me the sixteen bars on side A and the eight on side B, in which there are all-too-brief appearances by my favourite vocalist, Leo Watson.

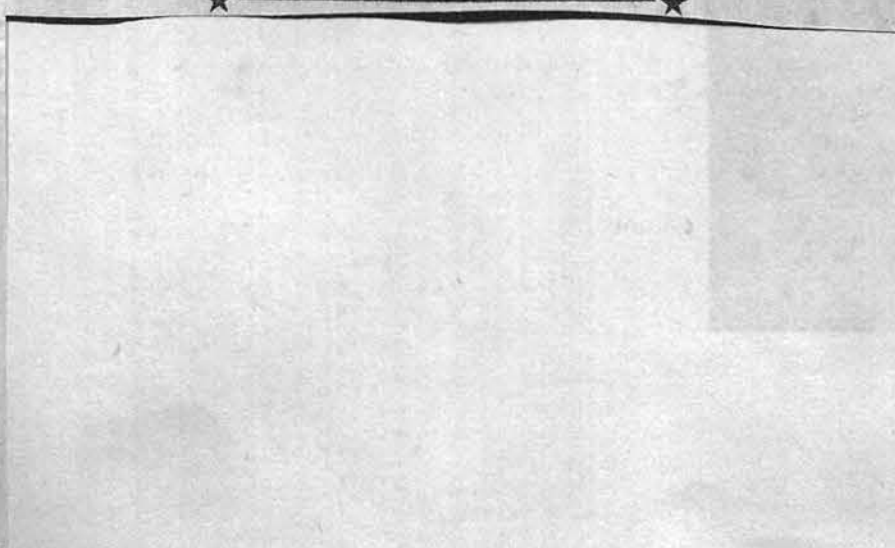
To be able to improvise such delightful phrases at all, much less sing them in tune, is an achievement for which Leo Watson deserves everything short of the Legion of Honour. He has redeemed the decadent art of scat singing.

"The Corniest Record Ever Made"—The Rhythm Wreckers. "Wabash Blues." "Somebody Stole My Gal." (Vocalion S.135.)

As the official title explains, this is another of those burlesques, but funnier than most. I haven't attempted to star it, as it depends on your sense of humour. The absurd glissing of the Hawaiian guitar, and the horses' hooves effects, plus wa-wa-trumpet and Fazola's pre-War clarinet phrases, make the first side the better of the two from the jive standpoint, but on *Somebody Stole My Gal* the concluding chorus is played in modern style, by way of contrast, and reminds us that Fazola can be a swell clarinetist when he means to.

SWIMMERS' GUIDE

★★★★ Trudgeon
★★★ Side Stroke
★★ Breast Stroke
★ Cramp!



83

COMPLETE GUIDE TO PERSONNELS OF MARCH DISCS

(Continued from last week)

Three-shilling records

Carroll, Eddie, and his Swingphonic Orchestra: (London, January, 1938.) *Midnight At The Onyx Club; Song Of The Volga Boatmen*. For personnel see Guide for January 1. Parlophone R.2491.

Dorsey, Tommy, and his Orchestra: (New York, Spring, 1937.) *Nola*; (Summer, 1937) *Who?* (vocal Jack Leonard). For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. H.M.V. B.8720.

Fitzgerald, Ella (Vocal) and her Savoy Eight: (N.) (New York, December, 1937.) *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen; It's My Turn Now*. Taft Jordan (trumpet); Louis Jordan (alto); Sandy Williams (trombone); Theodore McRae

(tenor); Tommy Fulford (piano); Boboy Johnson (guitar); Chick Webb (drums); Beverley Peer (bass). Brunswick 02561.

Froeba, Frank, and his Orchestra: (New York, November, 1937.) *Who? Goblins In the Steeple*. Frank Froeba (leader and piano); Charles Colin, Frank Wysochanski, Charles Cognata (trumpets); Mack zazmar (trombone); Sam Rubinitch, Joe Estren (altos); Ed Appie, Kurt Bloom (tenors); Clayton Duerer (guitar); Buddy Schutz (drums); Ralph Durham (bass). Brunswick 02565.

Goodman, Benny, and his Orchestra: (New York, Autumn, 1937.) *Jam Session; Chloee*. For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. H.M.V. B.8719.

Lang, Eddie (Guitar solo, with Arthur Schutt, piano). (New York, 1928.) *Eddie's Twister*. For backing see Venuti. Parlophone R.2493.

Logan, Ella (vocal) with Orchestra under the Direction of Bill Harty. (Los Angeles, Autumn, 1937.) *Jingle (Bingle) Bells; Oh, Dear! What Can The Matter Be?* Vocalion 578.

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: (Paris, June, 1937.) *Rose Room; Tea s*. For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. H.M.V. B.8718.

Rhythm Wreckers: (New York, Spring, 1937.) *Wabash Blues; Somebody Stole My Gal*. I. Fazola (clarinet); L. Singer (xylophone); L. Reiner (guitar); M. Stein (bass); B. Johnson (drums). Vocalion S.135.

Shaw, Artie, and his New music: (New York, September, 1937.) *I've A Strange New Rhythm In My Heart; Free Wheeling*. (Vocal Leo Watson). For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. Vocalion S.134.

Tatum, Art (Piano Solos): (N.) (New York, November, 1937.) *Gone With The Wind; Stormy Weather*. Brunswick 02564.

Trumbauer, Frankie, and his Orchestra: (New York, 1928.) *Ostrich Walk; Riverboat Shuffle*. Frankie Trumbauer (leader and C melody sax); Bix Beiderbecke (cornet); Bill Rank (trombone); Doc Ryker (sax); Don Murray (clarinet); Arthur Schutt (piano); Eddie Lang (guitar); Chauncey Morehouse (drums). Parlophone R.2492.

Venuti Joe, and Eddie Lang (Violin and Guitar Duet): (New York, 1928.) *Sunshine*. For backing see Lang Parlophone R.2493.

Two-shilling records

Armstrong, Louis, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, November, 1937.) *Once In A While; On The Sunny Side Of The Street* (both vocals Louis Armstrong). For personnel see Guide for mid-December, 1937, with George Callender replacing Pop Foster on bass Decca F.6613.

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: (London, January, 1938.) *Stomping At Decca; Night and Day*. Stephane Grappelly (violin); Django Reinhardt (solo guitar); Vees, Chaput (guitars); Louis Vola (bass). Decca F.6616.

Waller, Fats, and his Rhythm: (N.) (New York, Autumn, 1937.) *Every Day's A Holiday; You Fit Into The Picture* (both vocals Fats Waller). For

personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. H.M.V. BD.5333.

One-and-six records

Gardner, Freddy, and his Swing Orchestra: (London, February, 1938.) *Snake Charmer; Dipsy Doodle*. Freddy Gardner (leader and alto); Bill Farrell, Norman Payne (trumpets); Ted Heath, Paul Fenoulhet (trombones); Frank Weir (alto); E. O. Pogson (tenor); Pat Dodd (piano); George Elliott (guitar); Sid Heiger (drums); A. N. Other (bass). Rex 9244.

Second Decca Album of Jam Music. Featuring: Teddy Wilson, Red Norvo, Benny Goodman, Count Basie, Stuff Smith, Benny Carter, Willie ("The Lion") Smith, etc. Full personnels on special leaflet. Seven records in album 17s. 6d., single records 2s. 6d. each. Decca J8 to J14.

Feb 19th 1938

Round About Midnight By IAIN LANG

JAZZ CORNER

LEONARD FEATHER, who, at the age of twenty-four, is one of the world's most eminent jazzologists, left his Mayfair home the other day bound for Harlem, Fifty-second-street and Greenwich Village to look over new developments in hot music. He makes these pilgrimages regularly.

In wishing him *bon voyage*, I begged, "Don't come back without arranging for Maxine Sullivan to visit London."

Pocket-sized Girl

MAXINE is a pocket-sized coloured girl of seventeen who is now singing at the Onyx Club in New York. The great Ethel Waters is her most ardent admirer.

Maybe you have heard B.B.C. transmissions of her records of "Annie Laurie" and "Loch Lomond." She is a nap selection for West End cabaret.

Feather has promised to do his darnedest.

IAIN LANG

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Feather Foreca

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Chops"

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P o t a t o e

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P o r k



GREAT STUFF THESE SMITHS!

Hot
Records
Reviewed

•
Stuff Smith and
His Orchestra.
"After You've
Gone."

Willie Smith (The
Lion) and His
Clubs.
"Achin' Hearted
Blues."
(**Decca J.11.)

GR E A T
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t h e s e
S m i t h s ! W h e t h e r
b y c o i n c i d e n c e o r
i n a s p i r i t o f w i l f u l
f r i v o l i t y , D e c c a h a s
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b a n d-

l e a d e r s w h o s e c o m m u n i o n b e g i n s
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t r u m p e t p l a y i n g . A n d i f i t ' s r e a l l y
F r a n k i e N e w t o n I ' l l e a t t h e D e c c a
l e a f l e t w h i c h s a y s s o .



by
"Rophone"

wards, can be very proud of these routine performances. *Sunny Side* was previously waxed in France, where Louis made a double-sided version for Brunswick with a European band that was touring with him. This new rendering is greatly inferior, though the other one was no masterpiece. Every one of Louis's vocals to-day seems less Armstrong and more hamstrung than the last. The trumpet chorus-and-a-half are the passport, visa and sales ticket which help for identification purposes.

Once In a While has to skip the fences of a vocal and an orchestral chorus before Louis takes off. The band sounds heavy and lethargic.

Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight.

"Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen" (**).
"It's My Turn Now" (***)
(Brunswick 02561.)

Even if *Bei Mir* is hardly up Ella's alley, she does introduce a twist or two that sound more Hebrew than Harlem. This will sell on title rather than artist appeal.

The backing is the sort of thing that spells Fitzgerald, and, without any sparks, it has a certain glow.

Art Tatum (Piano Solos).
"Stormy Weather."
"Gone With The Wind."
(**Brunswick 02564.)

The titles tell the story. All the false flashiness, all the sound and fury, the stormy weather, in fact, of other recent Tatum efforts, seem to have gone with the wind, and instead we have a glimpse of another Art, an Art which has restored my waning faith in the gentleman.

There is something of the allure of the slow-tempo Waller in the first chorus of *Stormy Weather*. *Gone With The Wind*, too, is real piano playing and real jazz playing which will leave the hotcha boys restless and dissatisfied. There are a few flourishes at the end, as if to remind us that this is the guy who can do those clever runs, but there is a more than reparatory dose of Grade A Tatum.

Frank Froeba and his Orchestra.
"Who?"
"Goblins In The Steeple."
(*Brunswick 02565.)

Who has another of those unison-vocal-choral effects for which Tommy Dorsey's *Marie* started a mania. The attraction hasn't lasted.

Goblins is even more itchy-bitsy and novelty-wovelty than its coupling, and every bit as cute as the title indicates.

Ella Logan (Vocal).
"Jingle Bells."
"Oh, Dear! What Can The Matter Be?"
(**Vocalion 578.)

This is the same Ella who used to sing with Bowly, sing with Hughes, sing the blues; the Ella who went to Hollywood, sang with a Scottish-American accent and crashed the golden gates of big money. When it comes to swing style she is no match for the other Ella. Bill Harty directs the accompanying orchestra. It is interesting, if not very reassuring, to hear two such old friends again.

Ella Logan, Scots swing singer, who is Hollywood's latest sensation, has a word with saucer-eyed Misha Auer.

Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra.
"How Could You?"
"Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man."
(**Decca J.8.)
"I'll Never Be The Same" (****).
"Remember Me" (**).
(Decca J.14.)

These are the only four sides in the Jam Album played by a full-sized Wilson contingent. The first three are up to Teddy's highest standards, while the fourth was presumably included in the album because Mr. Goodman happens to participate.

The main charm of *How Could You?* is its quiet, easy-going polish. No British musicians and very few Americans understand how to inject the

maximum of swing and inspiration into a performance as unobtrusive as this. Even Billie Holiday hardly raises her larynx above a mezzo-forte, and the Ellington coterie, comprising Johnny Hodges, Cootie Williams and Harry Carney, glides along in an equally smooth groove.

Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man proceeds in just the manner you would expect if you know the tune and Teddy's customary routines on slow tempi. Orchids to Buck Clayton and Miss Holiday.

Greater still in a similar vein is the old Malneck tune, *I'll Never Be The Same*, which is the *Easy Living* of the new album. Teddy's piano chorus is one of those models of deftness and delicacy that defy description, so please excuse me.

The rather unfortunate Miss Boots Castle is the downfall of *Remember Me*. It is not a record I should be reluctant to play if the family insisted on a recording of this tune, but aside from a nice ensemble in the first chorus and a brief appearance by Goodman, there is nothing to approach the class of the other three titles.

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.
"On The Sunny Side Of The Street."
"Once In A While."
(**Decca F.6613.)

Nobody from Louis and Decca down-

HITCH HIKERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Hotel
- ★★★ Hostel
- ★★ Hut
- ★ Haystack

MELODY
MAKER
MARCH

12,
1938

MELODY MAKER, MARCH 12, 1938

RAY NOBLE'S TOUR OF ENGLAND

All About The Canadian Band He Is Bringing

ARRIVES IN MAY

(Dispatch From Leonard Feather In New York)

BILL HARTY ARRIVED IN NEW YORK THIS WEEK ON HIS WAY BACK TO CALIFORNIA, FROM CANADA, WHERE HE HAS BEEN BUSY FIXING UP DETAILS FOR THE SENSATIONAL PLANS TO BRING RAY NOBLE TO ENGLAND WITH AN ALL-CANADIAN COMBINATION.

Among the interesting details which Bill Harty was able to divulge were some of the personnel details of the band. Under the direction of Jimmy "Trump" Davidson, the combination has been in existence for some years, originating from Toronto, and has always been regarded as the only Canadian band approaching the best American standards in swing style.

Although the presentation will naturally be billed as Ray Noble and his Orchestra, Davidson himself will continue to be a featured artist in the show as vocalist and trumpet soloist. He will also contribute some of the arrangements. The band is now at the Club Gate-neau near Ottawa. It was heard regularly all last year on a coast-to-coast N.B.C. network, and is thus well known throughout the States.

In London the personnel will be fifteen strong, plus a number of vocal and entertainment elements of which

no details have yet been definitely set. "Trump" Davidson's brother, Terry, will be heard on tenor sax, and "Coke" Campbell, who will be heard taking clarinet choruses, is a brother of Bruce Campbell, who came to England with Billy Bissett last year, and has lately been with Jack Hylton's Orchestra.

Another fraternal tie-up to be noted in the personnel is that of "Reef" and "Red" McGarvie, both of whom will be in Noble's band, on drums and guitar respectively. Reef was one of the first drummers in Jean Goldkette's famous pioneer swing band in Detroit, and was also with the Casa Loma group in its early days. Red McGarvie will be a familiar name to British record fans, as he has been heard on some of Red Norvo's recent records, and left Norvo's band only a few weeks ago.

Bill Harty doubts whether he himself will take any active part in the band, partly because the managerial side of the work will occupy so much of his time, and he assures me that

Reef McGarvie is a colossal percussionist and will be more than capable of taking care of all the kitchen work in the rhythm section.

Others in the line-up include Johnny Burt, pianist and arranger, and George Guerette, the only French-Canadian in the combination, who will be heard on trombone.

Noble plans to leave California towards the end of April, arriving in England early in May and opening in the provinces, on an inaugural "personal appearance" tour, after which he will go into the resident hotel job which is, of course, the main object of his bringing the band across.

Ray recently assembled a recording band which has made a session for the Brunswick label, and under the same contract he will be waxing for the English Decca company with the Canadian group on his arrival.



Feather Forecast and News

48-HOUR DAYS IN NEW YORK

More Commodore Music Shop Jam — Artie Shapiro (bass) and Bud Freeman (tenor) with Pee Wee Russell in the background.

THIS is no easy task. Feather Forecasting is all very well in London, where one can view everything in a calm and detached manner, but the tempo of New York is baulking the co-ordination of my musical reflections. What else can you expect when a typical day over here is comprised like last Sunday, which went approximately as follows:—

Up early in the morning after a late night, to catch Sunday morning swing session organised weekly by Martin of Make-Believe Ballroom fame, who often gets better stars than the C.B.S. Swing Club. Present at this week's programme is Don Redman's Orchestra. Don's band is still sufficiently Redmanesque to be attractive, though the glee-club vocals have been so much copied that even the original sounds a little weary by now. Also at the session was Artie Shaw, who is playing magnificently right now and has his band in a strong posi-

tion, with twice-weekly coast-to-coast broadcasts in the offing, and Maxie Kaminsky in the brass.

After a hastily grabbed lunch, off to the Hickory House on 52nd Street for the Sunday afternoon jam session run weekly by Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans. While a ring of dazzling college girls encircle the bar, Joe's boys provide the swellest jam music conceivable, concluding every set with a novelty in which just about everybody except the drummer takes up a trumpet for a riotous all-brass climax. Marty Marsala, Joey Bushkin, Artie Shapiro and Ray Biondi all play trumpet!

Bob Crosby As Guest Artist

As guest artists this week, the Bob Crosby contingent known as the Bob-Cats came along with Bob himself, and sat in for a great session. Zurke, whose piano ambidexterity is phenomenal, is still on crutches from a fracture five months ago.

From the Hickory House to the edge

of New York, where at a big dance hall there are two bands, Bunny Berigan's and Count Basie's. Berigan has a fine group with tremendous lift from the percussion of haggard, worried-looking Dave Tough, and great solos by George Auld on tenor, Sonny Lee on trombone, Joe Dixon, clarinet, and Bunny when his lip is in shape. But any band pales into a dim background when Basie takes the stand. This gang has a punch, finesse, and library of superb arrangements, that can never be quite imagined without a flesh-and-blood hearing. The enormously rotund and incredibly popular James Rushing has a throbbing, powerful and musical voice. The male Bessie Smith.

Any Other Ork Sacrilege

After Basie it is almost sacrilege to listen to any other orchestra, but I dropped in at the Savoy on my way downtown to find out if Teddy Hill's Band had maintained its London standards, and regretted to note that it had not. The other group, at the Savoy Sultans, was in many ways more of a kick than Teddy's bunch.

Finally, at the Onyx, one more session of Maxine Sullivan to soothe the jangled nerves born of a restless day. The Onyx Club boys play softly to back Maxine, but boisterously and jivesomely when on their own. Buster Bailey is playing brilliantly and developing into a good comedian, too, while Pete Brown (whom the drummer encourages with cries of "Play it, fat man!") is the second Hodges of the alto and a round pillar of geniality. The only man in the band lacking personality is the leader himself, John Kirby, whose deadpan expression makes one scared that he may at any minute fall asleep over his bass. The biggest kick of all is Leo (Shoot The Likker) Watson, who not only sings with inspired lunacy, but has also become a pretty fair trombonist!

Two Ways Of Being Crazy

Unless you include the day when for a bet I played records for twenty-four hours non-stop, the above-described day must have provided me with more good jazz than any other day in my life.

Remind me to get a couple of hours' sleep some time next week.

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Feather of London Here

Leonard Feather of Decca's London office arrived in N. Y. Feb. 17 and will remain in U. S. for six weeks traveling between Chicago, Hollywood and N. Y.

In charge of the company's pop music recordings, he will shop around here on combo biz and pleasure trips before returning to London.

VARIETY

BILLBOARD

ing at the Pennsylvania. . . . And in spite of the fact that it is only the swing records that sell big in England, LEONARD FEATHER, Gotham gazing for London's *Melody Maker* mag, decries the fact that there isn't a single swing band in his native land worth a darn. . . . Aside

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

WEDNESDAY night's 'Swing Time' programme will be devoted to a memorial album issued lately of some of the Blues songs of Bessie Smith, coloured vocalist, who was killed in a Memphis car accident a few months ago. She was forty-four years old.

Bessie Smith's peculiar art, with her entirely unrestrained tone repetitive refrains on the simplest of melodic themes, can hardly be expected to appeal to the squeamish or the uninitiated. Her recordings, aimed solely at members of her own race, sold over four million copies during the nineteen-twenties, chiefly among the illiterate Blues lovers of the Southern States, but recently she has been taken up by jazz connoisseurs, who define her singing as the epitome of the Negro idiom.

I should be interested to hear your reactions to this programme.

* * * *

Ernest Dudley, who was responsible for the recent programme dedicated to Ray Noble, has devised a similar presentation outlining the history and achievements of Paul Whiteman, to be presented on Friday, March 18 (National, 4 p.m.).

Whiteman, though not much is heard of him over here nowadays since he has given up recording, is still active in the States with his large band, touring and playing concerts.

Men Behind the Bands

Mention has often been made in this column, though never at great length, of the arrangers whose jobs consist of orchestrating the material used by Britain's leading dance bands. Taking the single-line melody of a popular tune as their only basis, they have to build the structure of verses, choruses, backgrounds, and routines that constitute the three-minute interpretation of the average popular song. When you admire the general sound produced by the band, the way the playing seems to bring out the full value of the tune; when you are struck by the pleasant sound made by four saxophones in harmony, or by the way the brass section build up to a climax in the last chorus; when a score of details like these give you pleasure, your thoughts should turn to the infrequently publicised but all-important arranger, who built bricks out of straw to make an ordinary tune sound extraordinarily good.

Starting next week, I am giving a few details about some of these 'men behind the bands' whose names are occasionally mentioned on the air but about whom so little is generally known.

* * * *

You will shortly be hearing the first broadcast over here of Ray Ventura and his Orchestra, which I think may be described without exaggeration as the only big band France has ever produced which has modelled itself successfully on the best American lines.

Ventura, a suave personality, who looks far more mature than his thirty years, has been popular in his own country for many years, and although it is difficult from the economic standpoint to keep a band of this kind going in France, he has overcome innumerable obstacles and built up a combination which I am sure you will find interesting. Included in the personnel is Phillippe Brun, an excellent trumpet player who was over here for some years with Jack Hylton. Recently Ventura added an American vocalist to the outfit, Betty Allen, whom he saw during a visit to the States last year.

Ambrose Ban Threatens to Disrupt Band

Decca Contract Not Renewed . . . Ambrose Edict Adds to Dissatisfaction . . . French Ban English

By LEONARD FEATHER

LONDON.—Once again the most important news at the moment over here concerns Ambrose, and most of it is by no means good news. In the first place his recording contract with Decca has not been renewed and unless either this group or the EMI combine can come to terms with him he will not be recording at all for some time.

Another event that caused consternation was Ambrose's announcement to his boys that in the future they will not be permitted to do a single outside job of broadcasting or recording with other bands, except in special cases where he grants permission. One member of the band has already left as the result of flouting this arrangement, and since there are several of the boys who, at times, make more money outside the band than in it, Ambrose himself realizes that this ban may result in the partial break-up of the band, amongst whose personnel there is already considerable dissatisfaction about things in general.

Sam Browne, having left Ambrose to tour the music halls, has been replaced by Alan Kane, a youngster who was at one time with Lew Stone and has been more recently singing and drumming with Arthur Rosebery. Ambrose, by the way, particularly wishes it pointed out that Sid Phillips' Orchestra, which appeared on Variety records, did not, contrary to the review by Gordon Wright, include any members of Ambrose's Orchestra, nor was the session connected in any way with Ambrose. Sid Phillips is expected to return to Ambrose shortly, having worked for a while with Hylton and recorded with an American pick-up band during his brief New York sojourn.

BBC Asks French to Ban English

Hundreds of musicians who make a substantial living out of commercial radio in this country have been disturbed by the story that the BBC has persuaded the French government to ban all sponsored programs in the English language. These programs have been the mainstay of British commercial radio for years since there are no sponsored programs in England and the only important commercial station outside France is the one in Luxemburg. The abandonment of commercials from Toulouse, Normandie, Lyons and so on would create serious unemployment problems here, and against the pressure of the British government, said to have been persuaded by the BBC to take measures for the ban, artists' associations have conferred with a view to organizing a protest against the situation.

METRONOME

BBC Static

The BBC has been most unfortunate in its American relays during the past couple of months, three programs having been abandoned through technical hitches or poor reception. The first was a Broadway Matinee which was to have featured Art Tatum; the second Richard Himber's orchestra on Jan. 3, the third Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans from the Hickory House, who had to be faded out after three items owing to terrific static which made them almost inaudible. Bob Crosby's Band broke the jinx with a successful relay on Jan. 31. Red Norvo and His Band, with Mildred Bailey, were scheduled for Feb. 28.

Edgar Hayes Tour

Edgar Hayes and his orchestra, well-known over here through their records, are expected to open at Stockholm early in March, inaugurating a five months' tour of Europe. Harold Oxley, who books the Hayes and Lunceford bands, hopes also to bring the latter combination across here fairly soon, provided he can overcome the labor permit difficulties which resulted in the cancellation of the entire tour after Lunceford had arrived in Scandinavia last year.

Lunceford's former vocalist, Mabel Scott, arrived from Paris and has been working at the Trianon and other night clubs. She is expected to broadcast with Jack Harris and his band. Al Bowly has been singing with Sid Lipton, Lew Stone and others.

Bill Harty is rumored to be contemplating a tour of England with an all-star Canadian Band, said to have been discovered by him on a trip to Toronto, under the leadership of Jimmy Davidson, brilliant Canadian trumpeter.

Danny Polo's first swing recordings on Decca were successful enough to justify a second session for which the same personnel was used with the addition of George Chisholm on trombone and Norman Brown, the Mills Brothers' guitarist.

British Swing

Another British swing session has been recorded by Freddy Gardner, alto and tenor sax ace, who headed a group comprising four brass, four rhythm and himself. Gardner expects to broadcast with a similar group and may try to build the first permanently formed British swing band.

Hot Club of France

The Quintet of the Hot Club of France, with Django Reinhardt on guitar and Stéphane Grappelly on violin, paid its first visit to London on Sunday Jan. 30, for a special concert organized by the *Melody Maker*. The theatre was packed to capacity and the Quintet's excellent program was enthusiastically received. Other acts featured were Eric Siday and Reg Leopold, British violin duettists, the Mills Brothers and Claude Bampton's Blind orchestra.

Europe's Largest Theatre

Just after the ABC picture circuit

SIGNATURE TUNE....By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

MARCH, 1938

of five hundred cinemas had alarmed musicians by announcing its intention of giving up all stage shows in order to spend more money on films, a sharply contrasted event took place with the opening of Europe's largest theatre, the State Cinema in Kilburn, London, featuring both films and a colossal stage show. Teddy Joyce has been appointed musical director for the State and the other big houses operated by the Hyams brothers. He has already presented an all-girl band and a new male band, and is busy forming another orchestra composed of juveniles. By the way, the money received by Joyce for his airings in January was seven hundred dollars, not pounds, as misprinted in this column. Anyone who knows British radio might have known this!

Top songs at press time (mid February) were as follows:

1. Can't Stop Me From Dreaming.
2. Please Remember (Brit. Publ. Macmelodies).
3. Remember Me.
4. Still Love to Kiss You Good-night.
5. Roses In December.
6. Moon Got In My Eyes.
7. Silvery Moon And Golden Sands.
8. Nice Work If You Can Get It.
9. Linger Longer Island (Brit. Publ. Maurice).
10. Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen.

EDDIE MACAULEY, whose 'Listen to the Piano' is the latest addition to the Friday afternoon series of recitals, has risen in the last year to the position occupied in America by Teddy Wilson, whose style he has emulated. In other words he is the country's leading swing pianist.

Although he played some years ago with Jack Hylton and has been in the profession for five years, it was only in 1937 that he became a jazz celebrity. He has done recording and concert work with Benny Carter, made his debut as a solo broadcaster in my own jam session last Whitsun, and takes part in Victor Sylvester's BBC Ballroom sessions.

Small of stature, light of touch, and Oldham of accent, he is one of the few musicians who spend their spare time listening to music, and recalls as the thrill of his lifetime a holiday spent in New York.

Men Behind the Bands

(1) BERT BARNES

Since the departure of Sid Phillips from Ambrose's Orchestra, most of the orchestration for this famous band has been in the hands of the pianist, Bert Barnes, whose compositions and arrangements of 'Busy' and 'Embassy Stomp' you have no doubt heard.

After beginning his musical career in his native Stoke-on-Trent, Bert Barnes came to London in 1929 and joined Reg Batten's Orchestra. Later he worked with Maurice Winnick, and about this time became well known as an arranger.

Barnes is less serious of demeanour than most arrangers; stout, sleepy-eyed, and casual of manner, he is able to write all through the night after playing until 2 a.m. with the band.

Quite frequently, if he is suddenly commissioned to do an arrangement overnight, he gets up at 5 a.m. and starts work, safe in the knowledge that there will be no telephone calls to disturb him. 'And I have a very faithful copyist', he adds, 'who doesn't mind being called up at all hours of the night to help write out the parts.'

A popular tune is sometimes a matter of only four hours' work to Barnes, though more elaborate arrangements take a full day. During the recent rush period when the band was filming, broadcasting, and playing at the Café de Paris, he had to turn out from four to eight scores a week, and he's still wondering how he managed it.

'After I've played the tune over a few times on the piano, I get the feeling of it and start right into the job', he says. 'No, I've never played any of the instruments I write the parts for, except piano and a spot of violin when I was very young.'

Next time you hear Ambrose, look out for some of the recent Bert Barnes arrangements, of which he himself has a preference for 'Nice work if you can get it', 'Bei mir bist du schön', and 'Japanese Sandman', also for Ambrose's standard favourite 'Hors d'Œuvres'.

From: Exclusive Publications, Inc. - 1619 Broadway, N.Y.C. -albee

EXCLUSIVE GRABS TWO BRITISH TUNES

Platters to Be Issued in March on Ditties

Exclusive Publications, Inc. has added two new songs to its catalog, written by Leonard G. Feather, British journalist and swing exponent, titled, "Mighty Like the Blues" and "Don't Try Your Jive on Me", the latter written in collaboration with Edgar Sampson, who also contributed to the writing of the current hit song, "If Dreams Come True." Benny Carter, top swingster who left America in 1935 to find huge success on the Continent, recorded "Mighty Like the Blues" abroad, with his own band, which Vocalion will issue in the States in mid-April. Danny Polo, another American who went to foreign shores to find great success, notably with Bert Ambrose's orchestra, waxed "Don't Try Your Jive on Me", which will be released on Decca shortly.

Complete Personnel Guide to Mid-March Records

Three-shilling records

Boswell, Connie (Vocal) with **Bob Crosby's Bob Cats**: (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *Martha*; *Home On The Range*. Yank Lawson (trumpet); Warren Smith (trombone); Matty Matlock (clarinet); Eddie Miller (tenor); Bob Zurke (piano); Hilton Lamare (guitar); Ray Beauduc (drums); Bob Haggart (bass). Brunswick 02566.

Foursome, The (Vocal Quartet) with **Perry Botkin's Quartet**: (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *Sweet Georgia Brown*; *Chinatown My Chinatown*. Brunswick 02571.

James, Harry, and His Orchestra: (New York, November, 1937). *Jubilee* (vocal, Helen Humes); For personnel, see Guide for February 26; *One O'Clock Jump* (no vocal). As above, with Vernon Brown replacing Eddie Durham on trombone. Vocalion S.136.

Lunceford, Jimmie, and His Orchestra: (N.) (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *Like A Ship At Sea* (vocal, Dan Grissom) (New York, January, 1938); *Margie* (vocal, Johnny Young). For personnel, see Guide for December 1, 1937. Brunswick 02570.

Sullivan, Maxine (Vocal) with **Orchestra under the direction of Claude Thornhill**: *Nice Work If You Can Get It* (comp., Gershwin); *Easy To Love* (comp., Cole Porter). For personnel, see Guide for November, 1937, with Charley Shavers replacing Frank Newton on trumpet. Vocalion S.137.

Webb, Chick, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, December, 1937). *Dipsy Doodle* (vocal, Ella Fitzgerald); *Midnite In Harlem* (no vocal). For personnel, see Guide for mid-January. Brunswick 02569.

Two-shilling records

Armstrong, Louis, and His Orchestra: (N.) (Los Angeles, January, 1938). *I Double Dare You*; *True Confession* (both vocals, Armstrong). For personnel, see Guide for mid-December, 1937. Decca F.6619.

Crosby, Bob, and His Orchestra: (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *Squeeze Me*. For personnel, see Guide for February 1. (New York, August, 1936). *Royal Garden Blues*. As above, with Andy Ferretti replacing Charlie Spivak on

trumpet; Mark Bennett replacing Warren Smith on trombone; Noni Bernardi replacing Bill Kearns on alto and Gil Bowers replacing Bob Zurke on piano. Decca F.6622.

One and-sixpenny record

Gardner, Freddy, and His Swing Orchestra: (London, February, 1938). *I Double Dare You*; *Have You Any Castles, Baby?* For personnel, see Guide for March 1. Rex 9252.

RECORD TUITION

The best way to learn to play stylishly is by listening to the star players on records. Every week, under this heading, Edgar Jackson will pick out a selection of records from the current lists. Buy the records listed under your instrument—it is the cheapest and best way to stylish proficiency.

RECORD OF THE WEEK.

Recommended to all musicians, irrespective of whether their particular instrument is featured:—
"Blue Mood" by Teddy Wilson Quartet. (Decca J.10.)

Trumpet (Harry James).
Piano (Teddy Wilson).
Xylophone ("Red" Norvo).
Blue Mood by Teddy Wilson Quartet. (Decca J.10.)
Singing (Ella Fitzgerald).
Bei Mir Bist Du Schön and *It's My Turn Now* by Ella Fitzgerald's Orchestra. (Brunswick 02561.)

Tenor (Coleman Hawkins).
Devotion and Lamentation by Coleman Hawkins. (Decca F.6597.)

Tenor (Vido Musso).
Clarinet (Benny Goodman).
Drums (Krupa).
Swing Ensemble.

Jam Session by Benny Goodman's Orchestra. (H.M.V. B8719.)

Violin (S. Grappelly).
Guitar (Django Reinhardt).
Bass (Louis Vola).

Stomping At Decca and Night And Day by French Hot Club Quintet. (Decca F.6616.)

Melody Maker, March 19th, 1938

LIONEL HAMPTON BREAKS DOWN COLOUR BAR

Replaces Krupa in Goodman's Band

THE inevitable, and the persistently rumoured, has happened at last. Benny Goodman and his Orchestra opened at the Pennsylvania Hotel last week without Gene Krupa, and presiding over the drums was none other than Lionel Hampton!

This news is doubly sensational, for never before in any American hotel has a coloured musician been a regular member of a full-sized white orchestra. Lionel is making out very nicely, but on February 16 his place will be taken by Dave Tough, who handed in his notice to Bunny Berigan immediately after the sudden departure of Krupa from Benny's Band, presumably to team up with Benny.



LIONEL HAMPTON

Krupa's departure is stated to have resulted from a disagreement between him and Benny two nights before their arrival in New York. As a result of this incident, Gene did not serve out his two weeks' notice but quit immediately. His plans are not definite, but he will certainly form a band of his own, probably under the management of Johnny Gluskin and Arthur Mischoud, who handled the affairs of Berigan and Tommy Dorsey.

A recording contract with Vocalion is under consideration. Gene will have a tough time finding the talent for a really first-class band, and is setting to work on this already. Last Saturday he sat in with the Onyx Club boys on the CBS swing club programme.

It seems that the break with tradition, as far as a coloured man playing in a white band is concerned, is purely tentative.

9x

RIDDLE RECORD

Was Tommy Dorsey Pulling Somebody's Leg?

March 5, 1938

16 The Billboard

And in spite of the fact that it is only the swing records that sell big in England, LEONARD FEATHER, Gotham gazing for London's *Melody Maker* mag, decries the fact that there isn't a single swing band in his native land worth a darn.

Billboard

Leonard Feather, the British swing expert, who tells us that London has started a campaign to eliminate all such song titles as "Kicking the Gong Around," "Chant of the Weed" and "Reefer Man." The Lord Chamberlain doesn't think they help the public morale. . . .

a dig at the novelty number, which is quite another proposition, and almost misses its point by overlooking the fact that a burlesque must always exaggerate slightly the strongest characteristics of its model.

Who was Tommy's second biggest record seller of 1937 in the States, runner-up to *Marie*, so you can now deduce what the American public likes to hear from Mr. Dorsey. The glee-club vocal, common to these two top sellers, is presumably the main attraction. Preceded here by a straight trombone chorus, it maintains the interest for a few playings and is neatly done, but, oh, how wearisome it can become when you've heard it too often.

After the vocal comes a trumpet chorus which rides way up to fair effect, though not perhaps in Pee-Wee Erwin's best manner. Tommy warms it up next for sixteen bars, and finally there is a passage by Bud Freeman that is almost too typical, too quintessentially Freeman, to be true, or too true to be good.

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"Chloe."
"Jam Session."
(***H.M.V. B.8719.)

Composed and arranged by Jimmy Mundy, Benny's ex-Hines staff arranger, *Jam Session* belies its title with ensemble passages; who ever heard of a jam session with an organized umpteen-piece band, reading elaborate arrangements? Still, never let it be said that I condemned Mundy's brain-child on account of its name. There are rather too many reminiscent phrases in the scoring, including the *Goonie Goo* riff, which may have been less familiar at the time of recording, which was, I imagine, some time in 1936.

The solo passages make the record worth while. Vido Musso gets off with an attack and ferocity that recall the

aptness of his surname. Ziggy Elman runs a bit wild, continuing to remind me of a rather more imaginative Tommy McQuater. Benny's limpidity of style contrasts nicely with the stiffness of the arranging, and behind him is that Goodman rhythm section, the band's most unmistakable asset.

This same quality, with Allan Reuss' steadiness a prominent feature that we are apt to overlook giving credit for, marks the opening of *Chloe*. In the second chorus Benny plays variations on the melody rather than improvisations; then comes more ensemble, and eight good piano bars handicapped by a tempo that seems a little too slow for the number.

Maybe the fault of this disc is that none of it save Stacy's contribution seems to be in the idiom of improvisation. It lacks some of the warmth and the impression of spontaneity that real jazz demands. It has swing to a degree, but the thrill of Goodman at his greatest is not to be found.

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.
"Every Day's A Holiday."
"You Fit Into The Picture."
(**H.M.V. BD.5333.)

Every Day is one of those numbers which Fats had pro-

bably never heard before the morning of the session and which did not interest him in the least. It is played at that medium tempo where nothing much happens, and, instrumentally and vocally, this is the mediocre Fats. The reverse was made so long ago that it has been cut out of the American lists for over a year. It dates from a good Waller era, is certainly the better side, and has a stronger personnel.

Frank Trumbauer and his Orchestra.
"Ostrich Walk."
"Riverboat Shuffle."
(***Parlophone R.2492.)
Eddie Lang.
"Eddie's Twister."
Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang.
"Sunshine."
(***Parlophone R.2493.)

Four sides from the golden era about which it is difficult to take a 1938 attitude when you have lived with and liked them for a decade. Bix students will hardly need to be told about the Trumbauer coupling.

The fact that I like these discs has nothing to do with the fact that I still think Parlophone should acquire, or cause to be recorded, some live, current American music, instead of indulging in the false economy of reissues.

★ ————— ★

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.
"Nola."
"Who."
(**H.M.V. B.8720.)

IN *Nola* we have a record with a riddle: When is a burlesque not a burlesque? The performance sets the question, but does not provide the answer. This is the same slightly ironical version of *Nola* that Howard Smith arranged when he was with Isham Jones and recorded in an earlier version on Columbia by Isham Jones' Juniors.

To quote a few ickies the whole thing will be an agreeable noise with no suggestion of satire, for the codding is so gently carried out that it can easily pass over the head of the less initiated. That is where this disc differs from most previous attempts at musical sarcasm: it burlesques a different kind of corn. Usually the old tricks of hurried, staccato phrasing and groaning trombones convey an immediate impression of rough, unsubtle humour at the expense of the old-time corn kings. *Nola* takes

So This Is Broadway

By GEORGE ROSS.

Bob Crosby, at the Hotel Pennsylvania, had an unpremeditated tableful of swing critics listening to him last Monday night; the assemblage included Carl ("Down Beat") Cons; George ("Metronome") Simon; Leonard ("Melody Maker") Feathers, fresh from the British front; Al Brachman, American representative of the same publication, and the musical observer for *The Billboard*. . . .

Having had his fill of American night life, with all the trimmings, Leonard G. Feather is returning to London to resume his scribbling for "Melody Maker," England's music mag. . . . David [Name] who, among other minor duties, is head of RCA and NRC. . . .

Melody Maker 26 Mar 1938

Feather Forecast and News

DORSEY Bros. MIX-UP

THE fact that Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey are now good friends again saved what might have been an embarrassing moment at the New Yorker Hotel the other night when I went along with Tommy to hear Jimmy's band, which had just begun its season in this resident job.

After the floor show the master of ceremonies absent-mindedly announced: "And now you can dance to the music of Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra!" Jimmy, amidst laughter, retrieved the microphone and announced that he wasn't Tommy, but that that gentleman was, as it happened, among those present. The lights were flashed on Tommy, who took a bow.

A few minutes later Jimmy Dorsey borrowed a pair of glasses and a trombone and mimed into the mike as the band played *Getting Sentimental Over You!* Afterwards Tommy himself sat in with the brass section, taking four choruses in a row on *Honeysuckle Rose* and then three more on trumpet, which he handled surprisingly well. Then Jimmy followed suit with a couple of trumpet choruses. Tommy wound up the evening with a burlesque corny chorus on *Getting Sentimental*, which must have been a great emotional relief after the thousands of times he has had to play it dead straight.

Axe-Grinding Done Here

Pardon me if I turn this department to personal ends for a moment, but by the time you read this Ye Olde English Swynge Band will have come into a new existence, and in a form which I trust may be of interest to you. I have assembled a gang of boys for a session up at the Brunswick studios here who, though not yet the most famous of recording stars, seem to be equal in talent of many more famous names.

The combination comprises several members of the Hickory House band including Joe Marsala himself on clarinet and tenor; Joe Bushkin on piano, who now doubles a pretty good trumpet; Ray Biondi, an excellent man on guitar, violin and trumpet; and Artie Shapiro, the prince of all white bass players.

On cornet I have Bobby Hackett, whom all the critics forecast as the coming Bix. On alto is Pete "Fat Man" Brown, who ranks with Hodges and Carter at the very top of coloured alto men. Finally George Wettling, from Norvo's band, on drums, and vocals by Leo (*Shoot the Likker*) Watson.

We are making *For He's A Jolly Good Fellow*, *Oh My Darling Clementine*, *Happy Birthday To You* and, believe it or not, a jammed waltz similar to that which I cajoled Benny Carter into trying in his *Waifing The Blues*.

travelling band known as the Kentucky Colonels, later completing his studies at a university in Cincinnati. He came to New York with Hal Kemp in 1930, and stayed in the big city in order to concentrate on commercial radio work. He also worked as pianist with a number of bands, such as Don Voorhees', Jacques Renard's and the Music Hall Band from which Benny Goodman drew the nucleus of his present combination.

Managerial Handful

After that, Thornhill played with Ray Noble at the Rainbow Room, and subsequently worked for Kostelanetz, with whom he has been ever since. Maxine Sullivan is his first managerial undertaking, and he has handled both this side and the musical angle of her activities from the time she opened at the Onyx.

Short, stocky and blond, Claude talks slowly but thinks fast, and knows more about music than most people who write arrangements for seven-piece swing bands. He waxed on Parlophone with Bud Freeman's *Windy City Five*, and *Tillie's Downtown Now* is perhaps his best recorded solo, while Maxine's *I'm Coming Virginia* is as well an



Something else Feather couldn't have forecast! Toscanini complained that the drums of the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra weren't "profound" enough. So the country was searched for a bigger and better drum, the one shown above (8 feet by 4 feet) eventually being unearthed in the possession of Chicago University Football team. Just the thing for a gig!

illustration as you could wish of his small band orchestrations.

Incidentally, under the photo of Maxine Sullivan and a man which

appeared in the 12/3/38 issue the man's name was given as Claude Thornhill; actually it was Noble Sissie. LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Tempo March 1937

Swingin' . . . Around . . . Manhattan With B. Y. Stander

Feather Plans Disc Dates

Leonard Feather, well-known British music critic, is visiting New York for a look around and hopeful of getting at least one set of special recordings by ace musikers to bring to London. Feather recently made a session in London, headed by Danny Polo, which have been fascinating local Hot Club fans and Decca has slated two titles, *Blue Murder* and *Stratton Street Strut* for a March issue. Among other swing records made abroad is one by Benny Carter and Coleman Hawkins, which is contemplated for a March release.

No Bouquets for Claude

Although so much has been said in print about Maxine Sullivan lately, I have failed to notice any lengthy comments on Claude Thornhill, the brilliant pianist and arranger who helped to put her on the swing map. Something should be known about Claude, so here are a few biographical details.

He was born in 1909 only a few miles from the small Indiana town of Clinton, where Danny Polo first saw daylight. His family knew Danny's sister, who one day brought young Mr. Polo along to the Thornhill residence, with the result that an embryonic jam session took shape (I don't know what name they had for it at that time), and soon Claude and Danny had their own stage duet act. This was how they both got their first real start in professional show business.

Claude was only fourteen at the time. Shortly afterwards he joined a

ARMSTRONG SHOWDOWN

Hot Records Reviewed

by
"ROPHONE"

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra.
"I Double Dare You."
"True Confession."
(*Decca F.6619.)

THE time has come for a showdown on this Armstrong band and the reason for its poor work on recent recordings in spite of a star personnel that might well be expected to turn in terrific work.

First it should be made clear that the band in effect is not Armstrong's, but Luis Russell's, as it is directed and controlled by Russell as a background for Louis. Now Russell is known to be an inordinately easy-going fellow, with the result that the discipline in the band is poor. Moreover, he plays piano in a style that is ten years out of date, and his musical ideas correspond. Thirdly, since the band is, to the public, nothing more than an accompaniment, superficially it makes no difference whether it puts any effort into its work.

Can't Blame The Arranger

As for the arrangements, these are mostly made by Chappie Willet, a Harlemite of considerable competence, who cannot be blamed, especially as he has reputedly been complaining that if his work is to be played like this he would rather have it handed back to him.

These illuminating details should help you to account for the slovenly work of a band which contains Red Allen, Higginbotham, Charlie Holmes, Pop Foster, Albert Nicholas, Paul Barbarin and so on. Higgy turns in sixteen swell solo bars in *I Double Dare You*, the tenor gives a fair solo, Louis walks through his part, and the rhythm is negligible.

The limp work behind the opening vocal of *True Confession* is a lifelike illustration of the band's morale. Note also the very sentimental tenor, and the alto which, though nice, is but a shadow of the old Holmes.

Louis, I double dare you to make something out of this band.

Mr. James Takes a Jump

Harry James And His Orchestra.
"One O'Clock Jump." (***)
"Jubilee." (***)
(Vocalion S.136.)

Mr. James jumped in on us a month ago with this Basie-cum-Goodman band of his, and his second jump, notably the 1 a.m. one, bears up lustily. The Count's blues is moulded into a treatment different from the original Basie version, with Jess Stacy ready to knock you off your ears in some really amazing piano passages. Herschel Evans, whose Christian name I have seen spelt four different ways (I'm not worrying), is right down to earth in his tenor solo, with fine rhythmic background.

LADIES' UNDERWEAR GUIDE

- ★★★★ Crepe de Chine
- ★★★ Silk
- ★★ Linen
- ★ Flannelette

tunes seems to have obscured the fact that she has never relied on them for her repertoire, a vast proportion of which comprises standards and current pops. All of these she infuses with so much individuality that most aspiring singers will just burst into tears. How can anyone, so utterly effortlessly and with such a minimum of deviation from the original melody, extract so much from these simple tunes?

Thornhill's arrangements are again a model of pianissimo perfection, and Charlie Shavers' muted trumpet background work is wonderful. I have taken a mark off *Easy To Love* for Buster Bailey's dull and out-of-tune solo, but otherwise there is little to choose between the two titles. It is Buster who causes the male vocal surprise with a couple of gruff interjections at the end of *Nice Work*.

Maxine, as long as you can dish it out. . . .

Chick Webb And His Orchestra.
"Dipsy Doodle."
"Midnight In a Madhouse."
(* Bruns. 02569.)

Larry Clinton is becoming the worst menace in jazz since Will Hudson. I hear with alarm that his compositions

Buster Bailey (clarinet), Charlie Shavers (trumpet) and Maxine Sullivan at Maxine's latest Victor studios session.



and recordings are becoming vastly popular in the States, where a few easily remembered riffs and licks, no matter how stale, can still pass for a composition.

Dipsy Doodle has a melodic line that is, in the truest dictionary sense, very nearly monotonous, and, in the colloquial sense, monotonous as hell. Since Ella Fitzgerald doesn't attempt to pull the fat out of the fire by altering the tune, her chorus is accordingly weak. Sandy Williams takes a moderate solo, and the ensemble plays some ordinary routine stuff.

Midnight is an even worse and more stilted piece of rhythmic stilton. Fortunately the orchestration fades into the background half-way through to become an ordinary fast-tempo blues, in which Bobby Stark and Sandy Williams do more than well, with note-

worthy construction and phrasing from Stark, who has been insufficiently noted as one of the leading coloured trumpet players for many years.

Connie Boswell with Bob Crosby's Bob Cats.

"Martha." (**)
"Home On The Range." (***)
(Brun. 02566.)

The Bob Cats consist of all Mr. Crosby's star soloists and rhythm section. *Martha* is a very meaningless number of which far too much is heard before Eddie Miller takes off with a typical Bauduc background. Connie seems to put nothing into her performance.

Home On The Range is more within the range of swing conception, has a fast but easily riding tempo, and wakes Connie out of her lethargy.

Vernon Brown is the trombone surprise of the year. Newly added to Goodman's band, he belongs to the Benny Morton school of sliders. Harry James himself has personality and form, like all the soloists on this coupling.

Jubilee, another poor effort from the pen of the commercialized Hoagy, introduces a coming Ella Fitzgerald in a coloured gal named Helen Humes. James's work in the last chorus is reminiscent of the way Louis used to build bricks out of pops.

Magnificent Alto Playing

Jimmie Lunceford And His Orchestra.

"Margie." (***)
"Like A Ship At Sea." (*)
(Brun. 02570.)

The finer facets of the Lunceford layout are displayed in *Margie*, with Willie Smith's magnificent alto playing in the first chorus setting the pace smartly. Note the sax team blend behind a soothingly husky vocal. That trombonist who slithers around so uncomfortably (remember *Annie Laurie*?) again interferes with everyone's self-assurance and sense of pitch.

Ship At Sea has a lot that's well worth throwing overboard. Take the singer, Don Grissom, for example. And the intonation towards the end of the instrumental chorus is something wicked.

Maxine Sullivan (Vocal) And Her Orchestra.

"Nice Work If You Can Get It." (***)
"Easy To Love." (**)
(Vocalion S.137.)

All this fuss and pother about Maxine Sullivan's use of traditional

Pittsburgh Courier Mar 25

... OUT OF ...

BILLY ROWE'S

HARLEM

NOTE BOOK

Leonard Feathers, the European music critic and swing worshiper, has two London spots in mind for Billie Holiday, who is no longer with Count Basie

Billboard Mar 19

Birth of the Blues

LEONARD FEATHER, London music critic, waxes enthusiastic 'bout the waxing session he supervised this week at Brunswick . . . had Bobby Hackett, Joe Marsala et others, cutting a jam-boree for the platters in waltz time . . . heralded as a new treatment for the blues, it calls to mind the philosophy expounded by W. C. HANDY on the origin of blue songs . . . that strange combination of sorrow and joy oft found in the Negro . . . as Handy tells it, "a river roustabout has just been told his rent must be paid. He has little money but not enough. He calls his friends and kin. He is honest and wants to pay. They can't help. So he sits down and thinks. He is sad, but the change in his pocket reminds him of happy days. He will use it to forget his troubles. He will laugh while he can and trust the future." . . . That's the philosophy behind the blues.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

OUR British solidity of character seems to be mirrored in the comparative regularity of the courses pursued by some of our leading dance orchestras. In America, if a band stays in the same job for more than ten weeks at a time, it is almost considered to be stagnating; everyone is invariably on the move. Over here we have people like Jack Jackson and Syd Lipton holding down the same resident engagement for years on end.

Another example of this is Joe Kaye who, if one discounts his childhood days as a violinist-prodigy, can divide up his entire seventeen-year professional career into five well-defined periods. From 1921, when he first took up jazz, until 1923, was the first stage at the Piccadilly Hotel (he has always had his own band ever since entering dance music); next he was at the Ritz until 1926; then at the Café Anglais for four years; and then with the Savoy-Berkeley-Claridge's group until November, 1935, when he returned to the Ritz, giving his first broadcast from there on October 21 last.

As a child, Joe Kaye relates, he detested music and practising, but his father, though just another member of an unmusical family, insisted on his continuing. The recalcitrant son later studied in Manchester and at the Royal College of Music. Kaye claims to have the only West End band without a brass section, except one solitary trumpet. His pianist, Jack Volti, and an outside man, Don Bowden, contribute many of his arrangements.

Men Behind the Bands

(2) STANLEY BLACK

One of the youngest and most brilliant British arrangers is Stanley Black, whom you may know as half of Harry Roy's piano team, Black and White. A slight, swarthy young Londoner, Black began making arrangements of dance numbers as an offshoot of his efforts in 'straight' orchestration, and his first essays in jazz were the transcribing of choruses from records and the writing of occasional original choruses. Soon he made his first complete original arrangement, and with it won a prize offered by the *Melody Maker* for unknown talent.

His ability to listen to a record by, say, a twelve-piece band and set down on paper every note played by each instrument, so that another band reading from his manuscript could play precisely the same score as the original, earned Stanley Black the sobriquet of 'The Man with the Photographic Mind'.

His first professional dance-arranging was done for Cochran's 1930 revue, after which he worked for almost every big band in the country. Sometimes he works his arrangements out in trains or dressing-rooms without using a piano. He prefers working at night and his favourite jobs are two he did years ago for Lew Stone: 'If the moon turns green' and 'Limehouse Blues'.

Something specially agreeable to rhythm fans will be offered in the four o'clock record recital on Friday, April 1. This will be a programme of records selected from the list of winning discs in a competition organised by a Chicago newspaper. The musical readers of the journal in question have shown excellent judgment. Benny Goodman, Tom Dorsey, and Duke Ellington were the first three winners. They will be featured, with the runners-up, in this programme entitled 'They're the Tops'.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THIS column is being written amidst a labyrinth of skyscrapers and noise. From the musical standpoint, New York has changed only in one respect since my last visit in 1936: there is more of everything, good and bad.

One thing that English jazz has to be thankful for is that it has not yet been infected by the current American mania for boisterous drummers. Since the showmanship of Gene Krupa helped enormously in the elevation of Benny Goodman's Orchestra to the position of the world's most successful swing band, it has become the habit to feature drummers of many leading bands in spectacular solo choruses full of sound and fury signifying nothing but bad taste.

One of the first old friends to greet me here was Ray Noble's drummer and manager, Bill Harty, who informed me that he had just returned from Canada, where he completed plans to bring to England an all-Canadian orchestra, which Ray Noble will direct.

Except for a semi-vacational return to England, Ray Noble has been away from his home for several years, of which the last few months were devoted to writing film scores. On his arrival with the new combination, which will be enlarged to include fifteen instrumentalists and several singers and entertainers, he will open a tour of the country and will later take a resident engagement in London.

Another visitor who may be on his way to England by the time you read this is Art Tatum, the remarkable coloured pianist, who has been offered a long series of European engagements. Tatum, who is partly blind, is essentially a solo artist; his florid and technically outstanding style qualify him especially for the concert hall and the Variety stage. To my knowledge he has never worked in a band, and owing to the handicap of his poor eyesight he does not read music. In many ways he is one of the most brilliant pianists jazz has produced.

The other night I watched him working at a small night club, quite oblivious of his surroundings, improvising the most astonishing ideas and ethereal harmonies, and favouring keys such as B major, the very thought of which would make most jazz pianists shudder.

America is so full of phenomena that after a while one comes to accept the remarkable as the commonplace. There is an eleven-year-old Negro named Bobby Short who has never had a music lesson in his life and who cannot read music, but who can play classical and dance music on the piano better than most adults, has a fine powerful voice, has written the clever lyrics and music of a number of original compositions, and was described by a doctor as having the intelligence of a normal twenty-seven-year-old man.

Naturally there is a slightly crazy element in the Broadway scene which often produces the weirdest of anomalies. A recent case is that of a celebrated writer of novelty compositions who signed a contract with a music publisher (without, of course, reading it carefully first) and later discovered that it contained a clause which forbade him to play any of his own works on the air, on the ground that he was incapable of doing justice to them.

From: Master Records, Inc. - 799 7th Ave. (Pub.Off.)-NYC -albee

NEW SWING PLATTER TOPS MONTH'S LIST

"Jamming the Waltz" First Improvised Swing Record in 3/4 Time!

Among the many platters waxed during March, "Jamming the Waltz", one of the titles made by Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band for Master-Vocalion, promises to be the outstanding disk of the year for it is the first time in swing history that a jam-fest has been recorded in three-four tempo. The selection, itself, is based on the traditional Negro blues theme, but extended into twenty four bars instead of the usual twelve.

"A common complaint about swing," said Feather, British writer who conceived this innovation, "is that jazz has been badly handicapped by the limitations of a strict four-four tempo. Musicians have become so accustomed to this steady pace, it never occurred to them to try the waltz experimentally as a background for jamming. Yet when I suggested the idea on the session, they took to it spontaneously and improvised in the jam style as naturally as if they had been doing so for years."

"Swing," added Feather, "is dependent more upon the inflections and expressions of the notes played, upon the use of syncopation and ingenious phrasing and also upon the Negro scale of the minor third, than upon any particular time signature or basic rhythm. Thus Duke Ellington has produced a swing rumba (Moonlight Fiesta) and there have been other instances of swing in tango and six-eight time. The waltz is the last important musical form to surrender to the swing idiom."

"Jamming the Waltz" features an all-star personnel assembled by Feather during his recent visit to New York and includes Bobby Hackett (trumpet), who was recently given an individual recording contract by Irving Mills; Joe Marsala (clarinet), whose famous Chicagoans will be heard soon on platters; Pete Brown (alto sax), who is now forming his own orchestra; Joe Bushkin (piano), Ray Biondi (guitar and violin), Arthur Shapiro (bass) and George Wettling (drums).

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The outstanding platter of the month will undoubtedly be "Jamming the Waltz" recorded by Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band (for Master-Vocalion), marking the first time a jam-fest has been waxed in three four tempo. The band was comprised of seven ace instrumentalists who played more than a dozen different instruments on the session and included three band leaders: Joe Marsala (clarinet), Bobby Hackett (trumpet) and Pete Brown (alto sax), who is now forming his own band. Others on the date were Joe Bushkin (piano) Arthur Shapiro (bass), George Wettling (drums) and Ray Biondi (guitar). The theme used for this innovation in swing was the ordinary Negro blues, but extended to twenty-four bars instead of the usual twelve.

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Melody Maker, April 2, 1938

Complete Personnel Guide to April 1st Records

Three-shilling records

Bailey, Mildred (Vocal) and Her Orchestra: (M.) New York, January, 1938. *In The Land Of Sky Blue Water; Lover Come Back To Me.* J. Blake (trumpet); "Chu" Berry (tenor); Hank D'Amico (clarinet); Teddy Wilson (piano); Allen Reuss (guitar); Dave Tough (drums); Pete Peterson (bass). **Vocalion S.138.**

Carroll, Eddie, and His Swingphonic Orchestra: (London, March, 1938). *Midnite In Harlem; Night Time In Cairo.* For personnel see Guide for January 1. **Parlophone R.2504.**

Clinton, Larry, and His Orchestra: (New York, September, 1937). *The Campbells Are Swinging; Midnite In Harlem.* For personnel see Guide for February 1. **H.M.V. B.8726.**

Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra: (New York, August, 1934). *I'm Getting Sentimental Over You;* (January, 1935) *Dinah.* (Both vocals Bob Crosby). Tom Dorsey (trombone); Jimmy Dorsey (alto and clarinet). Probable personnel: George Throw (trumpet); Bobby Byrne (trombone); Arthur Hurlfurt (alto); Jack Stacy (tenor); Fulton McGrath (piano); Dick McDonough (guitar); Ray MacKinley (drums); Jim Taft (bass). **Brunswick 02573.**

Goodman, Benny, and His Orchestra: (New York, September, 1937). *Life Goes To A Party* (comp. Benny Goodman and Harry James); *If Dreams Come True* (comp. Edgar Sampson). For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. **H.M.V. B.8727.**

Goodman, Benny, Quartet: (New York, December, 1937). *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen* (two sides). For personnel see Guide for February 1. 1st side: vocal Martha Tilton; 2nd side: Ziggy Ellman (trumpet). **H.M.V. B.8725.**

Hayes, Edgar, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, October, 1937). *Old King Cole;* (January, 1938) *Barbary Coast Blues* (vocal Earlene Howell). For personnel see Guide for November, 1937. **Brunswick 02574.**

Kirk, Andy, and His Clouds of Joy: (N.) (New York, December, 1937). *Lover Come Back To Me; Poor Butterfly.* For personnel see Guide for November, 1937. **Brunswick 02575.**

Mole, Miff's, Molars: (New York, 1937). *Some Sweet Day;* Miff Mole (leader and trombone); Red Nichols (trumpet); Jimmy Dorsey (clarinet and alto); Eddie Lang (guitar); Vic Berton (drums). *Shi-Me-Sha-Wabble;* Miff Mole; Phil Napoleon (trumpet); Frank Teschmaker (clarinet); Joe Sullivan (piano); Eddie Condon (banjo); Gene Krupa (drums). **Parlophone R.2506.**

Rhythm Gangsters with Eric Siday: (London, January, 1938). *Blues;* Eric Siday (violin); Franchy Sartell (trumpet); Jack Penn (piano); Sam Gelsley (guitar); Max Abrams (drums); Don Stuteley (bass). For backing see Siday. **Parlophone R.2505.**

Shaw, Artie, and His New Music: (New York, November, 1937). *Free For All; Monsoon.* For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. **Vocalion S.140.**

Siday, Eric, and Reg. Leopold: (Two Violins And Rhythm). (London, January, 1938). *Tiger Rag.* For backing and Rhythm Section see Rhythm Gangsters. **Parlophone R.2505.**

Sullivan, Maxone (Vocal) and Her Orchestra: (New York, November, 1937). *Darling Nellie Gray; Folks Who Live On The Hill.* For personnel see Guide for mid-March. **Vocalion S.139.**

Webb, Chick, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, January, 1937). *Oh, Yes, Take Another Guess;* (vocal Ella Fitzgerald). For personnel see Guide for mid-January, with John Truehart replacing Bobby Johnson on guitar and Pete Clark replacing Chauncey Haughton on alto.

Chick Webb's Little Chicks: (November, 1937). *Sweet Sue.* For personnel see Guide for February 1. **Brunswick 02576.**

Two-shilling records

Crosby, Bob, and His Orchestra: (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *There's A Strange New Rhythm In My Heart; Why Should I Care?* (both comp. Cole Porter; vocals Bob Crosby). For personnel see Guide for February 1. **Decca F.6634.**

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: (London, January, 1938). *Honeysuckle Rose; Souvenirs.* For personnel see Guide for March 1. **Decca F.6639.**

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BAND THAT SAT ON THE CORN FENCE

Hot Records
Reviewed
by
"ROPHONE"

SARTORIAL GUIDE

- ★★★★ Tails
- ★★★ Dinner Jacket
- ★★ Tweeds
- ★ Dungarees



★
Langston Hughes (left) famous author, and Midge Williams, popular platter songstress of Master records, inspecting the first of a series of blues songs specially written by him for her.
★

Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.
"Royal Garden Blues."
"Squeeze Me."
(**** Decca F.6622.)

"I've A Strange New Rhythm In My Heart."
"Why Should I Care?"
(***Decca F.6634.)

If only because it sounds invariably like Bob Crosby's Orchestra and not like a carbon copy of Benny Goodman's, this orchestra's policy deserves encouragement. Often I have sat on a fence trying to decide which way to jump in my attitude towards the Crosby manner, just as the band itself has sat on a fence gazing over at the cornfield on the other side.

Reversion to Dixieland Type

Yet I doubt whether they play anything that could fairly be called corn. The Dixieland style is more a reversion to type; while jazz has been going from musical generation to generation to produce the streamlined descendant of to-day characterized by Goodman, old man ragtime has taken a new lease of life and begotten a son of its own.

Nothing more typical of the nature of this offspring could be

imagined than the last chorus of *Royal Garden Blues*. The aura of the excellent Ted Lewis version waxed in 1931 with Goodman and Fats Waller seems to have enveloped this newer arrangement by Dean Kincaid (which, I was surprised to note, was recorded in August, 1936, and has never been released in America).

No Change In Two Years

The band sounded substantially the same in 1936 as it does to-day, with characteristic solos by Matty Matlock, by Ward Silloway on trombone, Yank Lawson, and Eddie Miller.

Squeeze Me is a far more recent recording, and was arranged by the bassist, Bob Haggart. It is one of the best cases in support of the Crosby manner.

The commercial coupling features the usual competent singing of Bob, who sounds more than ever like an echo of Bing. The arrangements are by the old-time clarinet man, Fud Livingstone. Trombone on the first side and unison passage after the vocal on the second evidence hurried production, but for the most part the performances are clean and brisk, with a finely recorded rhythm section and solos by Miller and Lawson worthy of attention.

Crosby's music is an acquired taste. That has been said very often about very many bands, and this particular taste should be no harder to acquire than its antecedents.

Much Change In Two Years

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.
"Take Another Guess."
Chick Webb and his Little Chicks.
"Sweet Sue."
(***Brunswick 02576.)

Partly because she also recorded it with Benny Goodman, and partly because this is also a far from new recording, *Take Another Guess* offers a striking reminder of how Ella Fitzgerald has changed in the last two years. Her choruses here are fresher and less mannered than her later work, and indeed the whole band is considerably freer and more inspired.

very young and inexperienced Mr. Crosby, and a weak end. I've heard many a finer *Dinah*.

Mildred Bailey and her Orchestra.
"Lover Come Back To Me."
"Land Of The Sky Blue Water."
(***Vocalion S.138.)
Andy Kirk and his Orchestra.
"Lover Come Back To Me."
"Poor Butterfly."
(*Brunswick 02575.)

If you are in the mood for an argument with some friend who believes that the white man stands for the sweet and the Negro for the hot influence in jazz (and there are such misguided folk), the contrasting versions of *Lover Come Back* will make a very strong opposing case. In Mildred's grand version we have a combination of style and vivacity, with a superb rhythmic background, which nevertheless retains all the beauty of the tune.

In Pha Terrell's version we have (or you can have it; I don't want it) a slow and dreary ballad with background by Andy Kirk, who seems determined to earn himself a reputation as the coloured Lombardo and has even been described in this fashion by some of the coloured newspapers. Pha is one of the best singers of his kind, but both this title and *Poor Butterfly* are pedestrian performances illustrating the degeneration of what might still be a fine band.

Mildred is backed up by the best band she has had since the *More Than You Know* date a year or so ago. Three of the boys are from Norvo's Band — Jimmy Blake, trumpet; d'Amico, clarinet; and Pete Peterson, bass — and the others are Chu Berry on tenor, Teddy Wilson, who has a typical solo in *Sky Blue Water*, Allen Reuss, and the peerless Dave Tough at the drums.

The Little Chicks, whose previous issue was disappointingly corny and under-rehearsed, may appeal to you this time by dint of better team-work and a fast, fascinating bridge - passage used between choruses throughout, leading to an even dizzier final chorus for clarinet and flute. You may also get some fun out of comparing Wayman Carver's chorus with the flute solo he took in another version of the same number, with Spike Hughes.

Chick Webb's Drum Breaks

It is, however, incumbent upon this department to call attention to the weakness of Chick's drum breaks and his failure to keep on the beat during the ensuing piano solo. And the clarinet caricatures Buster Bailey at his least inspired.

Dorsey Brothers' Orchestra.
"I'm Getting Sentimental Over You."
"Dinah."
(**Brunswick 02573.)

Tommy Dorsey recorded his famous trombone speciality three times: once for American Brunswick with a swell vocal by Jean Bowes; then, from the identical arrangement, but less inspiredly played, with a vocal by Bob Crosby on America Decca; and later with his own band for Victor. This is the second version. The first and third have been previously issued over here. This seems to me essentially a number for a girl singer.

Dinah, one of those lickety arrangements which reek of Glenn Miller, has good tenor and clarinet by Jack Stacy and Jimmy Dorsey, an introduction reminiscent of Mildred Bailey's *Is That Religion?*, two choruses by the the

Melody Maker April 2, 1938

CHICAGO

STYLE AGAIN

Feather Forecast and News

THERE seems to be a general feeling among European jazz chasers that Chicago style, if ever it existed, is dead and buried since the exodus of the Chicago musicians from their home town. Nothing could be farther from the truth, for whenever these boys have a chance of getting together they are all the more eager to revive the spirit of the 'twenties.

As evidence of this comes a batch of exciting records waxed specially by the enterprising Milt Gabler of the Commodore Music Shop in New York. Under the name of Eddie Condon and His Windy City Seven, come four sides which, as the accompanying leaflet explains, could hardly have been issued by any of the big commercial companies in these days of swing sophistication.

There is a twelve-inch disc of *Carnegie Jump* and *Carnegie Drag* (No. 1500), the titles of which have no significance beyond an attempt to cash in on the publicity accorded to Benny Goodman's concert last January; and on a ten-inch record is that great number *Ja-Da* coupled with *Love Is Just Around The Corner* (No. 500).

Both sides of the larger disc are unadorned blues, in fast and slow tempo respectively. The fast one becomes a trifle confused, though there are innumerable excellent choruses. The slow one has form and real feeling, with Bud Freeman right back at his best and playing as he seldom plays with Tommy Dorsey. Pee-Wee Russell, in whom virtuosity makes way for verve, plays some heartrending clarinet, and Bobby Hackett's cornet once again brings back memories of Bix. The old-time trombone of George Brunies (who, by the way, can't read a note and doesn't know A flat from a hole in the ground) fits well into the general scheme.

tents was a second-class outfit and had never done anything before but for a few rehearsals, already sounded considerably more interesting than anything we can point to in England. Once again I realised what a hopeless abyss there is between the standards of the two countries, if in America anyone can go around hand-picking a dozen men and have a band which, inside a week, can play with the spirit and team-work of Ambrose with the added advantage of several star soloists. In this group I observed an old friend, Chelsea Quealey, blowing some more than competent trumpet, while other good work came from Slat Long



Artie Shapiro (bass), Bobby Hackett (cornet), and George Wettling (drums) recording as "Eddie Condon and his Windy City Seven" for the Commodore Music Shop.

on clarinet, Fiji McGrath on piano and one "Red" Solomon on trumpet and fluegelhorn. Chauncey himself played the tamps and vibraphone, leaving the ordinary percussion work to Stan King.

By the way, I'm not trying to suggest that England should be able to bridge the gap, with one-third of the population and three thousand miles of ocean in between. But still, as I was showing you just now, they *did* transport Chicago style as far as New York!

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

How to Save Six Shillings

For those who can't afford the dollar-and-a-half, you can save the half by investing in the *Ja-Da* coupling, which is an even better example of the immortality of this style. I hear the musicians took a week to recover from the making of this session. Which shows that it takes a great effort to sound effortless.

Pee-Wee sounds so very much like the most revered of all Chicago clarinetists (especially in *Love Is Just Around The Corner*) that you might think, as Red McKenzie commented to me during an inspired orgy of music the other night at Nick's, "Tesch-niaker has come to life again."

Nick's is the Greenwich Village resort where McKenzie, Bobby Hackett, Condon, Pee-Wee and Brunies are all working to produce some of the most exciting music in town. To know what it is like to spend an evening there, you must try to imagine yourself sitting with desperate patience through a vocal duettist act, a series of numbers by a girl singer and an endless interlude on a Hammond organ before the band comes on for its much too brief stanza.

For the extra-avid Chicago fans there are four more of these discs: the Bud Freeman Trio (Freeman, Stacy and Wettling) in *Three's No Crowd* and *You Took Advantage Of Me* on 501, and *I Got Rhythm* on 502, which is coupled with another Windy City Seven side, *Beat To The Socks*.

The other evening I went to a dance hall somewhat optimistically dubbed the Swing Club and located way uptown in the Bronx, to catch the first public performance of Chauncey Morehouse and His Orchestra, which was formed recently as a background to Chauncey's drum act.

I was particularly struck with the fact that this band, which to all in-

'GIRL with the BEDROOM VOICE'

Maxine Sullivan.
 "The Folks Who Live On The Hill."
 "Darling Nellie Gray."
 (****S.139.)

MOST of the world's social evils and prejudices find their root in intolerance. When I think how much pleasure my friendly enemy "Mike" is missing by refusing to tolerate Maxine Sullivan, I could cry. Never has the "girl with the bedroom voice" had better material or used it with more goose-pimpily allure than in these two samples of silken swing.

There is a fault, and one which Claude Thornhill must correct. The jazz element in his arrangements is giving way to the rather precious gravity with which they take themselves. And the overtones of the chime effects cause them to sound horribly out of tune.

But Maxine and her backgrounds, and especially the delightful few bars of unison vocal behind her in *Nellie Gray*, and the subtlety of the harmonies, and everything else . . . well, all I can murmur is, John Kirby, you're a lucky guy.

Artie Shaw and his New Music.
 "Monsoon."
 "Free For All."
 (***Vocalion S.140.)

It's not often you hear a big band giving a concerted effect of improvisation. Artie's *Free For All*, though presumably a manuscripted composition up to a point, achieves this desirably and commendably. The disc has nice pace, good drumming (but rather too much in proportion to the rest of the rhythm section) and good solos by George Arus on trombone and Artie himself, way above the staff and in spirits correspondingly high.

Hot
 Records
 Reviewed
 by
 "ROPHONE"



Eddie South, "Dark Angel of the Violin," and his band, touring on the Continent, recording in the Hague for Brunswick (at twenty-four hours' notice) and now signed for Brown and Polson Luxembourg programmes from May 1st.

"A wind that blows steadily along the Asiatic coast of the Pacific in winter, from the North-East" (Standard Dictionary). This means that *Monsoon* is to all intents interchangeable with *Sirocco* as a jazz programme miniature, though from the composition and executive standpoints alike it has rather more scope than the old Spike Hughes opus. Fine saxophone work is a feature in the building up of an interpretative monotony which occasionally becomes repetitious, but which furnishes the right music for a certain mood.

Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra.
 "Old King Cole" (***).
 "Barbary Coast Blues" (**).
 (Brunswick 02574.)

I hope this band, during its present European peregrinations, runs near

enough to England for me to hop across and catch it in the flesh. The brass and reed team work is not up to standard in this waxing of Spencer Williams' newest piece, *Barbary Coast Blues*, but in a pretty fair arrangement of Johnny Mercer's tune on the reverse you can get some idea of the combination's claims to future stardom.

The vocalists, male on the first side and female post-Fitzgerald on the second, are no more than competent. And, by the way, what is the "Shoot the likker to me" riff doing in *Old King Cole*?

Quintet of the Hot Club of France.
 "Rose Room."
 "Tears."
 (H.M.V. B.8718.)
 "Stomping at Decca."
 "Night and Day."
 (Decca F.6616.)
 "Souvenirs."
 "Honeysuckle Rose."
 (Decca F.6639.)

If you saw someone do a quintuple somersault on skates, you would pro-

bably be quite excited. But if he continued to do exactly the same somersault *ad infinitum*, the time would come (maybe after hours, maybe days, according to your constitution) when you would remember an important dinner date.

I remember an important dinner date every time I hear the Quintet nowadays. For those of the audience who have only just walked in, the somersaults will be attractive. For me, all the musicianship and refinement of these productions do not eliminate

PYROTECHNICIANS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Rocket
- ★★★ Roman Candle
- ★★ Catherine Wheel
- ★ Damp Squib

the utter lack of the remotest conception of swing, and the complete absence of anything new. Except for some agreeable chords in *Souvenirs* and a slightly original last chorus to *Honeysuckle*, the canvas ranges from banality to corn (e.g., Grappelly's phrases in the first chorus of *Night And Day*).

Larry Clinton and his Orchestra.
 "Midnite In Harlem."
 "The Campbells Are Swingin'."
 (H.M.V. B.8726.)

Eddie Carroll and his Swingphonic Orchestra.
 "Midnite In Harlem."
 "Night Time In Cairo."
 (Parlophone R.2504.)

Playing records of *Midnite In Harlem* is getting to be an expensive business, what with having to fumigate the room afterwards every time.

Whether in composer Clinton's original version or any other, this is a new low in jazz synthesis.

The fact that Clinton's band has some good men (witness solos in *Campbells*) and that Eddie Carroll's bunch sounds more like a band than most British assemblages, aggravates the pity of it all.

Dipsy, also Clinton's brain-ape, is less offensive in that the main phrase is twelve bars long and can be used for solos based on the blues.

April 9, 1938

THE MELODY MAKER

CHANGES IN BENNY GOODMAN'S BAND

Switches In Sax Section: Teddy Wilson Planning To Leave: Gene Krupa Fixes His Outfit

RED HOT U.S. NEWS FROM LEONARD FEATHER



Gene Krupa (left) and Leonard Feather. Leonard has just arrived back in London from his American visit.

THE PAST TWO WEEKS HAVE BEEN PACKED WITH SENSATIONAL STORIES ABOUT CHANGES ALLEGEDLY INTENDED IN BENNY GOODMAN'S ORCHESTRA. OF THE HALF-DOZEN RUMOURS OF THIS KIND, FIVE HAVE ALREADY BEEN SUBSTANTIATED. FOR, BY THE TIME YOU READ THIS, BENNY WILL HAVE AN ENTIRELY NEW SAX SECTION WITH THE EXCEPTION OF ARTHUR ROLLINI.

George Koenig, the alto man, has gone over to Gene Krupa's Orchestra, and has been replaced by Dave Matthews from Jimmy Dorsey's group. The other Goodman alto man, Hymie Schertzer, is about to leave, with Milt Yaner cited as a possible replacement.

On tenor, Babe Rusin will be replaced by no less famous a figure than Bud Freeman, who handed in his notice once again to Tommy Dorsey, and evidently really meant it this time, as he shortly afterwards accepted an offer from Goodman.

The presence of Jess Stacy, Dave Tough and Bud Freeman together in one great swing band means that three great old-time Chicagoans are reunited, and will unquestionably "send" one another to produce unprecedented effects in the orchestra's performance.

Another sudden change was the departure of Alan Reuss, Benny's guitarist, who was one of the earliest members of the present aggregation. Benny declares that, owing to the difficulty of finding an adequate replacement, he will do without a guitar player for the present.

WILSON'S PLANS

As previously reported, Edgar Sampson has taken over Jimmy Mundy's job as staff arranger.

Finally, in answer to the rumour that he is also leaving the organisation, Teddy Wilson told me: "Yes, I'm leaving, but I don't know exactly when. Not for the present, anyway. When I do go, I shall get together a small band of my own."

The addition of Dave Tough has given a great impetus to the rhythm section and has caused great personal excitement to Benny Goodman himself, who played splendidly on the first new quartet session at Victor on the day before mailing this. Five sides were made, including Lionel Hampton's composition *Dizzy Spells*; Maceo Pinkard's old tune *Sugar*; and two sides of superb blues.

Teddy Wilson wrought some interesting changes at a session of his own for Brunswick this week when, instead

of using the men from Basie's Band as on other recent sessions, he assembled a mixed eight-piece for which he wrote skeleton arrangements.

Bobby Hackett was featured on cornet, while the saxes comprised Tab Smith and Pee-Wee Russell on altos and Eugene Sedic on tenor. Nan Wynn, former Hudson-DeLange singer took the vocals.

FILM-STAR ARMSTRONG

Louis Armstrong came to town this week heading a one-hour coloured show at Loew's State Theatre. Red Allen, though featured on all the billings and ads, does nothing at all in the show; Louis does practically nothing except the novelty numbers from his films; and Midge Williams, making her first Broadway appearances disappointed with a somewhat corny medley of *It Don't Mean A Thing and Mood Indigo*, which the audience seemed to like.

The band has several great soloists, but the only number in which it can be heard is the background to a comedy dance team.

British film producers should be interested to note that Louis's managers would be glad to consider a good offer to bring him over to England for a really substantial acting and playing role.

Since *Pennies From Heaven*, his Hollywood picture appearances have been too limited to give scope for his undoubted natural histrionic talent, and it is felt that an English company might be able to give him a break more commensurate with his abilities.

Harold Oxley, manager of Edgar Hayes and Jimmie Lunceford, sails for London next week to prepare plans for the latter's European tour.

Setting another precedent in the breaking down of America's musical colour line, Billie Holiday has opened with Artie Shaw's Orchestra at the Roseland State Ballroom in Boston. She is the first great coloured vocalist to become a member of a white band.

Any orchestra that is worth a six-hour journey must be something more than just competent, but I never for a moment felt that the hours of travel has been wasted. Facing a huge audience of college youths, Billie and Artie nearly caused a riot with a rendering of the blues that lasted nearly half an hour.

KRUPA'S LINE-UP

From the standpoint of individual talent, Artie's band is in many respects ahead of any other white orchestra in the world. Maxie Kaminsky on trumpet, Tony Pastor on tenor, George Arus on trombone and Les Burness on piano all displayed unique personal styles, while Artie's clarinet was indescribably brilliant.

Gene Krupa has now fixed most of the line-up for his band, which is to open at the Steel Pier in Atlantic City on April 15.

The only known names in the personnel are Vido Musso on tenor and George Koenig on sax (both ex-Goodman); and Ray Biondi (ex-Marsala) on guitar and violin.

The others are newcomers discovered by Gene on his talent-hunting tour. They include Dave Schultz from Texas on trumpet, Claude Lakey on alto, Horace Rollins on bass. The pianist may be an old-timer, Jack O'Brien. Altogether there will be five brass, four reeds, four rhythm and a girl singer. Gene has signed up to record for Victor, to which company Artie Shaw, by the way, also expects to transfer soon.

Teddy Hill has opened at the Savoy Ballroom. He speaks highly of Melba Smith, a girl singer from his hometown, Birmingham, Alabama, whom he found there during a recent visit to his family, and whom he hopes to have in the band soon.

Y... the place... it doesn't look big enough to swing a cat, does it? But after all, who wants to, with all these cats swingin' in there anyhow? Let's see—twenty to seven—I'll bet you we'll be the only people there.

Ah! I thought so. Looks like we're the only people in town who know where to find good

three now. Started playing violin when he was about seven. Then he played trombone for a long time, and came to London with Will Vodery's Plantation Orchestra—one of the first big coloured bands that went across there. 1922, it was. Then he had trouble with his lip and gave up the trombone. He was with Wilbur Sweatman in 1923 and joined Duke Ellington in 1925, and stayed with him right up to a couple of years ago.

Jeese, wasn't that blues really something? Two more rickys, please, waiter.

Well, as I was saying, after Braud left Duke he thought he could make a roaring hit as a restaurateur, and started a place called the Vodvil Club with Jimmy Noone. He soon found out what he didn't know about that business, and spent a lot of time making up for all the money he lost. Then last fall he took these Spirits over, and he was at the Onyx here for months.

McBride Walker 9 April 1938

Summing-up The American Scene

Feather Forecast and News

WHEN your friends who have come down to the dock to see you off from America exchange friendly quips about sending you back to prepare for the next war, Europe does not seem a very healthy place to which to return; but there is one consolation. Now that I have placed three thousand miles between myself and New York City, it is easier to view my subject in the detached, objective mood for which candid criticism calls.

Duke Ellington Still the "Tops"

A summing-up of the American scene as observed during those five frantic weeks leaves one conclusion standing out in sharp relief: Duke Ellington, his music and his orchestra, still represent the pinnacle of achievement in almost every department of jazz. A couple of hours at the Cotton Club while the band was playing for dancing removed any possible doubt of this.

BUT—and it is a capital **BUT**—there are so many other bands of the very highest order, each in its way as exciting as all the others, that comparisons and orders of merit would be stupid. Count Basie was perhaps the most unexpected thrill, if only because his recordings do not give any idea of the band's true value; but the bands of Chick Webb, Teddy Hill, Don Redman, and, among the white outfits, Artie Shaw, Red Norvo, Bob Crosby, Bunny Berigan and Benny Goodman, each provided an unforgettable musical experience. Some of these bands are not regarded in New York swing circles as real first-rankers, but compared with anything that can be heard outside the

States every one of them is remarkable.

There are at least three small bands, too, whose music is far too good to be appreciated by the audiences they draw, but who play loudly enough to continue to draw them. Anything that drowns conversation is fashionable with the college crowds right now, especially if it be a drummer. In fact, one of these three bands, Joe Marsala's, is almost spoilt by the deafening percussion which completely swamps the rest of the rhythm section. The others are Bobby Hackett's band at Nick's, and John Kirby's boys at the Onyx.

The biggest surprise of the trip, both physically and otherwise, was the two-hundred-pound-odd vocalist, James Rushing, whose blues with Count Basie I have already mentioned often enough to imply that he must have something. Here again you would be justified in scepticism, for Rushing's fine voice will never be quite as impressive on a disc.

Swell Pianist at Eleven Years of Age

The smallest surprise, by way of contrast, was Bobby Short, an amazing child of eleven, who, though he can't yet stretch an octave, plays swell piano, and also has an extraordinary voice. The son of a Chicago coloured lawyer and a non-musical family, Bobby started playing at three, has never had a lesson, can't read a note of music, can transpose anything into any key instantaneously, has written lyrics and music of several excellent commercial songs, plays classical music and is quite a hand at the Hammond organ.

Bobby, who started professionally in 1936 and has played concerts with Bob

Here is
eleven-
year-old
Bobby Short
who was
the smallest
(physically)
and biggest
(mentally)
surprise
of Leonard
Feather's
American
visit



Crosby, Paul Whiteman, Fletcher Henderson, Bunny Berigan and Don Redman, was revealed in an intelligence test as having the mentality of a twenty-seven-year-old man. He is something more than a prodigy; he is quite phenomenal, but fortunately

doesn't like to talk as if he knows it, and prefers talking about politics, philosophy, and drawing, at which he is also adept.

Jot the name of Bobby Short down in your mental notebook. You'll be hearing more of him.

Ban Lifted, American Bands Flock to England

**Benny Goodman to Russia
... Randy Mergentroid
Seen ... England's
Worst Songs**

Our Siamese correspondent in Iceland reports an authoritative rumor that Randy Mergentroid has been seen in Europe and is currently engaged on a tour of some of the Continent's largest and most accommodating woodsheds.

No confirmation is at present available, since our Siamese correspondent has been transferred to China to cover the Civil War in Spain. However, it has been ascertained that a bearded and suspicious-looking figure was seen hovering around the stage door of a prominent honky-tonk in the Swedish town of Smörgasbord singing *You're the Swedish Girl in All the World*.

It was later revealed that this figure was not Mergentroid, but the stage door keeper.

Fifty-two American Bands for England

LONDON.—At last, after four years of complete suppression of international exchange of orchestras between Great Britain and the United

TEN WORST SONGS IN ENGLAND

Following are the ten most prominent flops in Great Britain at press time (March 39), and, according to official reports from farmers all over the country, have laid the largest crop of eggs since the depression:—

God Save the Swing.

When the Juice Comes Over the Grapefruit.

How Come You Do Me Like You Like Me Do You Like Me Like You Do?

I Double Date You.

When the Organ Played Jingle Bells in A Flat and I Sang in C Sharp Minor.

Doing the Tapioca.

Bei Mir Bist Du Gefaehrlich.

Ti-pi-tout.

Why the Hell Should I Dream If I Don't Want To.

Blues in My Flat.

States, comes the news that the ban in England on foreign musicians has at last been raised, and that an influx of at least one big American band per week throughout next year is expected in well-informed London circles.

According to a leading figure at 802, this move is part of a plan to evacuate New York City of all undesirable characters during the World's Fair. In order to accommodate the huge influx of tourists from Europe who will stream into New York for the Fair, the city will be cleared of all musicians. Plans for taking similar action regarding agents and song-pluggers are being put forward (by the bandleaders).

The American orchestras in England will be completely unrestrict-

ed as to their activities over there, no matter how much British labour they displace. The only stipulation is that they shall turn over a sum amounting to not more and not less than one hundred and five per cent (105%) of all their net earnings during the trip. This will not affect them very seriously, as there is a proviso in the agreement stating that they will be expected to play benefits on weekdays and weekends and cannot play before an audience for money.

After that they will run, not walk, to the nearest exit.

Benny Goodman for Russia

Since the picketing of the Carnegie Hall, during Benny Goodman's concert, on the grounds that Benny had played benefits for the Spanish loyalists, stories have been buzzing around regarding Benny's plans for extending his activities in the political field.

Terms might be arranged (through the courtesy of Comrade Hammond) to bring Benny and his red rug cutters to the Red Square in Moscow at a date soon after May Day in 1939. Several hundred Muscovite musical maniacs have already applied for seats, rather prematurely, for the payoff is that everybody will be expected to stand to attention throughout the performance.



Spotted in Europe:
Randy Mergentroid

BRITISH BANDS REVIEWED

RED APFELBAUM

Minimum of Style . . .

Maximum of Nausea

(D plus)

RED APFELBAUM and his Little Apples. Vine St. Police Station, London, England.

Saxes: (1) Christopher Apfelbaum, (2) Michael Apfelbaum, (3) St. John Apfelbaum. Trumpets: (1) Red Apfelbaum, (2) Jake Apfelbaum, (3) Cholomondeley Apfelbaum. Trombone: Ed Schnurtz. Piano: Luke Apfelbaum. Guitar: "Apy" Apfelbaum. Bass: Randy Apfelbaum. Drums: "Cozy" Apfelbaum. Vocals: Red Apfelbaum.

BACKGROUND: This band might never have come into existence had it not been for the tireless efforts of Red Apfelbaum's father. Red has three brothers in the sax section, three more in the brass and four in the rhythm section. Ed Schnurtz, the trombone player, is a cousin of the Apfelbaum brothers.

AT PRESENT: This is a good band between sets. When Red Apfelbaum decided on the novel and successful policy of playing phonograph records for twenty-minute stanzas and working the intermediate five-minute sets with the orchestra, he fixed on a plan that not only pleases the patrons, but also works out better for the management, as there are a number of visitors who come specially to hear some of the great records that are played.

Apfelbaum is thus more or less in the position of a stand-by for a nickel machine, and in this respect he does very nicely. The expressions on the faces of the reed sec-

tion, for instance, when they are listening to a Goodman platter, match perfectly and have the slick sense of team-work so essential to a successful combination.

No Thought

The brass similarly manages to convey an impression of homogeneity of thought, or rather of absence of thought, which, strengthened by the fact that they all have red hair, makes this one of the smoothest and most colorful teams in the country.

Only in the rhythm section is this spirit of fraternal co-operation partially lacking. The bass-player, who developed an inferiority complex from falling inside the bass when very small, has an inclination to go to sleep in the middle of the performance, with the result that he presents a somewhat monotonous appearance. However, he has improved immeasurably since he first joined the band, and is now able to smile in his sleep.



Informal shot of Red Applebaum and his Little Apples

Taken from the musical standpoint, the band's main fault is that owing to financial difficulties which are no fault of the boys themselves, it has been impossible to get their instruments out of hock.

No Parts

Until the real thing comes along, the boys substitute for their horns by means of whistling their parts. Here again Apfelbaum does not merely rely on the novelty of the idea to put himself over, but presents it in an original manner. His credo is that every man in the band has his own individual idea of how the numbers should be phrased, his own individual range and consequently his own favorite key. Apfelbaum therefore gives each man free rein to sing in what key he pleases and to phrase in his own particular manner. This gives the combination a variety of style and unorthodoxy of intonation comparable with that of some of the best-known American groups (no names).

Because no amplification is available and there is generally too large a crowd present for the voice to penetrate very far, Apfelbaum has wisely decided to take all the vocal work on his own shoulders.



"Who dat Man?"

"You mean who dat man?"

"No, I mean who dat man?"

"Oh. Dat man looking at you am Pee-wee Hunt and dat man who Pee-wee is looking at is Glen Gray. Both of them don't play with Red Apfelbaum any more."

Since he lost his voice in an accident with a bottle some years ago, this gives the vocal work a subtle inaudibility that places a considerable responsibility on the listener's imagination. To think very hard of Bing Crosby during Apfelbaum's silent renderings is all that is necessary to a complete enjoyment of his work.

No Arrangements

Arrangements are left in the capable hands of "Cozy" Apfelbaum, who fortunately cannot read or write music and therefore saves considerable time, trouble and rehearsal by not writing any arrangements.

Finally, to complete the picture in the negative history of the first band without instruments, singers or music, the payoff is that the band doesn't get paid off.

FEATHER FIDGETS.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED APRIL 8, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

BASED on a personal experience, the second of Stan Patchett's narrative hot-record recitals will be broadcast on Tuesday, April 12, under the title, 'Rainy Night in Chicago'. Though he cannot be said to have actually gone round the world in search of jazz, Mr. Patchett has encountered a great deal of it in all kinds of out-of-the-way places and circumstances.

* * * * *

He began his career as a film publicity man in Australia and very naturally his thoughts turned to Hollywood, where he believed he would find a wider and more lucrative field. So he worked his passage to the States, determined that the Film City should provide him with some sort of a job. It provided him with all sorts. He was, successively, a real-estate agent, a bellboy, a travelling salesman in carpet sweepers, a soda-fountain clerk, and a newspaper reporter. Finally, he secured a position as publicity agent for First National Pictures.

* * * * *

Shortly after, he was present at a dinner where Jim Tully made a speech in which he decried the sedentary habits of mankind and extolled the joys of being a hobo. So alluringly did he describe the pleasures of the open road that Patchett resigned from his job, resolved upon hoboeing his way from California to New York. During this adventure he heard a great deal of pioneer hot jazz, his enthusiasm being first aroused in a tiny back-street cinema where he heard the Original Mound City Blue Blowers.

* * * * *

Tuesday's record recital will take us back to the Dempsey-Tunney fight for the World's Championship. Stan Patchett—having bet every cent he possessed on Dempsey—came away from the fight and took refuge from torrential rain in an underground speakeasy. A gramophone was playing, and gradually the insistent and insinuating rhythms of a clarinet forced their way into his far-away thoughts. 'Who is it?' he asked. Nobody knew, till Joe the barman was called and identified the player as 'a kid he'd known at school—Benny Goodman'. Joe seems to have been the original rhythm fan, for he knew all the jazz players and proceeded to demonstrate their merits on the gramophone. This little scene will be re-enacted in 'Rainy Night in Chicago'.

Men Behind the Bands

(3) BOB BUSBY

Bob Busby, who has been kept very busy lately writing the arrangements for Teddy Joyce's all-girl broadcasts, is a pioneer among arrangers in England. He began studying harmony at the age of seven. Later, his father, who conducted a military band, encouraged him to try writing for that branch of music. From this he turned to orchestral arranging.

During the halcyon days of the Original Dixieland Band, he arranged for similar combinations. Then Paul Whiteman's advent inspired him to bigger things. Busby spent many months abroad, writing for Continental bands. Back home again, he spent four years with Jack Payne.

* * * * *

'My happiest memories of the days with Jack', he adds, 'are of when he led us on the field in a game of Soccer. Jack's radio announcements of my arrangements helped considerably to establish me as a symphonic arranger.' Since leaving Payne he has been a free-lance. 'It gives me more freedom', he explains, 'to work on the symphony I started a year ago.'

A Briton Looks at the B'way Swing Scene and Goes B'way

By LEONARD G. FEATHER
(Music Critic for The Melody Maker in London)

Every time I cross the Atlantic to survey jazz on its native soil I become increasingly aware, with some alarm, of an internal struggle that is constantly being waged in the realm of swing music.

The average American, who for many years has had too much of everything

until he cannot see the wood for the trees, will perhaps never become fully conscious, in a detached manner, of the situation that the swing music craze has produced in the profession (I almost wrote industry). I visualize the scene as a battle between two unequal forces. On one side, the genuine music as an American artform; and, on the opposing side, Broadway and all that the term signifies.

Broadway (Tin Pan Alley in particular) does not care for swing music and does not even commence to understand it. The "ickies," who crowd around the band stand gaping at Benny Goodman, are the same suckers who have set up the false idols of jazz, such as the Casa Loma Orchestra, and, most reprehensible of all recent creations, Larry Clinton. They are the same trifling youths who have caused bands like Chick Webb's, Louis Armstrong's and Tommy Dorsey's to degenerate into commercial commodities to whom swing is but an incidental attribute.

In the same way the music publishers, who moan that sheet music sales are dropping because of the vogue for hot numbers, do not hesitate to fawn on the swing band leaders in an effort to make them play *My Little Old Home in Osh-*

kosh or *The Schmatz Waltz* on their next broadcast. Possibly because in their school days they heard the story of Canute and the tide, they partially realize that the swing wave cannot be checked, but still they will do their damndest to check it, since they are in this business for a living.

Until the swing craze began, swing music and Broadway did not have to meet. Jam sessions took place informally without publicity, records were made for the limited public of connoisseurs, and the musicians were allowed to play whatever they pleased. Nowadays, however, the position is characterized by an incident which took place in my presence at the Victor recording studios only a few days ago.

Fats Waller was making a session of current popular songs. He had scarcely been given a chance to see the numbers before the date but was expected to read off the lyrics and music simultaneously and make six good records immediately that afternoon. Finally he came to one number which he objected was particularly unsuitable to his style and impossible to learn at such short notice. He insisted on substituting a hot number (which, by the way, was of the type that would sell excellently to the nickel-machine trade), and waxed it. However, he was then instructed to do the pop tune and reluctantly plodded his way thru it. The following week I learned that the records of the swing number had been destroyed.

Another angle that is holding swing music back is the racial question. This has been dealt with elsewhere and I do not intend to dilate upon it, but, in passing, I must point out that a set-up where colored musicians are subjected to every kind of sharp practice there is little hope for complete musical freedom. The development of mixed-color bands is an essential step in the future, tho it will have to surmount the objections of prejudiced managers, publishers and audiences.

If I have painted a very black picture of the American scene, I must add that by comparison with the state of affairs in Great Britain, this country has very few faults. In England there are practically no nickel-machines, and consequently record sales are appallingly low

(swing records like Goodman's and Lunceford's are lucky to reach a thousand sale); there are no swing bands and only a handful of musicians who have any instinctive feeling for improvisation of this kind; there are very few big-time jobs, for the lack of a strong union has caused prices to be slashed to ribbons, and many famous West End spots in London are employing full-sized bands for an all-in weekly salary of \$400 or \$500.

So America is not really the worst country in the world for musical conditions, even if Broadway is eating into the vitals of this thing called swing.

Finally, I may as well tell a story against myself. In my anxiety to assemble a recording band during my stay here, and knowing that my ideas would be held "uncommercial" unless I presented some novel angle, I waxed four numbers for Vocalion featuring old traditional tunes in swing style and also a rendering of the Negro blues played as a waltz. When the waltz record came thru I was told that this was a commercial idea, that the number would be published, enlarged into an orchestration for a big band, and that I was to write lyrics for it (even tho an improvised swing solo is about as easy to fit words to as a violin sonata). I shamelessly admit that I consented to this commercialization. Which only goes to show that everyone, sooner or later, goes Broadway!



L. G. FEATHER

Water 8-5755

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world



The Quintet of the Hot Club of France

THE mid-evening dance band music on Friday, April 22, will be supplied by the famous Quintet of the Hot Club of France, relayed from Paris (Regional 7.30).

This combination—the first to draw serious attention to the possibilities of French swing music—has an interesting history. In 1932 American jazz was already a cult in Paris. The general enthusiasm led to the foundation of the Hot Club of France, for which Freddy Johnson, the coloured pianist, formed a special band, the Harlemites. However, Johnson left Paris and the club committee found a new band leader in the person of Django Reinhardt, a prodigious guitarist and a gypsy, living in a caravan, but to be found every night in one or other of the small night clubs where hot jazz was played. His dexterity was almost uncanny, considering that an accident had rendered two fingers of his left hand almost useless.

* * * *

He found the perfect partner in the violinist Stéphane Grappelly, whose musical understanding matched his own. These two—a formidable duo reminiscent of Lang and Venuti, though featuring an individual style—were backed by a rhythm section comprising Django's brother, Joseph, and Roger Chaput on guitars and Louis Vola on string-bass.

Men Behind The Bands**(4) RONALD BINGE**

Practically every one of the smart arrangements featured by Mantovani's orchestra comes from the fertile brain of twenty-eight-year-old Ronald Binge. Only when there is an extra rush of work is an outside orchestrator entrusted with some small part of it. Binge was born in Derby and, though his father was a professional pianist, he had no intention of pursuing a musical career. 'Dad gave me my early piano tuition', he says. 'I was too young to be able to remember much about it; but I knew quite a lot when I went to my first teacher at school.' Later he studied piano and organ under W. J. Baker, organist at St. Andrew's, Derby, and through him met most of the local amateurs, for whom he acted as accompanist. He took a course of orchestration, in which he was deeply interested; but he was quite happy and satisfied to take his first job behind the counter in a gentlemen's outfitter establishment.

* * * *

Then, having made a small connection for himself with the local semi-professional bands, he determined to make music his sole business. He played his way to Sheffield and Nottingham, and there received an offer to form his own band in his home town, Derby. This five-piece combination featured a number of Binge's own arrangements. When the Derby charity organisations got together to produce a mammoth pantomime, he offered his services and formed a fourteen-piece pit-band and another ten-piece outfit to play jazz on the stage.

* * * *

Subsequent engagements were widely varied; in theatre pits, on the stage; with symphonic, jazz, and gypsy orchestras. He toured with a six-piece band who between them manipulated twenty-five instruments; the Six Rhythm Boys. Just three years ago he joined Mantovani to play piano-accordion and offered him an arrangement of 'La Rosita' which so impressed the leader that he soon placed all his arranging in the capable newcomer's hands.

Melody Maker
23 April 1938

COMPLETE PERSONNEL GUIDE for Mid-April RELEASES

Three-shilling discs

Andrews Sisters (Vocal Trio with Orchestra: (New York, March, 1938). *Ooh Boom!*; *Shortenn' Bread*. John McGee (trumpet and arranger); Vic Schoen (trumpet); George Mazz (trombone); Tony Zimmer (clarinet); Frank Proeba (piano); Dave Barb (guitar); Sammy Weiss (drums); Ed Stephens (bass). Brunswick 02582.

Armstrong, Lil, and her Orchestra (N.): (New York, October, 1937) *Let's Call It Love; You Mean So Much To Me*. (Vocals: Lil Armstrong.) Probable personnel: Shirley Clay (trumpet); Prince Robinson (tenor); Buster Bailey (clarinet); James Sherman (piano); Arnold Adams (guitar); Manzie Johnson (drums); Wellma Braud (bass). Brunswick 02578.

Basie, Count, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, February, 1938). *Blues for The Dark* (comp. Basie); *Georgiana*. (Vocals: James Rushing); (Count Basie, leader and piano); Ed. Lewis, Bobby Hicks, Buck Clayton (trumpets); George Hunt, Dan Minor, Ed Durham (trombones); Earl Warren, Jack Washington (altos); Lester Young, Hershel Evans (tenors); Fred Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Page (bass). Brunswick 02581.

Norvo, Red, and his Orchestra: (New York, February 10, 1938). *Week-end O' A Private Secretary* (comp. Johnny Mercer); *More Than Ever*. (Vocals: Mildred Bailey). Red Norvo (leader and xylophone); Zeke Zarchy, Barney Zudecoff (trumpets); Jimmy Blake (solo trumpet); Wes Hein (trombone); Leonard Goldstein (alto); Hank D'Amico (alto and clarinet); Jerry Jerome, Chas. Lamphere (tenors); Bill Miller (piano); Alan Hanlon (guitar); George Wettling (drums); Pete Peterson (bass). Vocalion S.142.

Rollini, Adrian, Quintet: (New York, February, 1938). *You're A Sweetheart; True Confession*. Adrian Rollini (leader and vibroharp); Bobby Hackett (trumpet); Frank Victor (guitar); Buddy Rich (drums); Frank Clark (bass). Brunswick 02679.

Webb, Chick, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, February, 1938). *I've Got A Guy* (Vocal: Ella Fitzgerald); *Harlem Congo*. For personnel see Guide for April 1. Brunswick 02580.

Wilson, Teddy, and his Orchestra (N.): (New York, January 6, 1938). *If Dreams Come True* (Comp. Benny Goodman and Edgar Sampson); *When You're Smiling*. Vocals: Billie Holiday). Teddy Wilson (leader and piano); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Benny Morton (trombone); Lester Young (tenor); Freddy Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Page (bass). Vocalion S.141.

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BILLIE TAKES HOLIDAY



BILLIE HOLIDAY

by
Leonard Feather,
 just back from a two-
 months' stay in New York.

DOOR opened on the first floor and a figure, emerging, glanced down the stairs at me.

"You the feller wants to see?"

I followed the massive, mounded figure into the apartment there was no need to who was addressing me. Round face, full mouth and oval features, the whole impression of Billie herself multiplied by three, told me that this was Billie's mother.

The little living-room was in almost complete darkness. Sit around were four or five people intent on the latest installment of a weekly radio play. Nearest to the radio, sitting in an oral orgy of words and gunfire, was the recently dressed and sleek-faced Miss Holiday in person.

The Reason For Going To Prison

At the end of the programme, which turns out to have the apt title "Lights Out," the party came to life, and Billie brought out a large pile of her own records, Teddy Wilson's and hundreds more. On the mantelpiece were signed photographs of Teddy, Maxine Sullivan, Pha Terrell; and one of Billie herself in an ingenious frame composed of five thousand matchsticks, which Billie told me was sent to her by an admirer who was serving a penitentiary sentence and did his work in jail. "He sent me a long along with it that he wrote and wants me to use. Maybe I'll be using it on my next session."

All the happiness, the unself-consciousness and personality that Billie has instilled into her records emerges in her personal manner. When she talks or sings her lips display a grace of movement that contrasts sharply with the often ugly facial contortions of many an operatic soprano. Ginger Rogers once said of Billie: "I wish I had a mouth as expressive as hers."

I asked Billie to put on her grand record of the blues (*Billie's Blues*), and enquired where she found those original lyrics. "I've been singing them same blues as long as I can remember. I made those words up myself. That's how I made my whole income as a composer; a couple of months ago I received the royalties for the recording of the blues; just eleven dollars!"

Her mother interrupted with the story of how Billie used to annoy an aunt with whom she once lived by singing these same blues about "my man this, and my man that." It seems this aunt was very reli-

gious and did not like the idea of a young child like Billie singing about such subjects. But the first song she ever sang was *My Mammy*, and her mammy confirms that "She used to sing that to me all the time!"

Billie was born in Philadelphia twenty-two years ago, first coming to New York when she was twelve. Her professional debut was the result of her mother's culinary connection with a little Harlem club, Mexico's, for it was here that Holiday junior sang while her mother continued to act as cook for the establishment.

Then John Hammond heard her one night, took her downtown to meet Benny Goodman, and had her make two of Benny's Columbia recordings. *Your Mother's Son-In-Law* was released shortly afterwards in England and marked the first occasion on which she was heard in this country.

It was when Billie started recording with Teddy Wilson in summer 1935 that her name began to mean something to the public. *What A Little Moonlight Can Do*; *Miss Brown To You* and *I Wished On The Moon* were all landmarks. Since then she has toured with various bands and worked at innumerable clubs, and for the past two years has also been recording under her own name for Vocalion. Lately she was with Count Basie's Orchestra for a while, but many of the white audiences to whom she sang did not probe far enough beneath the tonal eccentricity of her style to appreciate her. Basie let her go, and at the time of writing (March) Billie is taking a holiday.

Prefers To Sing Songs Her Own Way

Possibly if she had not clung to her own style, disregarding those who told her to commercialise it a little, she might be more famous to-day. She could make these changes if she cared to, but prefers to sing the way she feels rather than the way audiences would like her to feel.

If you saw Duke Ellington's short film "Symphony In Black" you may not have realised that the singer whose short blues refrain was a high-spot of the picture was this same Miss Holiday. The flashes of acting that the scene called for presented no difficulties to her. She is an instinctive artist.

I talked to Billie of her plans for the future, of the possibilities of an English trip. Last year she turned down an offer of no less substantial proportions than fifty pounds a week, but if the opportunity comes along again she will be really "sent" at the idea of crossing that ocean. "But I'd better bring a pianist with me," she adds

thoughtfully. "Those musicians over there, they can just about read and that's all, huh?"

I reassured Billie by playing one or two of Benny Carter's recent recordings. She never suspected that British musicians had even heard of swing music. When she was being sent by a record she would get up and rock gently in rhythm; when a passage displeased her she would murmur, "No, I ain't comin'!"

There is no doubt that if it were not for her colour she might have joined Benny Goodman long ago. The fact that her star has not ascended with the rapidity that might have been expected does not perturb her, for she is the sort who takes life and fortune as it comes. Success and renown are easy come, easy go; music, friends and a good time are the things that matter.

That is the Billie I found in the little Harlem apartment; the Billie who, to a select few listeners, is one of life's biggest vocal thrills; the Billie who may some of these days give the London rhythm clubbers their treat of the year in the shape of a person's appearance.

Until then, the pleasure of hearing even without seeing her can be perpetuated in a hundred records and characterised in that same old blues strain:—

"Some men like me short and snappy, others like me when I'm happy.

Some call me honey, others think I've got money,

Some say, "Baby, you're built for speed"

Now I, put that all together, make: ev'rything good can be!

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★ SWING TRUMPET DISCOVERY ★

HARLEM'S Dark Secrets



"Hot Lips" Page

LAST week I told you about some of the surprises, large and small, encountered during my New York sojourn. But in dealing as exclusively as I did with bands known to you all through records, I should have made it clear that there are more good fish in the C Major than ever reached wax. Harlem nurses countless dark secrets for the watchful treasure-hunter, and not the least of these was a band I heard at Small's Paradise, for many years a home of first-rate swing bands.

Good Old Good Ones

The name of the leader should be familiar to you, for he was a member of Benny Moten's Kansas City Orchestra during its most prolific recording period. Listen to *Toby*, or *Moten*

Swing, or *Milenberg Joys*, and you can hear some characteristic trumpet solos by Oron "Hot Lips" Page, the gentleman in question.

Though there has not yet been any wax evidence of the fact, Lips is now a leader of his own band, and a promising combination it is. His forte is the blues, which he plays and sings almost endlessly.

That Eventful School Band

Lips hails from Dallas, Texas, where he started an eventful life in 1908. After learning to play mellophone for his school band, he took up trumpet and went with a band from New Orleans which took him on the road. Later he formed his own band from friends he had made at school, but never achieved the honour of a paid job of work. After being featured for a while at hotels down South with

Sugar Lou and Eddie's Orchestra (better known as Clayton and Jackson, who were then partners of Schnozzle Durante in a comedy team), he joined up with the Original Blue Devils under the leadership of his half-brother Walter, now playing bass with Count Basie.

It was from this band that Benny Moten annexed much of the star talent for his orchestra, and soon the two Pages turned over a new leaf and played with Benny until he died.

After this Basie became leader of the band. The next chapter in Lips' career dates back to a night when Louis Armstrong and his manager, Joe Glaser, took me to hear Basie at the Reno Club in Kansas City. Glaser, impressed by a solo number in which Lips was featured with Basie, murmured that he would like to form a band around that boy.

Since Lips will probably be recording for Decca soon, the personnel may be handy for reference. Several names will strike you as familiar, not the least of these being that great old warrior of the bass, Wellman (ex-Ellington) Braud. Also in the rhythm section is Yank Porter, formerly with Fats Waller; Connie Wainwright, on guitar, and Jimmy Reynolds. Another old-timer, twenty years in the business, is the first trumpet, Bob Schaffner, former King Oliver and

Luis Russell man. With him are Wardell Jones, former Blue Rhythm Band trumpet, and George Stevens on trombone.

The saxes, all of whom are also arrangers, comprise Ben Smith, first alto (previously with Claude Hopkins); Ben Waters, tenor (was with Fletcher Henderson); J. Johnkins (whose *Wednesday Night Hop* was featured by Andy Kirk) on alto, and Lonnie Simmons on second tenor.

Lips' most recent waxings were made with Chu Berry and His Stompy Stevedores on Variety.

* * *
Another band which surprised me in Harlem was Eddie Mallory's, which tours with Ethel Waters' stage show, and is unusual in that its leader, by playing both saxophones and trumpet himself, can produce a

contingent of eight brass or six reeds; and one of his trombonists doubles spectacularly on vibraphone. The band has some fine qualities, as you may glean by the recording with Ethel Waters just released on Brunswick. I was surprised to note that Mallory is not credited on the labels over here, for in the States the billing was equalised as "Ethel Waters with Eddie Mallory and His Orchestra."

There's more than one reason for that. You see, Mr. Mallory happens to be Miss Waters' husband.

Feather
Forecast
and News

RECORD THAT NEEDS EASY-GOING NEIGHBOURS

Hot Records
Reviewed by
"ROPHONE"



James
Rushing,
featured
with
Count
Basie
and
his
Orchestra.

**Benny Goodman and His
Orchestra**

"Life Goes To A Party"
"If Dreams Come True"
(***H.M.V. B8727)

ARE your neighbours congenial? If you want to get as much kick out of *Life Goes To A Party* as the participants put into it, you will need to turn up all the volume you can get, for this is by nature a fortissimo platter.

Except for the first chorus there is not much resemblance to Harry James's Vocalion version of his own composition. The last chorus could never have been played effectively by a smaller band than Goodman's, for its mainstay is a phrase for the trumpets that must be played with savage attack.

You will find here none of the insipid or over-refined quality that

occasionally takes the punch out of Benny's more commercial work. Points to note are the crisp staccato after-quavers of the brass in the second chorus, cutting in between the beats of a well-defined rhythm section; Goodman's nicely constructed clarinet chorus, phrased mainly in quavers; James's own solo, in which most of his phrases start with one long note before breaking out into a rhythmic rash; and lastly, the co-operation between Krupa and the ensemble in the final chorus.

When it plays this way, which is not quite often enough, there is very little to match the Goodman orchestra in the world of white

jazz.

Edgar Sampson's old tune, *If Dreams Come True*, was recorded by Chick Webb when he was in Chick's band some years ago, and earned a new lease of life when Benny unearthed it and put it on the air lately. This is an exact repetition of what happened to another of Edgar's tunes,

Stomping At The Savoy, and the process has since been repeated with *Don't Be That Way*.

But when Benny took over *If Dreams Come True* his staff arranger was James Mundy, and my suspicion is that Mundy, not Sampson himself, arranged this new version. The tempo is rather too slow—Benny did this with *Stomping At The Savoy*, too. In the clarinet chorus you can distinctly follow the melody, however little you know about jazz; which is one of the reasons Benny is making plenty of scratch these days.

Vernon Brown, Benny's present trombone man, makes his debut with sixteen strong-toned bars in a forceful style.

Benny Goodman Quartet
"Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen"
(Parts I and II)
(***H.M.V. B8725)

The first side is typical quartet music, not at its most original, but musically pleasant, with a typically undistinguished vocal by Martha Tilton. The second side brings the quartet up to a sextet by the time it's through, what with Ziggy Elman's trumpet intervention and a reprise by Martha Tilton.

Ziggy's contribution is an extraordinary phenomenon quite unrelated

to any normal conception of swing music. It is composed of a succession of stiff phrases (generally minim, two quavers, crotchet, with stress on the first quaver), jerky in their melodic line and raucously cornetlike in tone. The idea, I gather, is "Impressions Of The Ghetto," and it certainly isn't impressions of the get-off. I have never heard anything in any ghetto or synagogue (even the shofar) sound anything like this. The only picture it conjures to my mind is a slightly groggy John Peel with his hounds and his horn in the morning; and the coda sounds like something off the sound-track of *Beau Geste*, with Benny's clarinet as the echo floating back across the desert.

I have awarded this three stars for its curiosity value, but as swing music it's hardly worth a twinkle.

Miff Mole's Molers

"Shim-Me-Sha Wabble" (***)
"Some Sweet Day" (*)
(Parlo. R2506)

The only title ever released featuring this personnel; a grand old Spencer Williams tune; solos by Joe Sullivan and Frank Teschmaker that would do to-day; these are some of the excuses for the issue in 1938 of a 1928 recording of the *Wabble*. Notice

the instinctive team-work between Miff and the trumpet (Phil Napoleon, methinks) in the semi-arranged chorus near the end. And the background the work of Condon and Krupa.

On the reverse is one of those pieces that excited us veterans when we originally bought it back in the dark ages, but it won't mean a thing to the average buyer to-day. To think that there ever was such a year as 1926.

The Rhythm Gangsters
"Blues" (**)

Eric Siday and Reg Leopold
"Tiger Rag"
(Parlo. R2505)

The blues is played by Eric Siday, violin; Frenchy Sartell, trumpet, and a rhythm section, plus a fire brigade which announces itself inexplicably between choruses. Eric is a variable guy indeed; his playing varies from the stylishly attractive, such as his first two four-string choruses here, to the smeary and corny manner into which he lapses in the ensemble choruses at the end.

There are moments when this side has the authentic blues touch, but not while Frenchy Sartell is playing. You would expect a Canadian to be somewhere nearer the border of real jazz, yet his phrasing is tumty-tumty and his melodic line completely uninventive. I don't think there is a trumpet player in this country who can play the blues.

The fiddle duet belongs to a genre so distinct from swing that I feel hesitant about passing judgment. There is a tremendous amount of technique lavished upon intricate phrases played in quavers at quick-step tempo. For admirers of clever jazz, this is clever.

Fats Waller and His Rhythm
"Why Do Hawaiians Sing Aloha?"
"Neglected"

(*H.M.V. BD5342)

Just potboilers. A more pertinent question would be "Why does Fats Waller sing *Why Do Hawaiians Sing Aloha?*"

It is so painfully clear during the vocal chorus of this side that nobody, especially Fats, has the faintest idea how the number goes. Fats doesn't even dare play piano during the vocal, and the rhythm section's chord sequence is quite confused. It is bad enough that records like this have to be made at all, much less released in England.

JAZZ APHRODITE

**Philosophical
Ramblings
by
S. R. Nelson**

SHALL we start off this week with two quotations which, I suggest, are apposite? First, one by that misanthrope Nietzsche, who once said: "Distrust the artist who is not chaste while creating." The second quotation is from Meredith, who wisecracked rather better than the composite figures we see on the screen when he said that the last thing civilised by man would be woman.

The more discerning among you will have realised that this is going to be about music, or more strictly our particular backwater of it, and its relation to women. And it is the direct result of listening to some piano solos the other day by Mary Lou Williams and Cleo Brown and then, purely fortuitively, hearing Una Mae Carlisle on the radio.

is being unfaithful to old Mère Musique?

And it would postulate that jazz is *ipso facto* uncivilised and that women, if Meredith was right, should necessarily shine in it. I am sorry that these jazz

women do not play in a distinctive style of their own and merely copy slavishly the patterns of the male Negro players. As I have been saying a good deal lately, the main trouble with jazz is that there is no individualism in it left worth discussing.

Mamselles Brown, Williams and Carlisle, might I ask you to break away from fashion and found your own jazz? You have the technique and sensibility to do it, and I think you can. It is a little thing that I ask, but so very important.

Immortality, you might remember, will be the portion of few in jazz.

HOROLOGIST'S GUIDE

- ★★★★ Big Ben
- ★★★ Grandfather clock
- ★★ Half-hunter
- ★ Wrist watch

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Melody Maker 23 April 1938

CHICK WEBB'S 27-BAR DRUM BREAK



Joe Marsala, with his own band at Hickory House for the past year or so. Recorded with Len Feather's Olde English Swynge Band.

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

- Chick Webb and his Orchestra. "Congo."
- "I've Got A Guy." (**Brunswick 02580.) Adrian Rollini Quintet.
- "True Confession."
- "You're A Sweetheart." (**Brunswick 02579.) Lil Armstrong and Her Swing Orchestra.
- "Let's Call It Love."
- "You Mean So Much To Me." (**Brunswick 02578.)

WHAT is this? A reversion to type? In each of these three records the drumming is so obstreperous that you would think yourself back in the middle ages of 1914 ragtime, when the percussionist was the comedian-showman of the band.

Listen, for instance, to the trumpet chorus in *You Mean So Much To Me*, where the drums

BIG GAME HUNTERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Elephant
- ★★★ Lion
- ★★ Jaguar
- ★ Skunk

effectively obscure the rest of the rhythm section and prevent any suggestion of swing, much less of musical background; or to the twenty-seven-bar drum

break (why twenty-seven?) by Chick Webb in *Congo*; or to the heavy, gritty noise made on the side drums throughout both the Rollini sides.

While the members of the rhythm section are performing in that capacity, they should constitute a united entity from which emanate the swing and the chord progressions which help to guide the soloists. When this rule is abrogated in the interests of showmanship, as in the above instances, the drummer is abusing his rightful status in the band.

The only one of these six sides that makes consistently good listening is the Ella Fitzgerald feature number, *I've Got A Guy*, an agreeable enough tune characteristically sung and arranged. *Congo* (released in America as *Harlem Congo*) is one of those appallingly synthetic pieces which end up in a recrudescence of all the phrases over which Mr. Will Hudson has been licking his chops and chopping his licks these past five years.

On the Rollini sides there are commercial vocal choruses by Sonny Schuyler, some nice innocuous vibraphone by Adrian, and cornet solos by Bobby Hackett, the "new Bix," whom the material does not inspire sufficiently to give you a real idea of his capabilities.

The Lil Armstrong sides are just undistinguished all round.

Blues Sandwich

- Count Basie and his Orchestra. "Blues In The Dark."
- "Georgianna." (**Brunswick 02581.)
- Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra. "When You're Smiling."
- "If Dreams Come True." (**Vocalion S.141.)

For *Blues In The Dark* the Decca studios were plunged into darkness, despite which this Basie blues sandwich, breaded with two bits of muted

Clayton, is not sufficiently different from *Good Morning Blues* to be worth another three shillings. James Rushing sings pretty much the same blues as usual. ("Kind treatment make me love you; be mean an' you'll drive me away. You're gonna long for me, Baby, one of these ol' rainy days.")

Georgianna (whoever thought we should hear Basie playing a tune by Ginger Croom-Johnson!) brought up an interesting point for me. I wonder how many swing record fans, and what proportion of my own readers, can get as far as identifying the instruments? The two tenor saxophonists here, Hershel Evans in the beginning and Lester Young towards the end, sound so confusingly dissimilar in tone that one could hardly be blamed for thinking them entirely different instruments.

Peculiar, Tricky Little Phrase

James Rushing sings less effectively on this side. Evans is not so sure of himself as usual, but Lester Young does some fine work, in which you will notice a peculiar, tricky little phrase in semiquavers. Turn to *When You're Smiling*, by Teddy Wilson, and you will find the same trick towards the end of his solo in the last chorus. Let's hope he doesn't wear it out.

This Wilson coupling, played by half of the Basie band, has the trombone of Benny Morton replacing the usual clarinet, and is below par. Morton takes a straight chorus, playing consistently sharp, to open *When You're Smiling*, and takes a hot chorus on the reverse which, though inventive, lacks tonal vitality.

"Melody Maker" 23 April 1938



Leo Watson, vocalist of the Spirits of Rhythm, zoomed to solo fame on "Shoot the Likker to Me, John Boy," as recorded by Artie Shaw, and now with Gene Krupa's Band.

NO doubt you have seen the name of Bobby Hackett flitting through these pages from time to time during the past six months; often enough, anyway, to make you wonder what all the excitement is about. Because most of his records are unknown over here I have delayed giving any details about this new star, but since you can now hear him on the Adrian Rollini Quintet discs as well as the Andrew Sisters' *Bei Mir* and *Why Talk About Love?* the time has come to introduce him.

Born in Providence in 1915, Bobby Hackett started his career as a violinist, later taking up the guitar. At the age of fourteen he was working with a small band in a Chinese restaurant. Later he organised a little jam unit of his own for the Theatrical Club in Boston. It was only three and a half years ago that he started playing cornet.

His work attracted the attention of

a Boston critic, who drew attention to the remarkable similarity between Bobby's style and Bix's, though Bix died years before Hackett took up the cornet. The same tone, the same direct style and phrasing directly on or between the beats, something of the same heartfelt emotion that Bix infused into his work, were reborn.

After a few Press eulogies Hackett decided last year to try his luck in New York. He was comparatively neglected. For a couple of weeks he played in Joe Marsala's band, as guitarist. Then Red McKenzie helped to place him in charge of the band at Nick's, where Red and Hackett are still currently working.

Acclaimed the New Bix

At Goodman's Carnegie Hall concert Hackett was acclaimed for his reincarnation of the Bix chorus of *I'm Coming, Virginia*. He has been signed by the Mills office and waxed a session of his own, making *Da-Da Strain; Jazz Band Ball* and two pops. He can also be heard on records by Dick Robertson, Teddy Wilson and other recording bands.

Another star from Boston about

Feather Forecast and News

TWO STARS FROM BEAN CITY

Bobby Hackett and Toots Mondello

whom little has been related is Nuncio ("Toots" to us) Mondello, considered by many as without equal among white alto players. Born in the beany city twenty-six years ago, Toots began as a solo entertainer when only twelve.

His first big-time musical job was given him by Mal Hallett; later he was with Irving Aaronson's Commanders, Buddy Rogers, Ray Noble, Joe Haymes, and, during its early stages, the present Benny Goodman Orchestra. You may remember how the presence of his lovely alto tone lent a colour to the reed section that is never likely to be surpassed. Such records as *Sometimes I'm Happy* and *Japanese Sandman* bear witness to this.

For the last three years Toots has been concentrating on radio work with

such big-timers as Kostelanetz and the Kate Smith programme. You can hear him taking an alto or clarinet spot occasionally in the Saturday Night Swing Club house band, with which he plays regularly. Other recent examples of his work are the Claude Thornhill disc *Stop You're Breaking My Heart* and the latest Maxine Sullivan session, due for release here next month. He has also been recording with a pick-up band under his own name for American Brunswick. He made a brief appearance as a vocalist, on Joe Haymes' record *Swingin' For The King*.

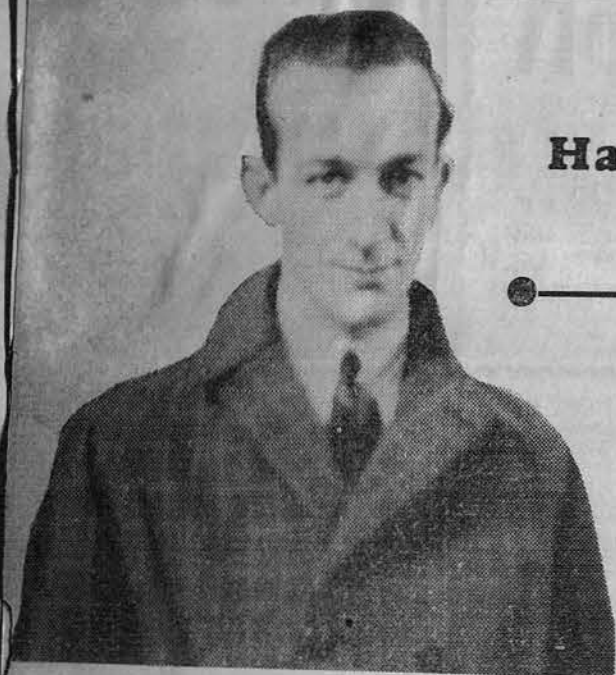
Swarthy little Mr. Mondello admits to a preference for Johnny Hodges, Benny Carter and Pete Brown among alto kings. Good for him; with such good taste added to his technique he could hardly go far wrong.

Down Beat April 1938

Benny Carter, swingster who left America in 1935 to find huge suc-

cess on the Continent, has recorded "Mighty Like the Blues" abroad with his own band. Vocalion will issue platter in the States in mid-April. Tune is an Exclusive release, written by British swing-critic Leonard G. Feather.

Melody Maker 30 April '38



PICCOLO SWING

Harlem Goes In For "High" Woodwind

Harry James, Benny Goodman's star trumpet, recording with his own band on Vocalion

ing to the identification tabs above the buttons; and hears them electrically reproduced.

Once the machine is installed it is essential to keep up the interest by constantly changing the records; and thus it is that swing records, which have the volume and informality appropriate to the atmosphere of these places have been produced in such quantities of recent years.

Generally there are enough customers with nickels to keep the machine in action, and the proprietor turns in an amount which not only pays for the records and the machine, but leaves a tidy profit.

Generally there is one particular disc that takes a customer's fancy and will be heard over and over again. During one dinner in Harlem I heard the same record played eleven times in succession by a fan to whom Jimmie Lunceford's *Margie* was evidently worth fifty-five cents (and she could have bought a copy for thirty-five!).

Another record which is the rage of the "piccolos" in the coloured localities is a Decca race item by a husky contralto, Rosetta Howard, accompanied by a group with the luscious name of The Harlem Hamfats. The title is *If You're A Viper*, and you can imagine the lyrics. This record must have sold literally in tens of thousands to the machine trade alone. Maxine Sullivan, Waller, Lunceford and Ellington are also huge sellers, sure of a five-figure sale, whereas in this benighted country they are lucky if they run into four figures.

Perhaps our dying disc trade might also earn a filip from the development of a similar slot-machine market. An attempt has been made to introduce this machine to the public in this country, but so far with nothing like the success they have attained in the States. It should not be thought that these machines displace musicians from their jobs. The vast majority of machines are used in localities which can afford either this canned music or else no music at all.

Feather Forecast And News

After studying for a while, Ellington joined the pioneer band of Wilbur Sweatman, and two years later came to New York with five men of his own selection. At a small night club there he was heard in 1926 by Irving Mills, the impresario who has controlled his affairs ever since. Mills helped him to enlarge the orchestra to twelve men, and the following year placed him in the Cotton Club.

Since then his recordings have earned him a world-wide reputation and the Cotton Club has been his *pick-a-terre* each year. He opened there in a new show last month, and the band as I heard it then is substantially the same group that will broadcast. Here is the personnel: —
Wallace Jones, first trumpet; Rex Stewart, Cootie Williams, Freddy Jenkins, trumpets; Lawrence Brown, Tricky Sam Nanton, Juan Tizol, trombones (Tizol, a Puerto Rican, is the composer of 'Caravan'); Johnny Hodges, Otto Hardwick, alto saxophones; Harry Carney, baritone saxophone, clarinet, and flute; Barney Bigard, clarinet soloist and tenor sax; Ellington, guitar; Sonny Greer, drums; Taylor, double-basses.

DID you know that ninety per cent. of the music in Harlem is played on piccolos? Don't misunderstand me; the word has a different significance since it moved up-town. "Piccolo" is the pet name for the countless slot-machine gramophones which provide a continuous undercurrent of musical entertainment in bars, pin-table saloons, clubs, restaurants, dives, dens,

and any other resort that does not care to pay for live talent. The revival of the gramophone record industry in the States these past few years has been largely due to the growth of the slot-machine trade. What happens is this. The proprietor of the club buys or rents a big machine studded with a dozen or twenty buttons. The customer inserts five, ten or twenty-five cents for one, two or five records; selects the particular discs he wants accord-

Melody Maker 30 April '38

SUNDAY SWING FOR LONDON PROJECT

FANS who have often complained that England has no equivalent of the famous New York "jam sessions" so often reported in these pages will be interested to hear of a scheme which has just reached maturity to inaugurate something on similar lines in London for the

first time. The idea was suggested recently to Morris Levy, who has always been in the vanguard of rhythmic affairs since the days when he imported the first Ellington records into this country.

Taking advantage of the excellent accommodation and technical facilities of his recently opened recording studio at 73, New Bond Street, he has arranged for a session there this Sunday, May 1, commencing at 4.30, at which one of the main attractions will be a recital by Leonard Feather of some of the remarkable recordings he brought back with him from his latest American trip.

ADMISSION FREE

All these discs are unissued, and the chance to hear them is a unique one. Admission is free, and all lovers of music will be welcomed. It is expected that a big roster of swing-musicians will be present, and the possibility of a genuine informal jam session is anticipated.

Should this scheme be supported enthusiastically enough to warrant repetition, it is possible that the "Sunday Afternoon Swing Session" will become a regular affair, the exact parallel of those held every Sunday in New York.

by the series of concerts, heard a giving a five pianists on the condition that he played what was written and did not let imagination run away with him. Everything went well until there was a pause in the music where Ellington saw an opportunity for a piano 'break' of his own. He took it—and received his notice that night.

Melody Maker 30 April '38

MUSIC with GUTS

Hot Records Reviewed

by

"'ROPHONE"

Harry James And His Orchestra.

"Texas Chatter."

"Song Of The Wanderer."

(***Vocalion S.146)

M R. JAMES continues to provide music with guts, and that's not all. As a composer he fulfils the promise of *Life Goes To A Party* by putting some swell ideas into *Texas Chatter*, notably the unexpected chord changes in the middle part.

He leads the first chorus with such an amplitude of expression that, if you tried to take it down on paper and have another trumpet player reproduce it, he would never get within a mile of the original. I also have rather a weakness for Jess Stacy's piano and the very pent-up tenor of Herschel Evans, which somehow reminds me of a passion fruit squelching with juice. Vernon Brown also plays an impressive passage on trombone, and the solid backing and cymbal work of Joe Jones is a lesson in efficient drumming without the showmanship of which I complained last week.

Practically all the wax in *Song Of The Wanderer*, a good old tune, is divided between James' trumpet and the vocal chorus of Helen Humes, who is so good this time that I won't even mention E—F—, as there is really no need for comparison any more; she is a good vocalist in her own right.

Technical tit-bits:—If we must go into details over James' work, listen to the passage after the vocal chorus and notice the effect of the grace notes in bar two, and the curious and attractive open-and-shut effect in bar fifteen

Bob Crosby And His Orchestra.

"Panama" (***).

"When My Dreamboat Comes Home"

(Big Apple Dance) (***).

(Decca F.6658)

Panama has always been a grand tune and Bob Crosby's has always been a grand band. What more do you want?

Don't be confused by the label of *Dreamboat*, which in any case should read "Big Apple Dance," not "Big Apple Calls," the idea being to convert the disc into an instructional background for youthful American practitioners of the large fruit dance. I can't help liking this record, even with Nappy Lamare's vocal, and his calls which interrupt the solos at crucial

moments ("now truck to the left!" "Suzi-Q to the right!" "Now everybody face Allah and do the Big Apple!") That three-trumpet-two-trombone brass section makes some glorious sounds, and towards the end there is some of the most beatific block-scoring I have ever heard.

Notice how the arrangers for this band achieve their Dixieland effect by avoiding syncopation in certain phrases where you would ordinarily expect it. For instance, the dominant and tonic on the fourth and first beats of the bar, starting each phrase at the opening of *Panama*, the effect of playing directly on the beat is strikingly Crosbysque.

Red Norvo And His Orchestra.

"The Week-End Of A Private Secretary" (***).

"More Than Ever" (**).

(Vocalion 142)

Mildred Bailey And Her Orchestra.

"Thanks For The Memory" (***).

"If You Ever Should Leave" (**).

(Vocalion S.148)

Johnny Mercer's amusing lyrics give Mildred a delightful rôle as the office girl who went to Havana and fell for a Cuban. The semi-rumba atmosphere is none the worse for being alien to swing music, and the net result is good music plus entertainment. *More Than Ever* is a typical Norvo-Bailey performance of an average pop tune. The band has come along considerably since its virtually complete overhauling, the most obvious improvement being in the rhythm section, which now boasts no less magnificent a drummer than George Wettling.

The first of the sides under Mildred's name dates from the same session as *Lover Come Back To Me* and doesn't fall far short of that standard. *Thanks For The Memory* is perhaps the best pop song since *Gone With The Wind*. My only kick is against that rather inexplicable line about burning toast and prunes.

Dating from an earlier session, *If You Ever Should Leave* is pleasant, but the instrumental passages are a bit dull, and Herschel Evans' tenor suffers in comparison with the solo by Chu on the reverse. There is, though, a short piano passage by James Sherman, who, I am assured, has one finger missing on each hand. It certainly doesn't seem to bother him.

Jabbo Smith And His Orchestra.

"Absolutely."

"How Could Cupid Be So Stupid?"

(*Brunswick 02586)

Absolutely not; and how could Cupid be so putrid?

Although Jabbo Smith can hardly be a common name, it is hard to realise that this is the same guy who played the wa-wa trumpet with Ellington in the original Parlophone *Black And Tan Fantasy*. All you can gather from this disc is that his playing and his rather mud-coloured Henry Allenesque vocalising are completely characterless, and that the lyrics of his two numbers are incredibly naive.

From: Master Records, Inc. - 799 7th Avenue - NYC -albee-

THREE BAND LEADERS ON ONE PLATTER
First Improvised Waltz Jammed on Unique Platter

- - -

As a gesture of friendly co-operation, three musicians who are jam-band leaders in their own right consented to take part in a recording made by Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band, which has been issued under the titles, "Jamming the Waltz" and "Clementine".

The batoneers starred on the disk were clarinettist Joe Marsala, whose Chicagoans are heard nightly at Swing Lane's Hickory House in New York; trumpeter Bobby Hackett, whose jam band has attracted jitterbugs to Nick's Tavern, also in New York, and Pete Brown, alto player, who recently left the Onyx Club to form his own orchestra. Other featured instrumentalists on the recording included George Wettling (drums), Ray Biondi (guitar), Arthur Shapiro (bass) and Joe Bushkin (piano).

"Many people were dubious about jamming a waltz," explained Irving Mills, managing director of Master-Vocalion records, "but it has been done so well and so naturally, that I feel certain other bands will soon be following suit."

Leonard Feather, who supervised the session on his recent visit to the United States, planned the recording session several months in advance, contemplating the services of the star soloists to interpret the novel performances. In addition to the capable instrumental renditions, he employed the novel scat singing of Leo Watson, on two added selections, "Happy Birthday to You" and "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow", which will be released in May.

* * * * *

SWING

INVITATION

Swing Music enthusiasts are cordially invited to visit

LEVY'S Sunday Afternoon Swing Club

Levy's Sound Studios, 73, New Bond Street, W.1
(near Oxford Street)

at 4.30 p.m.

ADMISSION FREE

LEONARD G. FEATHER

England's most widely-read jazz journalist, is in charge of record recitals. He has brought back an interesting collection of rare and unissued records from his latest trip to America

Swing musicians who would care to come along will be welcome, and are invited to take part in an informal "jam session"

Tell your friends about LEVY'S
SUNDAY AFTERNOON SWING CLUB

Melody Maker Apr. 30

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ERA Apr. 28

A SUNDAY JAM SESSION

Leonard Feather's Swing Afternoon

LONDON is at last to have a counterpart of the famous "Sunday afternoon jam sessions" which have been the rage in New York for the past year.

Admission is free, and all swing musicians as well as non-playing swing enthusiasts are welcome. The venue is Levy's Sound Studios at 73, New Bond-street, this Sunday (May 1) at 4.30. This session has been organised by Leonard Feather, who will present a recital of some of the special records he brought back from his latest American trip.

After the records, the possibility of a genuine informal session of improvised jazz on American lines is expected. Should the enthusiasm measure up to transatlantic standards, this "Sunday afternoon swing club" will become a regular event.

SESSIONS

Melody makes 7 May 38

Daily Sketch

117

Sunday Swing Session Is A Real Riot!

THE first of London's Sunday afternoon swing sessions, inaugurated by Leonard Feather and held last Sunday at Levy's Sound Studios in New Bond Street, was a riot, in the literal sense of the word.

Half an hour before the recital was due to start every seat in the studio was occupied and the gates had to be closed owing to the utter impossibility of finding further accommodation in the limited space available.

By five o'clock, a big crowd had gathered in Bond Street, trying to storm the gates, and altogether ten policemen were called up to help disperse the hundreds who had journeyed from all over London and out of town in order to be present. Bystanders thought some kind of May Day demonstration was going on!

"LIVE" AND WAXED

Those who arrived early enough to secure admission were given a veritable feast of jazz recorded and "live." Some of the latter might possibly be called enthusiastic rather than brilliant, and suffered by comparison with Leonard's set of grand American records. However, the audience enjoyed it all, and a pleasant afternoon resulted.

To start the session Leonard played a number of the unissued Irving Mills recordings and special Commodore Music Shop discs.

After this a "jam session" took place, in which the boys who sat in with the band included Arthur Mouncey and Archie Craig on trumpets; George Chisholm and Don Macaffer on trombones; Bertie King and Derek Neville on saxes; Doug Lees on bass; Len Johnson and Hymie Schneider on drums; and Gerry Moore, Bob Mosley, Yorke de Sousa and Leonard Feather on piano.

Mabel Scott's singing was another highlight of the afternoon.

As a souvenir, a couple of waxings of the boys' jamming, complete with applause from the audience to add to the informal atmosphere, were recorded.

Fans who could not get in should particularly note that a repeat performance of Leonard Feather's recital will be given by Leonard next Wednesday evening at No. 1 Rhythm Club, 243, Regent Street, W.1, commencing at 8 p.m.

SATURDAY, MAY 7, 1938.—Page 9

ROUND ABOUT MIDNIGHT By IAIN LANG

JAZZ CORNER

AT the close of last Sunday's swing session in Bond-street two young men introduced themselves to me, saying: "We've come 80 miles to hear this. We came specially from Rugby."

IT was this sort of enthusiasm that made the session too successful.

When Morris Levy and Leonard Feather planned it they thought that possibly fifty or sixty people might come to hear it.

TEN times that number actually clamoured for admission, and there was no way of coping with the situation on the spur of the moment.

JUNE 25

JAZZ CORNER - - - - - By Iain Lang

BECAUSE Duke Ellington has an exclusive recording contract with Irving Mills no new Ellington record has been issued here for more than a year.

Mills has tried, and failed, to arrange for the release of his Master and Variety series in this country. Consequently only a few of Duke's admirers in this country have any idea of the splendid records the band has been producing recently.

One of the most recent, made by a section of the band with Johnny Hodges as leader, ranks with the very finest Ellington products of all time. Hodges's alto saxophone in "Jeep's Blues" has taken my breath away completely.

I HAVE asked Leonard Feather to include this blues in the record recital at the Regent-street Swing Session next Wednesday—also two interesting sides issued in the name of Cootie Williams. But these records ought to have a still wider audience.

Incidentally, the "live" music at the Session amply repays the long climb up the stairs above the Balalaika.

JAZZ CORNER - - - - - By Iain Lang

young trumpet-player from Trinidad who is with Ken Johnson's band. His name is David Wilkins.

When he and George Chisholm got together in "Basin Street Blues" the result was electrifying.

* * *

DAILY SKETCH

May 21

THE swing sessions that opened somewhat chaotically in Bond-street a week or two ago are being continued, but on alternate Wednesday nights instead of Sunday afternoons, and the venue has been changed to Regent-street.

It would have been tactless to have said too much about the jam session in Bond-street. In contrast, the "jamming" in Regent-street last Wednesday was decidedly exciting.

I was particularly interested in a

June 4

SPENCER WILLIAMS looked in at last Wednesday's Regent-street swing session, and beamed benevolently while the band jammed his "Basin Street Blues" and "I Ain't Got Nobody."

Spencer has exchanged the banks of the Mississippi for the banks of the Thames these days. He lives at Sunbury.

A LAST-MINUTE apology for absence from the jam session came over the telephone from George Chisholm.

The tromboning Scot had a good alibi. He had to be at Buckingham Palace with Ambrose's band to play at the Royal Derby Night ball.

* * *

Melody Maker 14th May 1938

SWING SESSION NEXT WEDNESDAY

SWING fans who attended Leonard Feather's first jam session, held at Levy's recently, will have been wondering what arrangements would be made for further gatherings of this nature.

In view of the obvious need for careful organisation, indicated by the difficulties of coping with crowds at the last session, Leonard has decided to get together with Bill Elliott, old stalwart of No. 1 Rhythm Club.

Their joint experience is being brought to bear on the next session, to be presented jointly by the two of them next Wednesday evening, May 18, at the No. 1 Club premises, 243 Regent St. (third floor), where it is hoped to hold fortnightly sessions of this kind every other Wednesday, apart from the ordinary Rhythm Club meetings.

In order to prevent repetitions of the overcrowding experienced before, there will be a 2s. admission charge.

by Jonah Barrington

SO THIS IS "JAM . . ."

"JAM" sessions come to London. (JAM—an orgy of impromptu syncopation, played by swing experts who drop in, pick up an instrument, join in—and keep going for hours without music, rehearsal or knowledge of the other players.)

Frenzied jam sessions, run by Benny Goodman, are packing 'em in in New York. They're new to London.

Look at this one I saw, held in Regent-street on a hot night. Some forty young men and women sit drearily about—smoking, chatting.

Pianist Willie Soloman, cigarette dangling from lips, strolls to the piano, begins tinkering. A red-haired girl in the audience—moist-eyed, dreamy—calls out "Basin Street Blues."

And Mr. Soloman galvanises himself into leisurely life—begins playing.

Drummer Hymie Schneider

(round-faced and open-shirted) picks up a wire brush, begins a meditative sweeping of his drum. Saxophonist Bertie King and guitarist Joey Deniz join in as an afterthought.

Soon they've stirred that roomful of lethargics into a gang of shining-eyed, toe-tapping swing fanatics.

GRINS AT FANS

THERE'S a commotion at the door—slim, moustachioed, young Spanish bassist Louis Barrero comes running in. Picks up his bass, grins at the fans, starts slapping and twanging just as though he'd been there all the time.

On my left a youth sits reading the newspaper—but his feet, his hands and his whole body are never still. Before me, two men put their heads together, begin hi-de-hoing in harmony.

A girl, shoulders jiggling like a marionette, conducts with a cigarette and closed eyes. Another sits motionless—staring entranced at the floor.

With a crash the players finish (miraculously) together—and in the same key. Equally miraculously they start up again.

And it's a point of fact that they do this for fun—just a little exercise before going on to their normal paid jobs in night clubs and restaurants.

TWO B.B.C. JOBS

MELODY MAKER JULY 9.

REGENT STREET SWING SESSIONS

THE series of jam sessions organised by Leonard Feather in conjunction with Bill Elliott has been causing great excitement, not only among the fans, but also in the lay Press, for the novelty of hearing musicians "going to town," in the informal style of similar sessions attended by Leonard in New York, so intrigued Fleet Street curiosity-hunters that last week three daily papers sent emissaries to get a story and photographs of the jamming.

Visitors to the first two sessions were treated to great performances by such men as George Chisholm, whose trombone playing "sent" the audience into wild excitement; David Wilkins, the trumpet discovery from Ken Johnson's Old Florida Band; Bertie King and Benny Winestone on tenors; and a rhythm section comprising Willie Soloman on piano, Alan Ferguson on guitar, Len Harrison on bass, and Hymie Schneider on drums.

Ken Johnson, Una Mae Carlisle, Iain Lang, and Spencer Williams (in whose honour the band played *Basin Street Blues* and *I Ain't Got Nobody*) were among the celebrities who dropped in to listen to these sessions and to Leonard Feather's recitals of rare and unissued records, including many of the Ellington discs from Irving Mills' catalogue.

Another session will take place at 243, Regent Street (the No. 1 Rhythm Club premises) next Wednesday (July 13) at 8 o'clock, and a similar gathering of notabilities is expected to be present.

JAM SESSION

LEONARD FEATHER'S Jam Session with star musicians, also recital of rare American records as described in last Saturday's "Daily Express," next Wednesday, 8 p.m.—243, Regent Street, W.1. You're bound to enjoy it!

DAILY EXPRESS →

DAILY MIRROR

THURS. JUNE 30

C. E. Sparks, ... years ago and now lives at Heron-on-Thames.

All four magistrates are between sixty and seventy years of age.

IT'S JUST JAM

America's latest rhythm rage came to London last night—a "jam" session. "Jam" means that each musician in the band plays as he pleases, swinging into wild, unrehearsed interpolations. The dancers respond.

The London Swing "fans" packed a top-floor Regent-street room, and for three hours stamped and cheered to the "jam" efforts of a four-piece band and latest American swing records.

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M.M. Oct. 22, 1938 | Nov. 6 '38.

NEWS FROM THE RHYTHM CLUBS

THE No. 1 Club seems to have found ideal premises in going into the First Avenue Hotel, Holborn, as the first two meetings there have been noteworthy for good attendances.

Last Wednesday, Leonard Feather treated the club to a recital of new Ellington records, this being followed by a first-rate jam session.

Monday there will be two...

Valaida At A London Swing Session

INSTALLED in their new premises at the First Avenue Hotel in High Holborn, W.C., the fortnightly jam sessions run by Bill Elliott, of No. 1 Rhythm Club, and Leonard Feather are coming to be regarded as London's Mecca of swing music.

At the last session, a surprise highlight was provided by no less a personality than Valaida, who, after sitting in the audience enjoying the jamming by George Chisholm, Benny Winestone and other stars, borrowed a trumpet and provided some great excitement with her playing and singing.

Another session is to be held on Monday evening next, November 7, from 8 p.m., when a similar gathering of stars will be present.

In addition there will be a recital of some remarkable unissued recordings made by Vic Lewis, the young English guitarist, who has just returned from an American trip, where he waxed some privately-made discs with Joe Marsala, Bobby Hackett, Pee-Wee Russell and a dozen other notabilities.

PITTSBURGH COURIER
Nov. '38

Remember all the hot jam sessions you've been to, well you missed an unusual one over in England where Bill Elliott and Leonard Feather hold their fortnightly get-togethers. Valaida Snow was present at this particular one, and after listening to the various musicians give out, she felt the urge herself and borrowing a trumpet, threw herself with fervor into the session, completely stealing the show from the male contingent.

GRAMOPHONE RECORD

All the Cats and Vipers Will Be In New Bond Street To-morrow

THIS SUNDAY
(May 1st)

A JAM SESSION AT LEVY'S!

Here's a spot of good news for our customers! Leonard Feather is coming along to our Bond St. recording studio on Sunday afternoon with a pile of new records to play, and some of your favourite musicians to "Jam" for you. We are sorry we couldn't give you more warning but the whole thing was only fixed up a day or so ago. Which is almost as impromptu as the music you and the friends you bring along will be hearing. So come along at 4.30, but make a note of the new address. It is:

LEVY'S SOUND STUDIOS LTD.
73 New Bond Street - - London, W.1

SWINGING THE MUSIC AROUND

THE FIRST SESSION OF A NEW "RHYTHM" CLUB

—AND A NEW LANGUAGE

THERE MAY EVEN BE A "JAM SESSION"

BY A SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE

"YOU can bet your boots," the young woman enthusiast said to me, "that all the Cats and Vipers will be there."

She hastened to explain that it is not a new menagerie that is being opened at a studio in New Bond-street to-morrow, but the first session of the Sunday Afternoon Swing Club.

"Cats," she was good enough to add, "are those who sit in a state of open-mouthed ecstasy when swing music is played. They sway—and sometimes stamp—to the rhythm. Vipers are pretty much the same."

"If you were there you might be sent."

I begged her pardon, and she pointed out that to be "sent the cat" meant to be put into a state of ecstasy by swing music.

All the Rage in U.S.

"The latest swing records will be played—some of them not yet issued in this country," she went on. "And, of course, if some of the swing men from West End bands bring their instruments there may be a 'jam session.'"

A "jam session," I gathered, is when everybody plays "just how he feels," without music or any nonsense of that sort. They just "swing it."

Swing sessions, by the way, are a regular Sunday afternoon institution in America. They have become quite the rage among those who get a kick out of being "sent the cat." Now they have come to London.

Getting back to the elements of the thing, I admitted that I had not yet found what swing music really is.

On Dangerous Ground

"Well, rhythm predominates over melody," I was told. "It is very exciting. You can feel 'swing,' but if I were you I should not try to define it. There is something primeval about it. You would be on very dangerous ground."

I agreed, and went away feeling convinced that I am neither a Cat Viper. Perhaps I am just a Ver Dog.

SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1938.—Page 9

ROUND ABOUT MIDNIGHT

By IAIN LANG

JAZZ CORNER

DAILY SKETCH

IN New York swing sessions are a Sunday afternoon institution. The "Cats" assemble either at Hickory House or Nick's Tavern for an hour or two of down-to-earth jazz, and all the outstanding hot men take part in the proceedings.

We shall see to-morrow how near London can come to reproducing this atmosphere, when the first session of a new Sunday Afternoon Swing Club is held.

YOUTHFUL jazz-pundit Leonard Feather will play some of the record rarities he has just brought back from America—I've heard some of them, and I certainly shan't miss this chance of hearing them again—and there will be a "jam session" by the best swing men from the West End bands.

It won't cost you anything, if you want to go along. The address is 73, New Bond-street, and the session begins at 4.30.

DAILY SKETCH May 2nd

'JITTERBUGS' APPROVE

'DAILY SKETCH' REPORTER

WOMEN screamed as men carrying cases made a rush for a small door guarded by constables in Bond-street, yesterday.

It wasn't a raid, it wasn't a riot, it was just the opening of the new "swing" season, originated by DAILY SKETCH "swing" enthusiast, Iain Lang.

Four hundred people strove to get into a room which could hold only 70. Inside musicians were "swinging" it.

All the "cats" and "jitterbugs" were there, stamping feet and uttering primeval shouts of approval.

I stood still, but "swing" soon got me, Harold Fenton, "swing" connoisseur, told me "cats" are those who sit in a state of open-mouthed ecstasy when 'swing' music is played. They sway, stamp and shout to the rhythm. 'jitterbugs' are pretty much the same."

Disc Reviews

By Abel Green

Despite the billing of Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band on Vocalion 4062, that's only jive politeness for a brace of invigorating swingos. One is 'Jammin' the Waltz'—a waltz in swing tempo, of course—composed by the maestro. Reverse is the perennial 'Clementine' arranged by Feather. His Ye Olde English Swynge bandmen comprise Joe Marsala, Bobby Hackett, Pete Brown, Ray Biondi, Joe Bushkin, Arthur Shapiro and George Whetling.

HOT LICKS

by MICKY REINHARDT

June, 1938

TEMPO

In reply to *Jamming The Waltz*, Duke Ellington has produced a swing rumba called *Moonlight Fiesta*.

New Records

BRIEFS ON THE BEST RELEASES OF THE MONTH
By M. W. STEARNS

For a finish, I give you two novelties that should be heard. The first is Chauncey Morehouse's *Plastered in Paris & Mazi-Pani* on Brunswick, which features those tuned tympani drums. The man's got something. And that unusual *Jammin' the Waltz & Clementine* by Leonard Feather's band on Vocalion. *Jammin' the Waltz* is kicks, played by the Onyx bunch, and a fine study of good get-off men improvising beautifully without being allowed to get off. That waltz-beat frustrates some solid stuff. It's really a novelty.

So! Len Feather has another Ye Olde English Swynge Band—and not one of them has ever seen the fair chalk cliffs of Dover! Personnel is Bobby Hackett (trumpet), Joe Marsala (clarinet), Pete Brown (alto sax), Joe Bushkin (piano), Ray Biondi (guitar), Arthur Shapiro (bass) and George Whetling (drums).

Drummer Whetling, by the way, is a Jack Hylton discovery. He played with Jack in Chicago.

This *English Swynge Band* has recorded *Jamming the Waltz* in three-quarter time and the platter is getting fair critiques. Len certainly gets around.

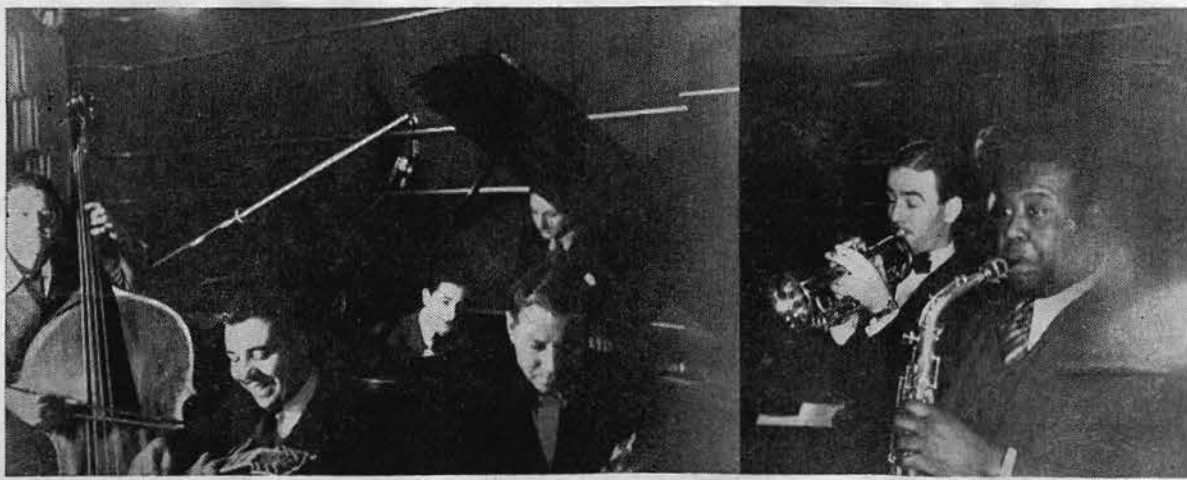


Chicago, May, 1938

DOWN BEAT

LOCAL NEWS

They Jammed A Waltz!



Leonard Feather's Old English Swynge Band, comprised of seven star instrumentalists who played thirteen instruments on the date, recorded the first improvised ¾ platter ever made. *Left to right*, Arthur Shapiro, bass; Ray Biondi, guitar; Joe Bushkin, piano; George Whetling, drums; Bobby Hackett, trumpet; Pete Brown, alto sax. Leonard Feather is standing in the background next to piano.

BOBBY HACKETT

At *The Jazz Band Ball; If Dreams Come True* (Vo 4047).—Dixieland raving can't be complete without mention of the first side by this strictly Noo Ohlins band. Hackett's trumpet lead is especially noteworthy, and you should get rhythmic kicks from Johnny Blowers' drumming and Dave Bowman's background pianistics. The reverse has a swell vocal by Lola Bard, and some awing clarinet work from Peewee Russell. You'll also find Hackett playing wonderfully well in *Leonard Feather's Clementine*, which also contains good Joe Marsala clarineting and Pete Brown altoing (Vo).

War Scares Cause Slump In England

Ambrose Ace Resigns and Reconsiders . . . Stone Band Reassembled . . . Sheet Sale

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON—London is going through one of the worst periods the musical profession has ever known. War clouds and political shadows over Europe have resulted in a general mental and financial depression which found its first outlet in a sudden slump in every branch of the entertainment world.

Record sales in particular are in a sad state, with discs that go over the fifty thousand mark in the States struggling for a total sale in England of a few hundred.

Jack Harris, who bought up Ciro's Club and built a very expensive band of his own to attract the patrons, is feeling the pinch to such an extent that he is considering letting some of his star men go and cutting the band down.

Cabaret Attraction

The cabaret attraction for the past two weeks at Ciro's has been Art Tatum, the American colored pianist who was recently at the Famous Door in New York. Art has made out pretty nicely, doubling at a smart night club, the Paradise, and earning frenzied applause from the audiences at Ciro's. He also managed, after some difficulty, to obtain a special permit to broadcast with Harris' band. At press time he is scheduled to go on a few one-nighters around the country.

Out and In

Danny Polo, the American clarinetist whose swing recordings I mentioned here (one of them was released on American Decca last month), handed in his notice to Ambrose after spending five years, on and off, with the orchestra, and is now free-lancing. Since there is no other orchestra which can afford to pay him adequately, there is a chance that Danny may form his own band, but at present he has accepted an offer to go back with Ambrose.

His place in the Ambrose group was taken by Joe Crossman, though

December 31, 1938

brass; Harry Gold, George Evans, Bill Apps, Ernest Ritte, saxes; Bobby McGee, piano; Ivor Mairants, guitar; Arthur Maden, bass; Jock Jacobsen, drums, and the original vocalist with this group, your old friend Al Bowlly.

Waller Coming?

Elma Warren, the agent for the Trianon, has been dickering for all kinds of star talent for the show here, ranging from Mae West to Fats Waller.

Harry Roy will be en route for Buenos Aires by the time you read this, ready to start his three-months South American tour with his orchestra and Wendy Claire, the Leeds shop-girl who ended his six-month search for a so-called glamor girl vocalist.

Ray Ventura, leader of France's best-known orchestra, paid a flying visit to town, played one concert near London, made a broadcast and a recording session, and rushed back to Paris.

King George

King George is opening the Empire Exhibition in Glasgow, Scotland, May 3. A dance band will play in the huge concert hall at this exhibition once every month, with Ambrose scheduled as the attraction for a week during May, followed by Henry Hall, Jack Hylton and Roy Fox.

Top Tunes

Biggest sheet music sellers in Britain are *Little Drummer Boy*, *So Many Memories* and *Patchwork Quilt*, the last-named being the first publication of a new firm, World Wide, managed by Joe Brannelly, the American who played guitar with Ambrose, and helped in his business affairs, for many years.

Radio leaders at present (mid-April) are as follows:

- Once In A While.*
- Girl In The Alice Blue Gown* (British; publ. Dash).
- So Many Memories.*
- I Double Dare You.*
- Rosalie.*
- Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen.*
- Little Drummer Boy* (British; publ. Dash).
- Little Red Book.*
- Please Remember* (British; publ. Macmelodies).
- Remember Me.*

DANISH FIDDLE ACE IN LONDON: JAM SESSION IN HIS HONOUR

SVEND ASMUSSEN, described by many critics as the Continent's greatest violinist and a potential successor to Stéphane Grappelly, is in London on a honeymoon trip.

He will only be here a few days, but a special reception and jam session has been arranged for him by Bill Elliott next Monday at the First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn, at 8 p.m., and it is hoped that all British swing fans interested in meeting and welcoming this outstanding musical personality will make a special effort to be present.

Asmussen, who broadcast to England two weeks ago, is not only a violinist of unusual swing talent, but can also put up a good show on piano, guitar, drums and string bass. Only twenty-two years old, he has already been well known for some time in his native Copenhagen.

He is a great admirer of the work of George Chisholm, Eddie Macauley, Eric Siday and other British swing musicians, and hopes to have an opportunity of getting together with them.

SWING SESSION

LEONARD FEATHER hopes all swing fans will come this Monday, 8.15, to First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn, to meet

SVEND ASMUSSEN

Europe's Greatest Swing Violinist, also GEORGE SHEARING and famous stars in another great jam session. Don't miss it!



Svend Asmussen

Danish Fiddle-Ace Jams In London

LAST Monday's meeting of the No. 1 Rhythm Club must rank as one of the best ever, as, apart from excellent record recitals, members had the opportunity of hearing that brilliant young Danish violinist, Svend Asmussen.

Joining in with an ever-increasing band of British swing stars, got together by Leonard Feather, Svend showed right from the start that he has got what it takes as a rhythmic fiddler.

On the form he revealed while playing a long and varied selection of tunes, it may be fairly stated that he can hold his own with any jazz violinist extant.

Nor must the British boys be forgotten, for they put over a sterling show, in which the high spot was probably a blues in which George Shearing took the lead to such effect that he had all the rest of the musicians well and truly in the groove.

Among the stalwarts who contributed to further maintenance of the bed realised a handsome sum for I. C. Gamage and Mrs. G. Ch. This event, organised by Hon.



Above is an action picture taken at the jam session held by the No. 1 Rhythm Club in honour of Svend Asmussen, the Danish swing-fiddle ace. Svend is seen on the extreme left, and other players who can be recognised are David Wilkins, Les Hutchinson, Joe and Frank Deniz, Sowande, Bruce Vanderpoye, Bertie King, etc.

Dec. 24, 1938.

58 INCHES OF SWING

Maxine Sullivan has been the centre of a lot of controversy lately. Here's some intimate stuff about her by a writer who has just returned from seeing her personally

Request Article

by LEONARD FEATHER



Thornhill's exquisite arrangements played by Kirby, Buster Bailey and the Onyx Club jam band; something here touches you as no other vocal act of its kind ever did.

Maxine Sullivan is more than just another jazz singer with a pleasant voice. Under the tuition of Thornhill she has become a conqueror of microphone technique, with the

Maxine Sullivan, centre of the fiercest controversy that has ever raged round a jazz singer.

now and then across an almost passive face.

Between sets Maxine told me of the part of her life that preceded the *Loch Lomond* dividing line. The story that she is 17 years old must have spread around as a result of her extraordinarily young and unsophisticated appearance. Petite though she is, Maxine is in her middle '20's. Back in Pittsburgh she used to sing in clubs and with local bands, doing mostly gig work and attaching very little importance to it. She filled in the rest of her time with odd jobs at sewing, and relied on needlework rather than her voice for a livelihood.

Then Gladys Mosier, pianist of the Ina Ray Hutton Orchestra, came through Pittsburgh and caught Maxine at one of these nocturnal rendezvous, where Maxine and Janice Dillard, her partner and accompanist, were doing an act together.

Gladys Mosier mentioned this unknown girl to Claude Thornhill, who contacted Joe Helbock, manager of the Onyx Club. Janice and Maxine came to town. Later, when Maxine was accompanied by the orchestra, Janice was retained as an intermission act on her own, and still works there.

Annie Laurie was the first of the folk songs on which Maxine picked, and *Loch Lomond* came some time later, after she had arrived in New York. Since then she has wisely decided to avoid getting into a rut of identification with one particular type of number, and although her repertoire features several other folk songs, they all come from different countries—*Darling Nellie Gray*; *Dark Eyes*; *My Yiddisher Momma*.

The rebukes that her adaptations

Continued on page 16

I DIDN'T have a tape-measure with me, but I can take their word for it. Even with the microphone set at its lowest adjustment Maxine has to look up as she sings into it, and with the whole room in complete darkness except for that blue spotlight on her face from the ceiling, you begin to realise that there are advantages to being 4 ft. 10 in.

There is something about that setting they gave her at the Onyx Club—that dim light, the sudden hushed respect from an audience which a moment before seemed to be composed largely of rowdy drunks, the quiet swishing of Claude

exact knowledge of how near she should be for each note, of how to control her vibrato, of phrasing, of every little dodge that makes an artist out of a singer. Without a microphone I can hardly imagine what would happen; the mike is as much a part of her act as it has been to the Mills Brothers.

Once an hour Maxine keeps this little club titillating with the same numbers she has been doing for months. She may have sung *Loch Lomond*, to put it conservatively, 500 times, but still enjoys herself every time, as you can see from that faint smile that flashes



Radio Times 6 May 1938

brought forth have stirred no angry response; Maxine, with the assurance and poise so characteristic of her, is quite satisfied that she has "done no harm" to the numbers by singing them the way she does, and it was the very fact that these are beautiful melodies which induced her to use them, for her idea was to interpret their beauty rather than to desecrate them, as any but a prejudiced listener must realise.

"I believe I may even turn to classical music for some material next," she added. "I don't understand why people should see anything wrong in broadening the scope of your style by using every type of material."

Then, with a surge of confidence, Maxine pulled out of her attaché case a few sheets of manuscript paper on the back of which were scribbled a mass of paragraphs which, she confided, formed the basis of an article she had been writing. "No, it's not for publication, and I don't want anyone to see it really; I just did it for my own amusement."

The theme of the article is that swing music is being gradually destroyed by the increasing quantities of people who are using the term and applying it to their music without knowing what it is all about. There is too much swing music which is based simply on the mad desire to swing, at the expense of refinement and technique. Without an increased trend towards musical culture and an appreciation of the fundamentals of the subject, swing music will float on

a lake of superficiality to an end in stagnation.

That she feels very strongly about these issues is not only reflected in the article itself but also in Maxine's singing. Every effect is studied with great care, and although she conveys the impression of spontaneity so essential to this idiom, once she hits on the right treatment she retains it in almost unaltered form every time she performs the number, changing nothing more than a trill here or a passing note there.

An intelligent alert girl who will take the right advantage of the sudden eminence into which she has been thrust, Maxine realises just what she has to do with the opportunities that are before her, and declares that if ever she becomes a really big star ("and I'm not saying that I ever will") it will be because of her adherence to the beliefs that she set out so meticulously to express on paper.

In the meantime she's doing pretty nicely, with film offers already under consideration, a new recording contract with Victor, and one or two tempting invitations to visit England.

Finally a word of praise must be awarded to the stocky, slow-speaking and brilliant young man whose efforts in both the musical and managerial fields have been of such incalculable value to Maxine's career to date. Pupils as pliable as this are not very often found, and Claude Thornhill must be one of the most satisfied instructors in the world.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

A NOVEL idea that may set a new style in dance-band presentations will be heard next Thursday when the first of a series of 'Band Boomerang' programmes, produced by John Burnaby, is to be transmitted in the National programme at 7.0.

The idea was suggested by a German radio feature called 'Ruck-Zuck', for which items were contributed by bands in different parts of the country. It will now be extended on international lines. For the initial programme London and Berlin will be linked, the participants being Debroy Somers and his Band and Otto Dobrindt and his Band from Berlin, and each orchestra will actually hear the other playing. There will be an English and a German announcer. In subsequent programmes other well-known Continental and American bands will provide contrasts with British bands.



Debroy Somers

Debroy Somers will be no stranger to German listeners to this programme, as he has been in the business long enough to acquire an international reputation. Born forty-eight years ago in Dublin, he came into prominence as conductor of the old Savoy Orpheans.

I should be interested to hear if anybody can claim to outdistance him in experience of the recording business, for as long ago as 1905 he got together a small band for the old Edison-Bell cylindrical records.

Men Behind the Bands

(5) BERT READ

Bert Read, principal arranger to Jack Harris's Orchestra, had not studied orchestration when his first effort in this field was accepted by Ambrose in 1928. Subsequently he became one of the chief members of Ambrose's arranging forces, though to listeners he was best known as pianist with the band.

After leaving Ambrose he worked in the same dual capacity for Henry Hall and the BBC Orchestra.

Curiously enough, Bert Read does not use the piano or any other instrument while writing his arrangements, preferring a mental image of how the scoring will sound. He likes to work in the mornings, in a small, quiet room at his suburban home, and an orchestration takes him on an average three and a half hours. 'The main thing I strive for in my work', he adds, 'is to produce as many colour schemes, that is to say, varieties of tone, as I can get with the limited range of instruments featured by the average dance band. I approve very heartily of the use of the flute in dance orchestras. I enjoyed writing for Henry Hall because he had six brass, six strings, and four saxes; I wish there were more English bands as big as that.'

Fair-haired, thirty years old, and very much a Londoner, Bert Read has what might be called a 'fan-mail face'. (But he's married.) His work for Jack Harris, for whom he writes though he no longer has time to play the piano, includes the frequently broadcast orchestrations of 'Tears in my Heart', 'Once in a While', and 'So Long, Sweetheart'.

Request
Article

WHERE ARE THEY NOW?

One of the oft requested items in the recent Referendum was an article telling what had happened to yesterday's "names"—a tough assignment. Here, however, are some of them, including some that are not so much "yesterday's" as "last evening's"

by GEOFFREY MARNE

NAMES make news, but only fame makes names. The transience of fame is well illustrated by a glance at any MELODY MAKER of ten years ago. What has happened to the stars who, in those days, gave us our first esoteric glimpses of hot music?

Here, alphabetically, is a summary of the comings and goings of all those who could be traced at the time of writing (April):—

Gene Austin, once a top-selling recording vocalist, was recently working in a Hollywood night club.

Paul Ash, leader of one of the first big-scale dance bands, now conducts the pit orchestra at the Roxy Theatre, New York City.

Harry Barris, who, with Bing Crosby and Al Rinker (Mildred Bailey's brother) was a member of the original Whiteman Rhythm Boys, is writing arrangements for vocal choral sequences in Hollywood productions. Al Rinker is doing a little radio work with a vocal quartet.

Vic Berton, drummer of the Original Five Pennies, is also doing Hollywood studio work.

Jack Bland, partner of McKenzie and Condon on many famous Chicago recordings, is in and out of various Fifty-Second Street night clubs in New York.

Johnny and Baby Dodds, clarinetist and drummer who worked with Armstrong at the inception of his climb to fame, bob up once in a while for recordings, but Baby is said to be in business running two or three taxis in Chicago.

Frank Froeba is working on and off in New York, and was lately with Milt

Herth, the Hammond organist, in a New York Hotel.

Dudley Fosdick, mellophonist of the old Five Pennies, is playing, believe it or not, with Guy Lombardo!

Jean Goldkette, pioneer band-leader with whom Bix and scores of others found fame, is managing the Charioteers and a few other radio acts.

Roger Wolfe Kahn, who at one time annexed nearly all the greatest swing men for a band of his own, has retired into equable millionairehood.

Stan King, drummer on many of the



old Parlophone Rhythm Style discs, is with Chauncey Morehouse's newly-organised band.

Carl Kress, former ace guitarist, is in business with a part interest in the Onyx Club.

Jim Lannigan, who played bass with McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans on the memorable *Liza* and *Sugar* session, was last heard of with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

Mead Lux Lewis, whom John Hammond discovered with great éclat and subsequently dropped, is right back where he was before all the fuss started; he is said to be working at some obscure haunt in Chicago, or possibly not working at all.

Fud Livingstone is playing with Jimmy Dorsey's Orchestra.

Jimmy Lytell, another old-time clarinetist, who recorded on some of the most noted Original Memphis Five discs, is doing house band work at N.B.C., and making out very nicely.

Paul Mares, trumpet player of the old New Orleans Rhythm Kings, is right out of the business and was lately running a barbecue shop in Chicago.

Red McKenzie is singing at Nick's in

Greenwich Village, New York, where he introduced Bobby Hackett, the new cornet discovery. Eddie Condon is also with Hackett's group.

Mezz Mezzrow has been in a very bad way since the disruption of the black-and-white band, is out of business and has no immediate prospects of getting the band together again.

Miff Mole is still making his fortune at highly-paid radio work for N.B.C.

Red Nichols has a band—not a very swingish band—in California.

Jimmy Noone, favourite clarinet player of many a present day white clarinetist, is not doing very much except for occasional recordings.

Floyd O'Brien, one of the greatest white trombonists, is hidden away in the commercial orchestra of Phil Harris, probably in California.

Jack Pettis still has his own combination.

Maceo Pinkard, veteran coloured songwriter, is in a permanent state of lethargy



as he can still depend on the royalties from *Sweet Georgia Brown* and *Sugar* to keep him going.

Jack Purvis has figured in some amazing adventures since he was last seen in New York. After playing trumpet on some Frank Froeba records he disappeared, was in jail in several different States at odd intervals afterwards on a variety of charges, and was last reported to be in the army as a chef.

Chelsea Quealey, trumpet with the great Elizalde band of 1930, is with Chauncey Morehouse's Orchestra.

Adrian Rollini is working with Richard Himber's Orchestra on broadcasts, is recording for Decca, and has his own instrumental agency for supplying and re-

Continued on page 32



pairing vibraphones and other instruments. His brother Arthur is still with Benny Goodman.

Arthur Schutt is doing film work on the coast.

Frank Signorelli keeps himself occupied with New York radio jobs.

Jack Teagarden is still whiling away the years with Paul Whiteman, as is his brother Charlie.

Paul Tremaine still has a band, and was recently playing one-night stands down South.

Joe Venuti has a band of his own in Texas.

Artie Whetsel, who played first trumpet

with Duke Ellington until a while ago, had to go out of the business on account of a serious mental disorder.

Clarence Williams, former OKeh recording pianist and talent spotter, runs his own song publishing house in New York.

And everyone I haven't mentioned is either completely gone and forgotten, or dead, or else, as in such cases as Armstrong, the Dorseys, and so on, still too well known to offer cause for any inquiries.

And as for the stars of to-day, remind me to deal with them in another article ten years from now. Where will they be then?

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Helody Make 7 May 1938

COMPLETE PERSONNEL GUIDE TO THE MAY RELEASES

Three-shilling records

Bailey, Mildred (Vocal) and Her Orchestra: (New York, January, 1938). *Thanks For The Memory*. For personnel see Guide for April 1; (New York, June, 1937). *If You Ever Should Leave*. For personnel see Guide for December 1. **Vocalion S.148.**

Firman, Bert's, Quintuplets of Swing: (London, 1937). *Blue Strings; Keep Goin'*. Freddy Gardner (alto); Cyril Hellier (violin); Cecil Norman (piano); George Elliott (guitar); Don Stuteley (bass). **Parlophone R.2514**

Goodman, Benny and His Orchestra: (Hollywood, October, 1937). *I've Hitched My Wagon To A Star; Let That Be A Lesson To You*. For personnel see Guide for December 1. **H.M.V. B.8636.** *Can't Teach My Old Heart New Tricks*; personnel as above. For backing see Goodman Trio. **H.M.V. B.8735.** (New York, October, 1936). *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. Benny Goodman (leader and clarinet); Zeke Zarchy, Ziggy Elman, Gordon Griffin (trumpets); Red Ballard, Murray McEachern (trombones); Hymie Schertzer; Bill Depew (altos); Vido Musso, Arthur Rollini (tenors); Jess Stacy (piano); Alan Reuss (guitar); Gene Krupa (drums); Harry Goodman (bass). For backing see Goodman Quartet. **H.M.V. B.8734.**

Goodman, Benny, Trio: (Hollywood, October, 1937). *Silhouetted In The Moonlight*. Benny Goodman (clarinet); Teddy Wilson (piano); Gene Krupa (drums). For backing see Goodman Band. **H.M.V. B.8735.**

Goodman, Benny, Quartet: (Hollywood, October, 1937). *I'm A Ding Dong*

Daddy; as above, plus Lionel Hampton (vibraphone). For backing see Goodman band. **H.M.V. B.8734.**

Grace, Teddy (Vocal) and Her Orchestra: (New York, October, 1937). *I've Taken A Fancy To You; Tears In My Heart*. **Brunswick 02584.**

Herth, Milt (Rhythmic Organ) with Willie "The Lion" Smith (N.) (Piano) and O'Neil Spencer (N.) (Drums): (New York, February, 1938). *Lost In The Shuffle; The Campbells are Swing-ing*. **Brunswick 02585.**

James, Harry and His Orchestra: (New York, November, 1937). *Texas Chatter; Song of The Wanderer*. For personnel see *One O'Clock Jump* in Guide for mid-March. **Vocalion S.146.**

Kirk, Andy, and His Clouds of Joy: (N.) (New York, December, 1937). *The Big Dipper; Bear Down*. For personnel see Guide for November, 1937. **Brunswick 02587.**

Nicholas Brothers (Rhythmic Vocalists and Tap-Dancers) with Orchestra: (New York, December, 1937). *Wrap Your Cares In Rhythm and Dance; They Say He Ought To Dance*. **Brunswick 02588.**

Norvo, Red, and his Orchestra: (New York, March, 1938). *Tea Time* (comp. Norvo); *Jeannine I Dream of Lilac Time*. For personnel see Guide for mid-April. **Vocalion S.143.**

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: (Paris, June, 1937). *Liebestraum; The Sheik Of Araby*. For personnel see Guide for December 1. **H.M.V. B.8737.**

Rollini, Adrian, and his Orchestra: (New York, 1934). *Blue Prelude; Mississippi Basin*. **Parlophone R.2575.**

Slim and Slam (Guitar and String-Bass): (New York, March, 1938). *Ti-Pi-Tin; That's What You Call Romance*. **Vocalion S.145.**

Smith, Jabbo, and his Orchestra: (N.) (New York, February, 1938). *Absolutely; How Could Cupid Be So Stupid?* Jabbo Smith (leader and trumpet); Ben Smith, Leslie Johnakins (altos); Sam Simmons (tenor); James Reynolds (piano); Connie Wainwright (guitar); Alfred Taylor (drums); Elmer James (bass). **Brunswick 02586.**

Sullivan, Maxine (Vocal) and Her Orchestra (Mixed): (New York, February, 1938). *Dark Eyes; A Brown Bird Singing*. Claude Thornhill (Director and piano); Charles Shaver (trumpet); Toots Mondello (alto); Raymond Usari (bass clarinet and flute); Buster Bailey (clarinet); O'Neil Spencer (drums); John Kirby (bass). **Vocalion S.144.**

Two-shilling records

Armstrong, Louis, and his Orchestra: (N.) (Hollywood, January, 1938). *Sweet As A Song; Let That Be A Lesson To You*. (Both vocals Louis Armstrong.) For Personnel see Guide for mid-December. **Decca F.6655.**

Crosby, Bob, and His Orchestra: (Hollywood, November, 1937). *Big Apple Dance* (to the tune of *When My Dreamboat Comes Home*), *Panama*. For personnel see Guide for February 1. **Decca F.6658.**

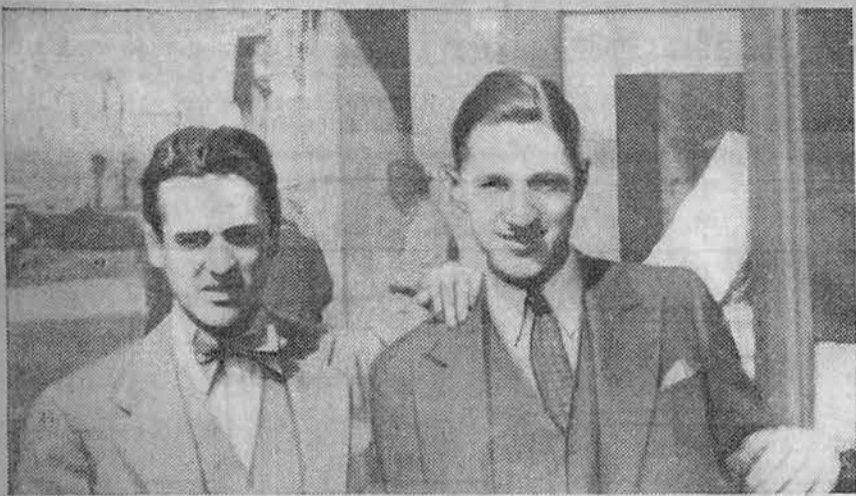
Waller, Fats, and His Rhythm: (New York, June, 1936). *Paswonky*. For personnel see Guide for December 1. *How Ya' Baby?* (November, 1937.) As above with Cedric Wallace replacing Charles Turner on bass (both vocals Fats Waller). **H.M.V. BD.5354.**

One-and-six record

Mannone, Wingy, and His Orchestra: *Loch Lomond; Annie Laurie* (both vocals). **Regal MR.2723.**

12 X

May 7 1938 "Melody Maker"



Gene Krupa (left) and Leonard Feather snapped during the latter's recent trip to New York in search of further jazz lore.

"'ROPHONE,"

in his review of hot records, says

THIS IS MASOCHISTIC MURDER!

Milt Herth, Willie "The Lion" Smith and O'Neill Spencer.
"The Campbells Are Swinging."
"Lost In The Shuffle."
(**Brunswick 02585)

SHOOT the likker to me, John boy! This record is just too much for my constitution. It isn't simply the bizarre and inorganic noises made by the organ (which in any case will never be legato enough to swing); it isn't the Lion's piano, which still plays the same phrases that it has played for the last twenty years, nor is it the drumming and singing of O'Neill Spencer, who is more than competent. It is just the generally fantastic idea of the whole set-up, and in particular the thought that, if "Mike" considers Maxine Sullivan's *Loch Lomond* bad taste, he will be prostrate when he hears the *Campbells Are Swinging*.

This isn't murder; it's sheer masochistic massacre. And guess who wrote it—our good friend Larry Clinton!

Andy Kirk And His Clouds Of Joy.
"Bear Down" (***).
"Big Dipper" (**).
(Brunswick 02587)

Even the best band in the world will be unable to withstand the burden of poor material indefinitely. I'm not quite sure what's been happening to Andy Kirk lately, but from his records it would certainly seem that his repertoire includes far too many sloppy ballads for Pha Terrell; and now comes a new evil in the form of the unavoidable Mr. Larry Clinton, whose *Big Dipper* measures right down to the well-known Clinton standard.

I am pleased to report, however, that *Bear Down* brings at least some sort of a reminder of the days when I thought that Andy had one of the finest coloured bands. True, the saxes sound thin in the first chorus, the brass is by no means comparable with a section of Basie's calibre and the trumpet soloist fluffs here and there. But there are compensations, not the least of which is the simple delicacy of Mary Lou's piano chorus.

Technical Titr-Bits: Notice where the clarinets enter, in the introduction; the ensemble passage before the tenor solo; the unison phrase at the end of the trumpet solo; and the glissing trombones in the final eight bars. All these passages employ clichés heard scores of times before, and offer brilliant examples of corny jazz writing.

Teddy Grace And Her Orchestra.
"I've Taken A Fancy To You."

MOUNTAINEERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Everest
- ★★★ Mont Blanc
- ★★ Brendon Tor
- ★ Hornsey Rise

dard of her excellent first release, *Rock It For Me*. The little accompanying band is quite adequate, with some piano passages in which all the signs point towards Froeba.

Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra.
"Sweet As A Song."

"Tears In My Heart."
(** Brunswick 02584)

Teddy doesn't disgrace herself on this adequate coupling, though she has yet to reach the stan-

"Let That Be A Lesson To You."
(*Decca F.6655)
Have you ever seen a racehorse pulling a milk cart?
Red Norvo And His Orchestra.
"Tea Time."
"Jeannine."
(***Vocalion S.143)

This is the first non-commercial, non-vocal coupling by the revamped Norvo band; in other words, the first opening for public inspection of the new line-up. All the band's current soloists are displayed, briefly though effectively, in *Tea Time* (which is composed by Norvo but almost undoubtedly arranged by Sauter). You can hear d'Amico's clarinet (one of the few holdovers from the previous band), Red's xylophone, Jerry Jerome's tenor, Wes Hein's very interesting trombone, and the slightly expressionless but promising trumpet of Jimmy Blake.

The composition, which could well have been dubbed *Prelude in F Minor*, is scored with the brilliance and imaginativeness of tone colour that I associate with Sauter.

In the dream of lilac time on the other side (lilac time is no longer three-four time) there is a full chorus by Norvo which bears something more than casual audition. Drink in deep, hum it or play it over, and appreciate that Norvo does more than improvise a chorus. He creates a new tune, which is the aim of every great improviser.

Industry Week 1 May 1938

WALLER ON THE AIR

Fleet Street Swing Fan



Mat Matlock, ace reed man of Bob Crosby's Band.

I CAN hardly imagine there will be anyone to complain at the news that for the next Transatlantic relay the B.B.C. has arranged to give a programme by Fats Waller. This is scheduled for Tuesday, May 17, at 7.30 p.m.

I only hope that Fats is restrained from using his full band, and employs instead simply the small contingent heard on his recordings. For his ordinary theatre and dance-hall work Fats is supported by a full-size orchestra, under the direction of one Don Donaldson. The five men who play on his discs are taken from this combination.

Until recently Fats used a band by the name of Charlie Turner's Arcadians, Turner being the bassist heard on the waxings. This combination has now been taken over by your old friends Buck and Bubbles, who have thus taken the plunge into the band-leading field.

* * *

Did you happen to hear the broadcast (reviewed on page 4 by "Detector") called "Black and White Blues"? There is an interesting story about this show, which was obviously the work of a real jazz connoisseur.

Iain Lang, who presented the broadcast, is probably the first Fleet Street journalist ever to take a profound and intelligent interest in swing music. His enthusiasm started many years ago in India where he was employed with a newspaper for a long and weary period, relieved by the moments of pleasure found in picking up rare second-hand hot records in obscure native bazaars. His early training in Henderson, Armstrong and Nichols primed him for the role of dyed-in-the-wool collector and jazz hound on his return to England.

Between bouts of gossip writing for the *Daily Sketch*, Iain Lang can be found nestled beside a gramophone drinking in Chicago style in liberal doses. Thank goodness for one daily paper man who won't penetrate any of those stories that swing is dying and the waltz is coming back!

* * *

Mention in this column recently of a combination known as the Harlem Hamfats put me in mind of some of the really weirdly-named groups that find their way into the American lists. If you have ever tried to look objectively at the odd appellations with which jazz artists and compositions are encumbered, you will soon find out

Feather Forecast and News

how a barrier has been set up between jazz and lovers of classical music, to many of whom these crazy names seem to postulate crazy music (though we, of course, know better).

For instance, how do you like "Ikey Robinson and his Windy City Five?" And what of the luscious sound of Jimmie Gordon and his Vip Vop Band? Both these are regular wax stars on the American Decca race list, where you can also find

such gems as Peetie Wheatstraw (The Devil's Son-in-Law); Bumble Bee Slim; Sleep John Estes; Half Pint Jaxon; Hamfoot Ham and the same Harlem Hamfats; Sweet Pease Spivey, and Dot Scott's Rhythm Dukes; and, best of all, perhaps, Old Ced Odom.

On other lists we find such blues exponents as the Yas Yas Girl, Bogan's Birmingham Busters, Memphis Minnie. These are the artists whose discs have popularised such numbers as *Shake Your Can*, *I Wonder Who's Boogiein'*, *My Woogie*, *Gimme Some Of That Yum Yum Yum*, *Let Me Hang My Stocking In Your Christmas Tree*, and *Rug Cutters' Function*. If one title sells particularly well they record it again and call it *Cold Blooded Murder No. 2*, *Don't Tear My Clothes No. 2*, *Take It Easy Greasy No. 2*, or even *Sweet Violets No. 3*.

No wonder they sell records in America.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE current season of American relays is proving a fruitful one to the swing-music fraternity. On Tuesday at 7.30, you will be able to hear the first English relay of Thomas Fats Waller, famous coloured composer and pianist.

Thirty-four years old, he has been in the profession since early youth, when he ran away from home to work in a little night club rather than



Fats Waller

follow the plans of his grandfather, Adolph Waller, a well-known German violinist, who wanted him to enter the Church. Fats is to this day an excellent organist, having played in many New York churches as well as theatres and cinemas. For some years he was accompanist to Bessie Smith, 'the queen of the blues'. He is the composer of 'Ain't mis-behavin'', 'Honeysuckle Rose', 'I'm Crazy 'bout my Baby', and dozens of other very successful tunes.

Paradoxically, although his singing by no means adds to the musical value of his performance, it was this which made a commercial attraction of him.

* * *

The qualities to watch for in Waller's piano playing are the assurance and preciseness of style and touch, and the exquisite symmetry of his phrasing. He has enormous hands which can stretch well over the usual tenth.

Amongst the musicians to be heard in his accompaniments are Eugene Sedric, clarinet and tenor saxophone; Herman Autrey, trumpet; Albert Casey, guitar; Wilmore Jones, drums; and Cedric Wallace, bass.

Personally Fats Waller is as amusing and humorously irresponsible as he sounds on his records. Although he takes nothing very seriously, he still spends endless hours practising. Among his best friends and admirers is Art Tatum, another clever coloured pianist who has been broadcasting lately with Jack Harris from Ciro's.

* * *

Did you ever hear of a band with four band leaders? This phenomenon is to be found regularly in the Irish 'Stop Dancing' series, the seventeenth of which will be relayed from Belfast tomorrow (Saturday) in the Regional programme. James Moody, who assembles the players from several different bands to take part in these presentations, has accompanied and arranged music for innumerable Belfast broadcasts.

The idea for the 'Stop Dancing' series originated in a suggestion that a band accompaniment be provided for 'Three In Harmony', a vocal act with which Moody had joined forces.

* * *

On Wednesday Northern listeners will hear another 'Dancing Here and There' programme, in which three semi-professional orchestras will take part: Eddie McGarry and his Band, Jack Lancaster and his Music, and George Sutton and his Arabians

* * *

Feather Forecast and News

GAOLED FOR ANNOUNCING SWING CONCERT



"THE things I've done for jazz!"

This may be the boast of a young man in Berlin of whom I have received some startling news. It seems that the gentleman in question, one of his country's infinitesimal minority of swing music enthusiasts, had the audacity to announce publicly the meeting of a rhythm club. Recently such organisations had been operating under a cloak of secrecy for fear of coming into conflict with the authorities, to whom jazz is synonymous with musical, racial and national decadence.

The result of this announcement of a forthcoming gathering of swing fans

was that the would-be organiser, who has been identified with many excellent ventures of this kind and has sponsored the issue of swing albums and hot record series in Germany, was pounced upon by the hairy arm of the law and clapped into jail.

Back In The Good Old Days

Back in the good old days, when I was a typical jazz fan with the pioneer spirit and lived for a time in Berlin, there was a music shop, not a million miles from the Tauentzienstrasse, which was the city's swing haven. The few dozen local fans would be constantly in and out to hear the latest imported recordings, to which the assistant would have to listen all day

JAM AT THE ONYX.

Maxine Sullivan at the mike with (l. to r.) Don Frye, Pete Brown, John Kirby (Maxine's husband), Buster Bailey.

long, her face contorted into excruciated agony.

I remember the excitement when Ted Lewis's *Dallas Blues* arrived, and the first efforts of the Schwester Boswell; and the astonishment when Duke's *Limehouse Blues* was actually issued in the ordinary German lists.

No doubt this memorable shop is gone with the political wind, for it was non-Aryan-controlled; and swing music is about as welcome in Germany as *Mozeltoiv*.

Heartrending Realisation

A glance through the complete guide to record releases last week left me with the heartrending realisation that most of America's music, by the time

it reaches us, is at least four to six months old. Of thirty-six sides mentioned, only thirteen were even waxed in 1938. If we are to keep pace with developments, then, the only real way is by judicious radio listening.

If "Detector" will pardon my encroachment for a moment, I should like to point out that the only reason I know how Bud Freeman sounds with Benny Goodman's Orchestra is that the Camel programme is transcribed and rebroadcast each Wednesday at 10.30 p.m. B.S.T., and my only proof that Billie Holiday is still an incalculable asset to Artie Shaw's band is the W2XE show on Saturdays at 11.30; similarly you can get Chick Webb, the Saturday Night Swing Club and others at times far more reasonable than have previously been available to short-wave fans.

But my main point is that everyone seems to have overlooked Eddie South's series of commercials (recorded just before he returned to America on the same ship as Benny Carter), which can be heard on Luxembourg each Sunday at 10.45 a.m. And that's something worth getting out of the warmest of beds for.

Melody Maker 14 May 1938

COMPLETE GUIDE TO PERSONNELS OF THE MID-MAY RELEASES

Andrews Sisters (Vocal Trio with Orchestra): (New York, March, 1938). *Ti-Pi-Tin; Where Have We Met Before?* For personnel see Guide for mid-April. Brunswick 02592.

Boswell, Connie (Vocal, with Bob Crosby's Bob Cats): (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *Gipsy Love Song; Ah, Sweet Mystery Of Life!* For per-

sonnel see Guide for mid-March. Brunswick 02589.

Fitzgerald, Ella (Vocal) and Her Savoy Eight: (N.) (New York, May, 1937). *If You Ever Should Leave; Everyone's Wrong But Me.* Taft Jordan (trumpet); Sandy Williams (trombone); Louis Jordan (alto); Theodore McRae (tenor); Tommy Fulford

(piano); Bobby Johnson (guitar); Chick Webb (drums); Beverley Peer (bass). Brunswick 02593.

Lunceford, Jimmie, and His Orchestra: (N.) (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *Pigeon Walk.* For personnel see Guide for mid-March. (New York, July, 1937). *Hell's Bells.* For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. Brunswick 02590.

Shaw, Artie, and His Orchestra: (New York, December, 1937). *Whistle While You Work; Non-Stop Flight.* For personnel see Guide for December 1, 1937. Vocalion S.147.

Strings in Swingtime: (New York, December, 1937). *Professor Visits Harlem; Oriental Stock Exchange* (comp. Austen Croom Johnson). Director: Vladimir Selinsky. Vocalion S.149.

Tatum, Art (Piano Solos): (N.) (New York, November, 1937). *Chloe; The Sheik Of Araby.* Brunswick 03591.

Wilson, Teddy, and His Orchestra: (Mixed) (New York, December, 1937). *I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me.* Teddy Wilson (leader and piano); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Benny Morton (trombone); Lester Young (tenor); Freddy Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Page (bass); Billie Holiday (vocalist). (Los Angeles, Summer, 1937). *You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me.* Teddy Wilson (leader and piano); Harry James (trumpet); Vido Musso (tenor); Archie Rosati (clarinet); Alan Reuss (guitar); Babe Lewis (drums); John Simmons (bass); Frances Hunt (vocalist). Vocalion S.150.

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: (London, January, 1938). *Black And White* (comp. Reinhardt-Grappelly); *Sweet Georgia Brown.* For personnel see Guide for March 1. Decca F.6675.

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AMERICAN REHEARSAL

The Goodman Quartet

by
Leonard Feather

MY colleague, Andy Gray, had a bright idea when he started his "Rehearsal" series. So bright, in fact, that I am going to beg his permission to borrow the idea to describe some of my recent adventures in New York.

This, therefore, is supposed to be the story of a rehearsal, but to be rigidly accurate it is a tale of how to avoid rehearsals in order to produce the results. Never has there been more informality, more complete absence of planning, than on the Benny Goodman Quartet session which I found in progress one afternoon at Victor's New York studios.

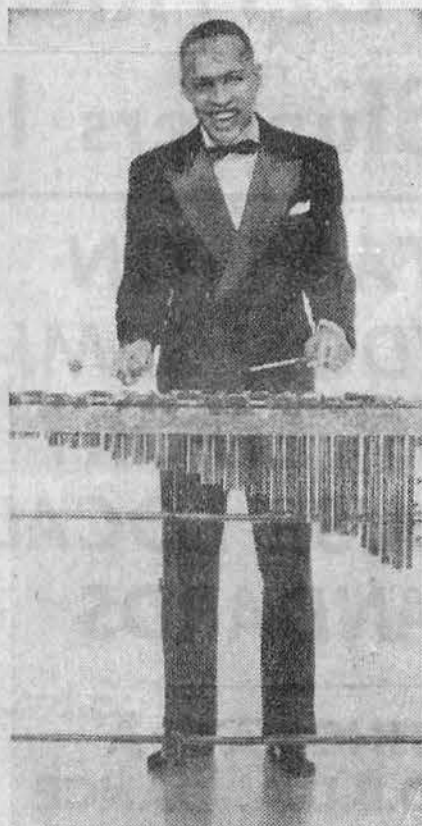
Dave Tough's First Session

To Benny himself, and to Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton, this particular date was an event of unique interest and charged with a new thrill. A few nights before, Benny had said to me: "We'll be making the first quartet session with Dave some time this week, and they're going to be the greatest we've ever done!"

This, then, was the debut of Dave Tough, the peerless ex-Chicagoan drummer, as a member of the Quartet. As the four of them sat together in the studio, wondering what to play and how to play it, there was an air of imminent triumph about Benny's expression. The puckered lips that mark his almost ineradicable smile showed that he was sending himself, and even Teddy's immobile countenance showed a spark of excitement.

After a few minutes of warming up on some of the standard evergreens, Benny suggested: "How about this?" and played a few bars of a lovely melody. "What's it called? I can't remember the title. Anyway, let's make it," said Benny.

Actually, it was the familiar *Sweet Lorraine*, and its chord sequences were certainly exceptionally pleasing. Benny transferred his mouthpiece on to an A clarinet, pointing out the superior tone



Lionel Hampton

and personality this seemed to have compared with the customary B flat instrument.

Since it was liable to take either Benny or else Lionel and Teddy into some very nasty keys, the A clarinet was laid aside after *Sweet Lorraine*. The boys relaxed, and, in a mood of relaxation, nothing is more natural than to want to play the blues. Teddy started it, Benny and Lionel came in, and the frail looking Dave Tough, staring straight ahead, motionless except for the slight swing of his hands and feet at work conjured up an easy brush rhythm which fitted perfectly with the blue mood Teddy had established.

Benny Gets a "Balance" Test

"We'll make a blues," decided Benny. Teddy took a bite out of the huge sandwich that lay on his piano where the manuscripts might ordinarily be found. He pushed his hat a little farther back on his head and played gently, as if to himself. As the buzzer went for the record to start, Benny leaned back on his chair and remained in this position, perched on its hind legs, throughout the recording, while I went through everything short of heart failure at the thought that he might



Benny Goodman

lean back just a little farther, topple, and spoil a masterpiece.

The first master seemed grand enough, but next Lionel suggested a definite melody for the first chorus so that he and Benny could work it together. This began to become really exciting; and when Lionel gets excited he starts stammering. (Witness Armstrong's old record, *You're Drivin' Me Crazy*, with Lionel's spoken introduction.) "Man, I could play the blues all day long!" he kept saying.

Making It Double Sided

The blues was so beautiful, the four of them felt so completely at ease, that Benny was convinced this was not enough blues for one day. My comment, "You ought to make a fifteen-inch blues," stirred him into the decision to make this a double-sided blues product. "We'll have Lionel sing on this one," he added. "Get a balance on Lionel's voice."

Lionel's mind was a maze of all the traditional blues lyrics he had ever heard. Finally we sorted out a couple that seemed suitable—the one beginning "Mama, mama, why do you treat me so?" and another starting "Give me back that wig I bought and let your head grow cold." For good measure I invented an original one: "If my gal cried whisky instead of salt water tears, I would never stay sober for another twenty-five years." It didn't mean much, but it did sound like the blues. "Solid!" cried Lionel. "We'll put that in too!"

They tried out a routine, found there was room only for four choruses, and within twenty minutes had two perfect masters waxed. Benny was so inspired by Tough's background that he could not restrain himself from bursting into a profusion of compliments, which Dave accepted with modest reluctance.

"Hey, how about this for the next number?" suggested Benny running

over the main phrase of Maceo Pinkard's old-timer, *Sugar* (not the better-known *Sugar*, but the one recorded by McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans in 1927). Everyone seemed happy at the latest choice of material, so *Sugar* was quickly dealt with.

"Four titles in two and a half hours!" murmured Benny with pride. "We have time to make a test of that number of Lionel's, *Dizzy Spells*. Put on a playback for us, will you?"

Amateur Goodmans may find a source of courage in the events that followed. *Dizzy Spells* is a very complicated piece at a dizzy tempo, including a passage which comprises a series of scales in descending thirds. Benny, whose technique should be enough to satisfy any demands, found this almost impossible to play and had to run it through dozens of times before he could even attempt to complete the scales. So take heart, you youthful clarinetists who despair of ever becoming great because you find a certain scale or exercise impossible to negotiate. Even Goodman is vulnerable.

However, Benny eventually threaded his way through *Dizzy Spells*, and with the joyful reflection that they had recorded five titles at one short sitting, the party adjourned.

Just A Swing Man

Benny as I saw him on this date was just a swing man having the time of his life with three other swing men: a musician's musician, who can find more delight in an appealing "riff" or a happily turned phrase than in the backslaps and handshakes of a hundred music publishers and miscellaneous sycophants.

In other words, success has not prevented Benny Goodman from remaining what he always has been: an honest and sincere musician. More power to him.

Melody Walker 14 May 1938

WORDS OF ADVICE FOR THORNHILL

Hot Records Reviewed
by
"ROPHONE"

THIRSTY ARABS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Oasis
- ★★★ Well
- ★★ Puddle
- ★ Mirage

Fats Waller and His Rhythm
"Paswonky."
"How Ya, Baby."
(***H.M.V. BD.5354.)

MANY thanks to H.M.V. for lending an ear to my requests for the release of *Paswonky*. I hope its original backing of *Black Raspberry Jam* will follow shortly. There is no particular explanation why I like *Paswonky*, and if you like it there will be no explanation either.

Fats doesn't explain what the title means, but no doubt it is something unprintable.

I like the other side, too.

Technical tit-bit:—In the second chorus of *Paswonky* notice the curious effect of the sixth played by the tenor sax on the sixth beat of each two-bar phrase, and the recurrence of the idea behind the trumpet solo.

Maxine Sullivan and her Orchestra.
"Dark Eyes" (**).
"A Brown Bird Singing" (***).
(Vocalion S.144.)

I should like to take Claude Thornhill by the arm and offer gently a few well-meant words of advice.

Claude, your arrangements for Maxine are becoming less and less rhythmic and more and more affectedly highfalutin'. Maxine's singing is suffering accordingly. If you think you are going to improve her by taking the Harlem out of her style and making her just another ballad singer you are making a lamentable mistake. *Dark Eyes*, with the quotations from Rachmaninoff, the rallentandos and similar ineptitudes, illustrates my point.

One quality she has which so few other singers possess is an instinctive sense of swing. Remove this and you are removing the very basis of her



Irving Fazola, "discovered" by Ben Pollack a year ago, and now playing clarinet with Bob Crosby.

popularity. In spite of this, Hadyn Wood's "Brown Bird Singing" makes a very attractive "vehicle" (as they say in Hollywood) for Maxine, and with one's ear glued to the gramophone it is possible to discern that the accompaniment is harmonically charming.

Wingy Mannone and his Orchestra.
"Loch Lomond."
"Annie Laurie."
(**Regal-Zonophone MR. 2732.)

Now you can call this heresy, sacrilege, blasphemy or whatever you will. This is a different kettle of fish altogether. Play it and realise in what exquisitely good taste Maxine's treatments were.

Regarded purely as jazz there is good stuff on both sides: a solid rhythm section, an interesting tenor man and fair trumpet with rather soulless tone by Wingy, whose singing is the caterpillar in the salad.

Slim and Slam.

"That's What You Call Romance."
"Ti-Pi-Tin."
(***Vocalion 145.)

According to the special Vocalion

leaflet this is soft swing month for their releases, with Slim and Slam cited as an example. These two Harlem gents sing and play guitar and bass respectively, accompanied by a drummer and no mean pianist. *That's What You Call Romance* has something of the intimacy of the old *Spirits of Rhythm*; the entire side—especially the last eight bars—forms a veritable definition of swing.

An alarming feature on both sides is the solo work on a bowed string-bass which, believe it or not, is played almost in tune.

Slim and Slam are real Harlem at its most inconsequential.

Gerry Moore and his Rhythm.
"Ti-Pi-Tin."
"Always And Always."
(*Parlophone F.1090.)

Skip the commercial aura, the pedestrian rhythm section and the horribly confused alto and clarinet of Derek Neville, but notice the vocal in the second title by a newcomer, Toni Adaire, who has the right idea. With more confidence and training and a couple of hours a day listening to

Bailey and Holiday records she may go places.

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"I've Hitched My Wagon To A Star."
"Let That Be A Lesson To You."
(**H.M.V. B.8636.)

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"Can't Teach My Old Heart New Tricks." (**)

Benny Goodman Trio.
"Silhouetted In The Moonlight."
(***)
(H.M.V. B.8635.)

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"Alexander's Ragtime Band."

Benny Goodman Quartet.
"I'm A Ding Dong Daddy."
(***H.M.V. B.8734.)

Of six sides of Goodman at one gasp I'll take the last coupling, thank you. "Alexander" dates from 1936, the period when nobody but Goodman himself took a solo, but the arrangement sounds more like Fletcher Henderson than Jimmy Mundy, which helps. The Quartet grapples admirably with the greyhound tempo and only falls down when Mr. Krupa starts his juggling tricks at the end. The other four sides are commercial; the colourless and deadly competent singing of Martha Tilton cuts a deep gash into the heart of each title. She sings slightly better with the Trio, possibly because she can hear herself.

You may be interested to know that my American Victor copy of *Ding Dong Daddy* is pressed from a different master and that the solos are rather better than those on the master used for the H.M.V. release. It happens too often that second-best masters are sent abroad, instead of copies of the originals.

Being Different Isn't Necessarily Being Good

says
"ROPHONE"
 in his review of hot records



MANSERVANTS' GUIDE
 ★★★★★ Major Domo
 ★★★ Footman
 ★★ Flunkey
 ★ Boots

Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra
 "I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me."
 "You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me."
 (**Vocalion S.150).

DOES a record have to be different to be good? Sometimes I wonder. In such cases as the Quintet of the Hot Club of France, every time a new issue comes in I am faced with six minutes of boredom because I know it is going to be no different from the last release. Yet, when a new Wilson record arrives, for exactly the same reason, I settle down comfortably, confident that I am going to enjoy myself.

Those Billie Holiday Twists

The only solution can be that Wilson's formula is an extraordinarily happy one. Though you can generally anticipate the order of the solos, and the twists that Billie Holiday is going to give the tune, you find in nine cases out of ten that the system still doesn't grow stale. Thus, the only deciding factor before the verdict is brought in is the merit of the tunes themselves. In this instance they qualify immediately for approval. *I Can't Believe* fits Miss Holiday like a glove, and *You Brought* is an old Maurice Chevalier number for which I have always had a soft spot. Miss Frances Hunt is the vocalist on this side. She is one of the ex-Goodman canaries, and rates somewhere between Helen Ward and Martha Tilton. The high spots are Vido Musso's tenor, and the clarinet of an unknown Los Angeles youngster, Archie Rosati.

Art of Harry James

Technical tit-bit:—Notice Harry James' phrasing in his obligato to Frances Hunt. Instead of just filling the in-between spots, he waits for her to start each phrase and then carries right on without any fear of clashing with her.

Four Hot Trumps.
 "Memories Of You."
 "Mama, I Wanna Make Rhythm."
 ("Regal-Zonophone MR. 2121.)

Somebody's *music* was very cautious when this band was named the "Four" Hot Trumps. It sounds to me like a large brass contingent plus a full-size rhythm section. Average commercial swing somewhat of the Gonella style, but slightly better.

Quintet Of the Hot Club Of France.
 "Liebestraum No. 3."
 "The Sheik Of Araby."
 (*H.M.V. B.8737.)

Here are six of those minutes of exquisite boredom that I was just talking about. In order to make Liszt revolve a little faster in his grave it was apparently necessary not merely to ignore the melody of his *Liebestraum*, but also to confuse the original harmonic sequence, with a result that bears no resemblance to old man Franz's masterpiece. *The Sheik* is just the same old stuff in its usual guise. We prefer him with no pants on.

Bert Firman's Quintuplets Of Swing.
 "Blue Strings."
 "Keep Goin'."
 (**Parlophone R.2514.)

Salon jazz, eminently well-mannered and by no means unpleasant. *Blue Strings* has moments that remind you of the old Venuti Blue Four—but fleeting moments. And the solo work of Freddy Gardner on clarinet, Cyril Hellier on fiddle, and Cecil Norman on piano is disappointing.

BEING DIFFERENT!
 Tommy Dorsey gives Edythe Wright a few hints on the sliphorn.

Adrian Rollini And His Orchestra.
 "Blue Prelude."
 "Mississippi Basin."
 (*Parlophone R.164.)

Recorded in 1933, and evidently never released in America, for obvious reasons. Tepid and torpid, with comatose vocals in which the only relief is the laugh you will get out of the word "pre-lood." Even a clarinet which is obviously Mr. Goodman doesn't help.

Dick Robertson And His Orchestra.
 "A Little White Lighthouse."
 (*Panachord 25974.)

See what your uncle Rophy found tucked away in the one-and-sixpennies! Hiding behind the name of Dick Robertson, who is the vocal bringdown on this side, we have such people as Bobby Hackett on cornet; Ralph Muzillo on trumpet; Don Watt on clarinet; Al Philburn on trombone; Frank Signorelli, Dave Barber, Stan King and Haig Stephens. The jam ensemble make a nice family party

noise, and in spite of the uninspiring material, there is evidence that some of these Robertson sessions should be worth watching.

Too bad that the coupling, instead of another Robertson, is Ted Weems with a whistler. Otherwise this might have been a super find.

Woody Herman And His Orchestra.
 "I Double Dare You."
 "Why Talk About Love?"
 (*Panachord 25971.)
 "You're A Sweetheart."
 "My Fine Feathered Friend."
 (*Panachord 25972.)

More one-and-sixpennies. Played commercially, but with good vocals by Woody, particularly in the last side, which also has a couple of good solo spots.

Tommy Dorsey And His Orchestra.
 "Good Night, Sweet Dreams, Good Night."
 (*H.M.V. BD.5355.)

If we must have crooners they may as well be like Jack Leonard, who at least has a voice.

This side will show you just how very, very remotely Tommy's band is connected with swing nowadays.

On the other side you can hear Guy Lombardo and His Royal Canadians tipping it in.

Melody Maker

21st May 1938

Feather Forecast and News

31-YEAR-OLD TROMBONE VETERAN



Count Basie

out some personal details. Thirty-one doesn't exactly suggest the declining days of a dotard, yet at that age the fella's a veteran. He started in the game in 1918, and he was doing then precisely what he's been doing ever since, that is to say playing trombone, arranging, and doubling on guitar.

Wille ("Schnozzle" to his Harlem fans) Bryant, after which came his long stay with Jimmie Lunceford's Orchestra, where he contributed any number of outstanding arrangements, of which he cites *Honey Keep Your Mind On Me* as a good example.

A Few of His Activities

Last autumn Eddie answered a mating call from his old buddies, Count Basie's boys, and currently he is working for the Count, for whom he scored such works as *Good Morning Blues*, *Out The Window*, *John's Idea* and *Let Me Dream*.

His most interesting recent accomplishment was the arranging on the session made by Harry James and his nine-piece recording band. Durham played trombone on the date, titles of which included *Life Goes To A Party* and *I Can Dream, Can't I?*

A couple of years ago Eddie took up the electric guitar, which he now uses

A NAME that has been cropping up quite frequently in the record review pages lately is that of Eddie Durham, one of the old timers of the Kansas City bands.

I met Durham several times on my recent American trip and found

Durham hails from San Antonio, Texas. The first name band for which he worked was Benny Moten's Kansas City Orchestra. With Count Basie he shared the bulk of the orchestration work in this group. Subsequently he worked with another noted Kansas City band, Andy Kirk's, and later with

Melody Maker 21 May 1938



DUKE ELLINGTON

ELLINGTON UNDERGOING OPERATION

IT is reported from New York that, upon leaving the Cotton Club when it closes for the summer season at the end of May, Duke Ellington will undergo an internal operation.

This is the result of an ailment which first began to trouble him two years ago and recurred recently.

As soon as the doctors have pronounced him physically fit Ellington and the band will embark on an extensive tour of the States.

There is also an interesting possibility of a South American trip which would take the Duke to Rio de Janeiro at a figure approximating to two-thousand pounds a week.



Eddie Durham and his Base Four: (L. to R) Eddie Durham, Walter Page, Buck Clayton (behind), Joe Jones (front) & Freddie Green

for all his solo work. This gave him the idea of forming a small recording contingent from Basie's band, featuring himself on this instrument with backgrounds by Freddie Green on an ordinary guitar, Walter Page on bass, Joe Jones on drums and Buck Clayton on a very muted trumpet. I was present at this session where, with John Hammond's assistance, they produced four sides which really start swinging where the French quintet leaves off. The titles made were *I Know That You Know*, *Good Morning Blues*, *Laughing At Life* and *Love Me Or Leave Me*, and the combination will be styled "Eddie Durham And His Base Four." (b-a-s-e, base, please note). Brunswick is releasing them in America.

Last Year's London Visit

Eddie Durham passed through London for a few brief days last year on his way home with the Lunceford gang. A few fans at the night clubs may have noticed the tall, thin, dark figure of this quiet-mannered fellow; but let's hope he'll revisit us in more auspicious circumstances some of these days.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Radio Times 20 May, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

ONE of the featured items in Ernest Longstaffe's 'Palace of Varieties' in the National programme on Saturday, May 28, will be the introduction of a remarkable new kind of organ which functions mysteriously without the aid of wind or pipes. Before you begin imagining that it is all done with mirrors, I should explain on behalf of Robin Richmond, who is the exponent of this novelty, that electricity is the key to the secret of this startling invention. Electrical wave-forms are created by the console and are converted into sound in a small power cabinet. The whole thing is extremely compact, and Richmond (who, as you might have guessed, lives in Richmond, Surrey) has thus been able to use it in cabaret, stage, and night-club work, carrying the apparatus round in a van. He brought the organ to this country last year after a tour in America, and has had it remodelled in streamline style.

* * * *

The Quintet of the Hot Club of France will be reappearing again on Thursday to take part in the second 'Band Boomerang' programme, in which the other participant will be Carroll Gibbons, already well known in France, having played for many summer seasons in the leading seaside resorts. He will be back at Deauville again before long.

* * * *

Gramophone record recitals worth noting are 'Le Jazz Hot', a programme of French swing music, presented by J. P. Holloway this afternoon (Friday, May 20); records by Tommy Dorsey on Monday night; and a recital of rumba music on Friday afternoon, May 27.

Men Behind the Bands

(6) STANLEY T. ANDREWS

Stanley T. Andrews, who is responsible for the arrangements for Jack Jackson's Orchestra, is something of a multi-instrument man, having mastered the technique of violin, saxophone, clarinet, trumpet, and piano. The violin is his principal instrument and he studied it for thirteen years, from the age of five.

He took lessons in orchestration as part of the training which enabled him to pass numerous violin examinations, and became interested in the idea of re-orchestrating scored works for small bands, aiming at producing the maximum of tone colour from limited instrumentation.

His first professional work came with the acceptance of one of his orchestrations by Jack Payne, who featured it in his stage show with his band from Savoy Hill six years ago. Since then, as Andrews puts it, he has had scarcely time to go to bed, having arranged for numerous well-known band leaders, including Louis Levy and Ambrose.

* * * *

His present work for Jack Jackson keeps him equally busy, the time spent on each orchestration varying greatly with his mood—and the circumstances under which he works. 'Some tunes', he says, 'seem to orchestrate themselves and can be finished in two or three hours. Others take a day and a half.' He is happiest when working in a contemplative mood, in the morning and at some in peace with his piano. But more often when not a rush job compels him to work in a crowded restaurant after midnight, with practically no time at all and no piano!

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

NATURALLY the big event of next week is the debut of Ray Noble's Canadian band, to be heard first in an 'Hour to Play' on Friday evening and then in a 'BBC Ballroom' programme on Saturday. The most interesting aspects of Noble's return are dealt with by the 'maestro' (repugnant word) himself in an article on page 11.



Alan Marsh

* * * *

It need only be added that I have found him the same quiet personality, always ready to relate his interesting reminiscences, but not Americanised in the slightest degree.

There is another 'Syncopation Piece' next Monday. The Melody Man this time will be Ivor Mairants, one of the best-known British guitarists, who will be familiar to you as a member of the Cubs Trio which was featured for some time with Roy Fox's band.

Men Behind the Bands

(7) SID PHILLIPS

Since I started this series, Sid Phillips, the stocky, fair-haired London composer who carried musical coals to New York on a recent visit, has returned to Ambrose's orchestra as saxophonist and chief arranger. Born in 1907, he toured Europe from 1923 to 1929; studying at conservatoires in Geneva, Naples, Rome, and Milan, sometimes offering saxophone lessons in exchange for instruction in theory.

In New York last winter he assembled an all-star band to record his compositions 'Dinner and Dance', 'Amazon Goes A-Wooing', and others. 'Several well-known American band leaders', he relates, 'were surprised by the amount of tonal variety I managed to get out of such a limited aggregation as a dance band, particularly in my composition "Escapada", which is a musical picture of a Mexican elopement.'

Amongst his other well-known pieces are 'B'Wanga', 'Night Ride', and 'A Message From Mars'. His recent arrangements for Ambrose include 'Ti-Pi-Tin'. 'I can finish an average arrangement in as little as three hours', says Phillips, 'with or without a piano. I like to work in the afternoon, when everyone else is too busy to bother with me.'

* * * *

Talking of Ambrose brings to mind a personality who has lately been featured in his broadcasts: young Alan Marsh, the vocalist. His is one of those all-round musical families. The son of a London cantor, he has a sister (Georgia Kaye) singing in a revue, a brother who is chief cantor in Sydney, and another who tours with a trio. Alan himself sang with a choir at the age of nine and took up drumming as a hobby. (He is deputy drummer with Ambrose now, playing during Max Bacon's vocal numbers.) He had his first taste of fame on succeeding Al Bowlly in Lew Stone's Monseigneur Orchestra. Under the name of Alan Kane he soon became a firm favourite, later broadcasting and recording with Joe Loss, Harry Leader, Don Sesta, and Arthur Rosebery, and reaching the peak of achievement when he replaced Sam Browne with Ambrose.

World-Radio

THE BBC FOREIGN PROGRAMME JOURNAL ★ EVERY FRIDAY **2^D**
WITH FULL INFORMATION FOR THE LISTENER AND VIEWER

MAY 27, 1938

WORLD-RADIO

HARMONY IN HARLEM

LEONARD G. FEATHER describes a recent visit to the "colourful" negro district of New York City, which has contributed many brilliant artists to radio entertainment.

ONE of the problems that have to be taken into consideration in the compilation of American radio programmes is the fact that one citizen in every ten in the United States is a negro. Of these twelve million coloured people there are countless thousands who depend on the radio as their only source of entertainment. The fountain-head of the talent which caters for this section of the populace is Harlem, the former Dutch section of New York, which now houses three hundred thousand Negroes in the rather cramped confines of twenty or thirty blocks towards the northern end of Manhattan Island.

Taking the subway express from Times Square, we alight at 125th Street, almost next door to the Apollo Theatre, which offers Harlem's best stage shows, "featuring" a different band and a star-supporting bill of singers and dancers each week. From this theatre emanates the celebrated "Amateur Night in Harlem," which has been a Wednesday night feature in the WMCA programme (23.00-00.00 E.D.S.T.) for some years. Harlem is such a hive of amateur talent that this show is even more amusing to watch than to hear. The so-called "hot rhythm" acts are by no means the only ones to meet with the approval of the largely coloured audience. I once heard an aspiring ballad-singer hold the crowd with her rendering of "Trees," whereas a young coloured girl who tried a rhythmic number and started off in the wrong key was yelled off the stage amidst a panic of catcalls, whistles, and laughter, aided by the comic stage policeman who fires a dummy gun at each unsuccessful act. A remarkable feature is the youth of many of the participants. Amongst the turns I have heard at the Apollo, all amateurs, are a sixteen-year-old boy trumpet-player, a schoolgirl with a remarkably well-developed soprano voice, and a little amateur orchestra of which all the members were in their 'teens.

Dancing Marathons

A little farther up-town, in Lenox Avenue, Harlem's High Street, is the Savoy Ballroom, a coloured *palais de danse* where the spontaneous exhibitions of ballroom dancing, Harlem style, form a unique and fascinating show in themselves. It is from this dimly-lit sanctum of swing music that NBC has for many years transmitted sustaining programmes, which can be frequently picked up through W2XAF on Saturday evenings. Playing there at present is the orchestra of Teddy Hill, heard in London last year with the Cotton Club show at the Palladium, and still ranked as one of the finest of coloured bands. Count Basie, Don Redman, Andy Kirk, Willie Bryant: these and other familiar names denote famous negro orchestras for which the Savoy Ballroom is a frequent port of call. During the weekdays the clientele is almost exclusively coloured, but on Saturday nights white seekers of entertainment throng into the packed room to watch the weekly "Lindy Hopping" contest and other amateur dance marathons, in which the intensity of the music and the dancing, combined with the excitement of the audience, bring the whole atmosphere to fever pitch.

One of the Savoy Ballroom's most famous products, Chick Webb's Orchestra, is currently to be heard from Boston through W2XAF each Saturday at 11.30 p.m. British Summer Time. From the Savoy one can proceed to a score of colourful and intimate little clubs, such as the



COUNT BASIE, a brilliant pianist and orchestra leader.

Indigo, the Shim Sham, the Plantation, the Ubangi, and the Uptown House, which frequently supply the music for programmes on the local New York stations. The entertainment is always fast, and the manner of all the broadcasts pleasantly impromptu. In view of the high standard offered by Negro entertainment it may seem curious that, until very recently, not a single American sponsor had offered a coloured show for a commercial radio programme. This manifestation of the colour bar was thwarted for the first time when Louis Armstrong and his band, with an all-coloured cast, gave a series of programmes for a well-known sponsor.

"All Black" Programmes

However, in the sustaining programmes there have been many permanent favourites drawn from Harlem, among them Midge Williams, the young singer whose name appeared in *WORLD-RADIO* every week for almost a year while she was doing her weekly fifteen minutes of songs for NBC. An interesting movement recently has been the development of specialised programmes strictly for coloured audiences. One of the best of these is the "Tales of Harlem" feature on WMCA, in which coloured journalists, athletes, politicians, and celebrities from every walk in life are invited to participate. Then there is "Echoes of Harlem," developed somewhat on the lines of a living newspaper, which is transmitted from WBNX at 23.45 E.D.S.T., on Mondays to Fridays inclusive.

To sum up, for the astute New York listener, and for the British enthusiast who takes a really serious interest in American medium and short wave reception, the Negro aspect of American radio offers both amusement and instruction in abundance. Harlem, that little crowded corner of New York, whence have emanated such brilliant stars as Florence Mills, Duke Ellington, Ethel Waters, and the sixty-year-old-tap-dancing king, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson (who, incidentally, is the Mayor of Harlem) has contributed more than its share to the history of American broadcasting entertainment.

Dance Music in Two Continents

England and America contrasted

by RAY NOBLE

whose new band makes its radio debut on Friday



You will hear Ray Noble's new band for the first time on Friday—and again on Saturday

WHEN I go on the air with my new band for the first time next week, the occasion will revive quite a few distant memories for me. Although the English public doesn't seem to have forgotten me, it will be three years this autumn since I left England.

Perhaps I should start with a brief synopsis of the chapters of my American story. For the first few months in New York I had to remain musically inactive pending admission to the local Musicians' Union.

Then, with the American band I had assembled, I went into the Rainbow Room in one of the Radio City buildings, sixty-four storeys above New York. After about eight months we went on a long tour of theatres and 'one-night stands'. Next we played a delightful club engagement in Texas right on the Gulf of Mexico, after which I returned home to England for a brief holiday in the summer of 1936.

In Hollywood

Back in America again, I organised a new band for further work at the Rainbow Room and in commercial radio. After another tour I went to Hollywood without a band, assembling a combination of local musicians for my broadcasts.

During my stay in California I was offered a job that had been an ambition of mine all my life: at the Coconut Grove in Hollywood. Yet I turned it down! I found that all the good musicians in Los Angeles were earning so much money in free-lance radio work that they wouldn't accept a resident job, and I should have been unable to assemble a band that would have done me credit.

Since March, 1937, I have been in a regular

air show with Burns and Allen, and I evolved a little line of comedy patter with Gracie Allen that caught on with the public. All I had to do was to make the same idiotic remark several times with my English accent and everybody was enormously amused. As a result of this, when Burns and Allen were given parts in the Fred Astaire picture *A Damsel in Distress*, Burns suggested a part for me.

Different Mentalities

During these lengthy wanderings in the United States I naturally had time to form some pronounced impressions of the differences in the mentalities of the English and transatlantic publics. It must be admitted that there is more general interest in dance music as an entertainment in America. An American couple might say 'Let's go somewhere where there's a band', whereas an English couple would be more likely to murmur 'Thank goodness, there's no music!'

At the Rainbow Room there were usually large and enthusiastic crowds of West Point and New York University youths from seventeen to twenty. Over here, these young people can't get away from the colleges and the only period of the year when you can see an English parallel of American conditions is May Week in Cambridge.

Moreover, in America middle-aged men will come up and make intelligent requests for some of our best numbers; they seem to have a younger mentality in this respect. But the one

great advantage of the English audiences is their courtesy.

The popular songs that enjoy the biggest vogue in America are rather more sophisticated than those that catch on in England. This may be because so many of the song publishing companies are owned by the film companies and their songs are those that have been written around certain scenes or situations in their pictures, which are generally of the sophisticated musical-comedy type.

My New Band

In conclusion, perhaps you would like to have a few details about the band you are going to hear on the air and in the music-halls during the next three months.

It is a Canadian band, originating from Toronto, which I have augmented with one or two English boys. Before I took it over the director was Jimmy 'Trump' Davidson, who will be a featured vocalist and trumpet soloist with the act. I think you will like another of the vocalists, Marian Manners, a distinctive personality whom I consider something of a discovery.

My time in this country is limited, as I have promised to return to Hollywood in September. However, if during the next twelve weeks I manage to establish a firm contact with the public throughout Great Britain I shall be more than happy. You see, in spite of all the recording and broadcasting work I did before I first left England, I have never toured the country before.



MIDGE WILLIAMS, singing "star" of Louis Armstrong's famous dance band (see "Harmony in Harlem"—an article on America's Negro Entertainers—on page 7).

CONNIE BOSWELL JAZZES NEAR-CLASSIC

Connie Boswell With Bob Crosby's Bob Cats.
 "Ah, Sweet Mystery Of Life."
 "Gipsy Love Song."
 (**Brunswick O2589.)

THIS question of bad taste again. If *Sweet Mystery Of Life* happens to be sacred to you or has sentimental associations you will not like this boisterous jazzing up. Regarded purely as jazz, this is just another thirty-two-bar chorus with pleasingly different chord changes. The Crosby octet makes a ragged, cheerful noise and seems to bring the best out of Connie, who is very different here from her ballad-moaning *alter ego*.

The other side, no less raucous, may be familiar to you as *Slumber On, My Little Gipsy Sweetheart*. It won't be familiar to you by the time you've heard Connie's version.

Ella Fitzgerald And Her Savoy Eight.

"If You Ever Should Leave."
 "Everyone's Wrong But Me."
 (**Brunswick O2593.)

Here's another girl vocalist with another eight-piece contingent from another band, but it's another story. Taft Jordan plays sharp and harsh throughout *Everybody's Wrong But Me*, and the whole accompaniment lacks the spontaneity and swing of Crosby's Bob Cats. I don't care for Tommy Fulford's diluted Teddy Wilson chorus in *If You Ever Should Leave*, nor for Ella's corny coda which she seems anxious to shove into everything she records.

This coupling was made a year ago.

Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra.
 "Pigeon Walk" (***)
 "Hell's Bells" (**)
 (Brunswick O2590.)

Pigeon Walk gives you a shock the first time. It has the same intro and coda as Basie's *Time Out*. Evidently Eddie Durham is rather fond of this particular invention of his. There is

SCHOLARSHIP GUIDE

- ★★★★ Genius
- ★★★ Savant
- ★★ Student
- ★ Dunce

also a Durham guitar solo with Eddie's peculiarity of sounding as though half the notes are missing. The arrangement is unusual in form and up to the better Lunceford standard in interpretation.

The infernal bells on the other side are, alas, recorded in such a manner as to grate on the ear like a knife across a plate. The copious semitone haunted house effects à la Walt Disney are also rather silly.

Artie Shaw and his Orchestra.
 "Whistle While You Work."
 "Non-Stop Flight."
 (**Vocalion S.147.)

Talking about Disney, Artie Shaw's version of one of the "Snow White" tunes is an extraordinarily fine example of how a good arranger makes good bricks out of straw. Indeed, believe it or not, this is the better side of the coupling.

Hot Records Reviewed by "Rophone"

Artie's own opus on the back is a typical sixteen-bar chorus affair. Tony's highly individual tenor pleases me more and more. You know all about Artie's clarinet and arranging.

Technical tit-bit: Notice the wonder-working effect of syncopation on the trumpets in the first chorus of *Whistle*. Also the nice eight-in-a-barish effect running throughout. Tony Pastor's vocal is abetted by some stylish phrases, whistled, I can reveal, by Artie himself.

Bob Crosby and his Orchestra
 "Silhouetted In The Moonlight."
 "I've Hitched My Wagon To A Star."
 (**Decca F.6668.)

Bob sings exactly like Bing on both sides. The least that can be said for this pairing is that the performances are looser and more interesting than Goodman's versions of the same numbers which cost a bob more.

Strings In Swing Time.
 "Oriental Stock Exchange."
 "Professor Visits Harlem."
 (*Vocalion S.149.)

No connection with Phil Green from next door and no connection with swing. Austen Croom Johnson's stock has dropped to zero with this shoddy imitation Persian marketry.

As for *Professor Visits Harlem*, Artie Shaw did something similar and infinitely better in 1936 with *Streamline*.



ARTIE SHAW and his new foursome. Artie on clarinet, Cliff Leemans on drums, Sid Weiss on bass, and Al Avola on guitar. Making bricks without shaw?

Art Tatum.
 "The Sheik Of Araby" (***)
 "Chloe" (**)
 (Brunswick O2591.)

This must be the first record of *The Sheik* in which I have ever heard the verse. Art manages, despite frequent caprices and tricks (some humorous, some clever and some useless), to maintain a more or less steady tempo throughout. For pianists at least this is breath-taking stuff, and for others

there are exciting moments.

Chloe is just Tatum caught playing for himself in the studio for three minutes. There will be many ivory pounders who will wish that they could ramble on formlessly with so much technical ammunition, but others will rebuke Art for having forgotten that he was playing for other people to listen. His unawareness of an audience is carried rather too far on this side.

HARLEM GOES JAPANESE!

ONCE again politics and jazz have clashed. A flood of abusive telephone calls, two hundred within twenty minutes, inundated Station WNEW the other day after their broadcast of some recordings made by Midge Williams, the young Harlem songstress, featuring *Dinah* and *Lazybones* sung in Japanese.

All the defences that the records were merely played as a novelty and were not intended as propaganda for the Japanese, whose invasion of China has made them so unpopular in America, could not satisfy the furious listeners. Yet, the story behind these discs is merely that of an adventurous little girl who, with her three brothers, Louis, Charley and Robert, and their mother, left America in 1933 to play for six months at the Canadrome ballroom in Shanghai, subsequently playing at the Florida Ballroom and the Imperial Hotel, Tokio, and engagements in Yokohama and other parts of Japan. During her five months in that country Midge did a session for the Nipponophone Co., the Japanese affiliate of Columbia, accompanied by a Philippine orchestra. The Japanese lyrics don't sound half as strange as you'd think and the effect is oddly pleasing.

Midge, whom I met in New York when she recently joined up with Louis Armstrong's Orchestra, has had a colourful life. The quartet started as child amateurs in California in 1925; their first professional job was with a touring revue in 1927. Later, a young man named Roger Segure heard Midge, got her a radio job, and has been her pianist, composer, arranger and right-hand man ever since.

Midge enjoyed her Oriental jaunt and her work in the strange ballroom, where nobody ever drank anything but tea and famous Eastern diplomats came along to hear her sing. When she came home in 1934, the death of one of her brothers caused the break-up of the quartet.

After broadcasting in Los Angeles with Bing Crosby and Al Jolson, she came to New York a couple of years ago, toured with Fats Waller, was heard frequently on NBC with Rudy Vallee as well as in her own regular sustaining programme, and recorded with Frankie Froeba and with Teddy Wilson. (Her *Lazy River Goes By* was released in



Midge Williams

the first Decca Jam Album.) She has recorded several solo sessions, for Irving Mills, accompanied firstly by the Raymond Scott Quintet, later by Bobby Hick's group from the Saucy Ballroom, and lately by the Onyx Club.

Midge's style is no more naturally flatter than Japanese, but fiercer strong point. In popular sounds very commercial, but she sings real gut buck quite an exciting fashion.

LEONARD G. FEAT

THREE HEARTS IN HARMONY

One might think that the Boswell Sisters left nothing to be said on the subject of girl vocal trios, but the Andrews Sisters have that little extra something

by LEONARD FEATHER

I MIGHT say bella bella, even say wunderbar, but bei mir Patty Andrews is distinctly schoen.

That was the first thought that played havoc with my equilibrium when I called on Lou Levy (the American variety agent, not the English orchestra conductor) to meet his protégées, the Andrews Sisters, who in six months have risen from obscurity to the position of the most famous girl trio since the Boswells.

They act, dress, sing and think alike, these three charming kids—maybe they will resent this description, for Patty is 18, Maxene is approaching her 21st birthday, and LaVerne is nearly 23. Yet in their lack of affectation and their enjoyment of life they are much younger than that.

When that first record came out over here nobody knew a thing about any Andrews Sisters. They might be white or coloured, young or old, new stars or just flashes in the pan; nobody in England who bought and enjoyed the record knew anything of these details. It was history in the repetitive process, for that is just how the Boswells hit us in 1931.

By now we know, of course, that the Andrews girls are not as coloured as they sound; in fact, their father came from Greece and their mother from Norway, and they themselves were brought up in Minneapolis.

Since there did not seem to be much of a future in attaching them to the restaurant he managed (perhaps the idea never even occurred to him), the girls' father encouraged them to exercise the vocal cords that proved themselves more than normally flexible even when there was nothing for them to do but join in with the school choir.

Amateur shows, though not yet attaining to Major Bowes proportions, were nevertheless an accepted form of entertainment in which the children found the first real outlet for their ability. It was at one of these performances, in a kiddies' revue, that Larry Rich, a well-known master of ceremonies, found them



and put them in a big vaudeville touring revue.

From here to orchestra work was but a short step, and soon they were singing with Leon Belasco and Maurie Sherman. As the years slipped through their fingers and jazz marched on, the girls kept abreast of the developments in swing style and, in fact, even got a couple of paces ahead, so that soon, instead of conforming to the stereotyped stage vocal manner, they evolved something which, though modelled on the idea that had made the Boswell Sisters what they were, still had something individual.

Then came the turning point. Sammy

Cahn and Saul Chaplin unearthed the little-known song number from a Jewish revue, added some English lyrics, and handed a copy to their agent, Lou Levy, who immediately visualised a useful tie-up by arranging for the Andrews girls to introduce it over the air. Thus it was that the Andrews Sisters, singing in a Broadway matinée with Freddy Rich and His Orchestra, gave us our first hearing of *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen*.

The results were so overwhelming that it would be unfair to say either that the girls made the song or that the song made them. At all events, they were mutually beneficial to an astonish-

Three Hearts in Harmony - - - -

ing degree. On November 24, 1937 ("I remember dates like that exactly," says Patty), they recorded *Bei Mir* at the Decca studios, and the result was just about as big as anything in Decca's American history. Last time I inquired, the sales were said to have reached 130,000. Even if you divide that by two it's a big sale.

After *Bei Mir* the Andrews Sisters' stock jumped fivefold—from \$200 to £200 a week, to put it simply. Recently they went to Chicago to start a series of broadcasts on WABC from 7 to 7.15 every day except Saturdays and Sundays. It's as big a break as they could wish.

"And who," I asked inevitably, "does your arrangements?"

"Well, we all kind of get together and put our own ideas in—it's never any one of us alone," smiled Patty. "I take all the solo parts. And the orchestral arrangements have been handled for us for the last two years by Vic Schoen. He directed all our recording dates and played second trumpet on them."

Vic Schoen. *Bei Mir Bist Du*. Surely this coincidence means that the song was predestined for the girls?

"We had a wonderful session a few weeks ago, when we made *Ti-pi-tin*, *Shortnin' Bread*, *Easier Said Than Done*, *Where Have We Met Before?* *Ooh Boom*, and the follow-up to *Bei Mir*, which is called *Joseph, Joseph*. You'll like the band, I know; we had Tony Zimmers on tenor and clarinet; Johnny McGee on first trumpet; George Mazza on trombone; Frankie Froeba on piano; Dave Barber on guitar; Haig Stephens on bass, and Sam Weiss on drums."

Patty added that she "sings herself hoarse" trying to get above the cumbersome bands that are provided for the accompaniments on the radio programmes. They would all prefer to work with a small combination like the one they use on discs, but it seems that this wouldn't be pretentious or flamboyant enough for the powers that be. "Give me a small bunch every time," says Patty.

And give her also Frances Langford, Connie Boswell and Leo Watson, the scat singer from the Onyx Club, for these are her favourite vocalists. The other two sisters heartily concurred with these views. "Connie's record of *Marta*—that just lays me out!" said Maxene with fervour.

One thing I like about these maidens, apart from their voices, is their strength of will. They have never yet given way to the temptation to sing a waltz (at least, not up to the time of writing), and

although Patty has had two offers from big movie companies, she would not break up the trio by accepting them, but prefers to wait until the right time and opportunity arises.

An admirable gesture of team-spirit, this; the same spirit that seeps through

Benny Carter after nearly a year over here, spent mostly in Paris.

Tour

Ray Noble's Canadian boys, headed by Trump Davidson, arrived over here early in May to prepare for the opening of their eleven-weeks tour of Great Britain. Two American vocalists have been added to the organization: Marian Manners, a new star discovered in Hollywood by Bill Harty, Noble's manager; and Phil Warren, who has been heard frequently on NBC and has done recording work with Adrian Rollini. The band opens on June 6 in Glasgow and has fixed a number of BBC broadcasts.

Ambrose

Also in Glasgow at the time of writing is Ambrose, playing in a concert hall at the Empire Exhibition. Danny Polo has rejoined the band, and Archie Slavin, formerly with Lew Stone, replaced Albert Harris on guitar following the latter's departure for New York to await admission into the AFM.

The Dance Band Leaders' Association accepted Ambrose's resignation recently, but is still carrying on its policy of organizing the country's band leaders.

Uncertain

Lew Stone was engaged to re-form his old Monseigneur Band, once considered England's leading outfit, for the re-opening of the Trianon Restaurant, but the venture is in financial difficulties and the outlook is uncertain.

Levy's London's equivalent of the Commodore Music Shop in New York, held London's first afternoon swing session on May 1. Dozens of British musicians turned up to join in the jamming, and altogether there was such a crowd that a dozen policemen had to be called to deal with them.

West End

West End conditions are in just as bad a way as reported last month. It has now come to the stage where a well-known leader actually offered to go into a big restaurant with a six-piece band, in the heart of London, for \$125 a week all in. A brighter item in the news is the reopening of the old Embassy Club under new management. One of the partners will be Abe Aronsohn, an American, one time saxophonist and business partner of Jack Harris. Aronsohn is putting in an eight-piece band under the direction of Tim Clayton on piano, with the Canadian multi-instrumentalist Harry Karr, on first alto.

Top Tunes

Radio song leaders for mid-May are:—Tears In My Heart, Lambeth Walk (British; publ. Cinephonic), Thanks for the Memory, I Double Dare You, Don't Ever Change, Girl in the Alice Blue Gown (American title: Girl in the Bonnet of Blue. British; publ. Dash), Whistle While You Work, Once in a While, You're a Sweetheart, Little Red Book.

Best sheet music seller is an English song published by Irwin Dash: Little Drummer Boy.

Memorandum June '38

Begin Trek Back to U. S.

Ray Noble's Canadian Boys
On Tour . . . Lew Stone
Reforms Old Band

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON—Three well-known American personalities who have been over here for some time said goodbye to Europe last month.

Benny Carter, having finished his six months engagement at the Boeuf Sur Le Toit in Paris, decided that the time had come to take advantage of various offers that have been coming to him from America and sailed for home on the Normandie. By the time you read this he will probably have formed an orchestra in New York and may have accepted an offer to write arrangements for Tommy Dorsey.

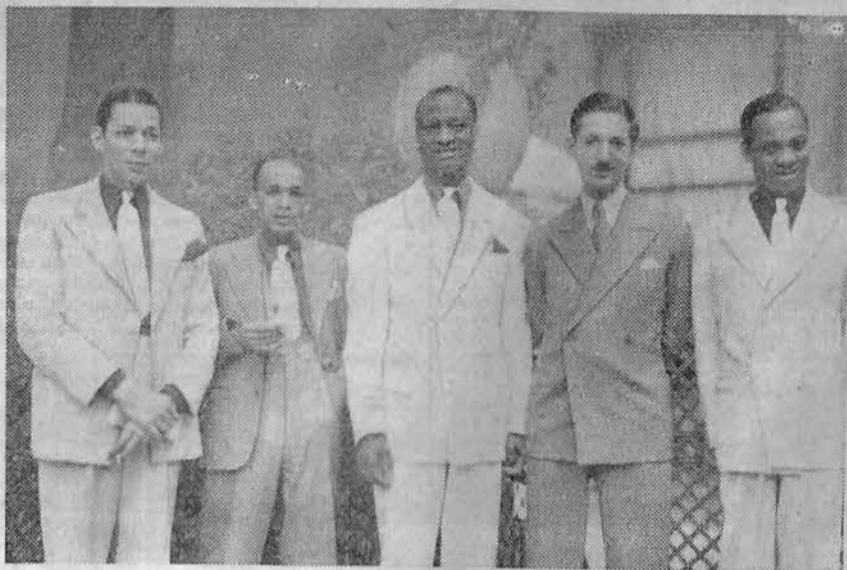
Unappreciated

Howard Jacobs, one of the world's most famous concert saxophonists, who worked for years with the Savoy Hotel group in London and was one of this country's highest paid band leaders, returned home for good to his native America. His last job of any importance was the conducting and coaching of the Australian Broadcasting Company's official resident band. Ill health and a retiring disposition, combined with the fact that none of the big agencies ever handled him, prevented him from doing anything in London of recent years worthy of his talents.

Eddie South Sails

Eddie South, the most brilliant jazz violinist ever to have played in Europe, sailed at the same time as

BAND BANKRUPTCY



Leonard Feather (second from right) with Willie Lewis and some of the latter's band—(l. to r.) Billy Burns (trombone), Herman Chitison (piano), Willie Lewis, and Jack Butler (trumpet).

HAVE you ever heard of a whole band going into bankruptcy? This latest story in the chequered career of Stuff Smith's Onyx Club Boys fits in well with the combination's previous history.

Almost since the day he first

came to New York City two-and-a-half years ago as an unknown fiddler from Buffalo, N.Y., Stuff has been in continuous trouble of one sort or another. Once he was sued for the recovery of some jewellery; another time he was in a jam

Chequered Career of Stuff Smith

with his managers; and last summer when he went to Hollywood he was involved in a long fight with the Musicians' Union as a result of which it looked at one time as though he would never be allowed to play again.

When this had finally been straightened out, Stuff came to New York again but was ordered back to the Coast to work out a contract there. In the meantime the plans for including the combination in a big musical picture entitled "Fifty Second Street" had gone awry, and a number of loans that had been advanced to the boys on the strength of the film assignment had already evaporated.

Filed Their Petitions

Results: the other day, shortly after opening at New York's Onyx Club, the boys all filed their petitions, listing their assets as nil and liabilities ranging around a thousand dollars. Jonah Jones, the trumpeter, Clyde Hart, the pianist, Bobby Bennett, the guitarist, Mack Walker, the bassist, and dear old pal Cozy Cole, all had to tell the same sad story. And Stuff himself owes about three times as much as any of them.

These cats will certainly need nine lives by the time they get out of all that. And that's not all—the current hit tune *It's Wonderful*, which bears Stuff's name as composer, is the subject of an infringement allegation made by a gentleman from Texas named C. S. Wells, who reports that Stuff has now admitted that this is not his original work. There is a likelihood of a financial settlement of the dispute.

Apart from all of which Stuff is feeling fine, thank you.

Do You Remember—

Transatlantic Jottings: Remember Baron Lee, alias Jimmy Ferguson, who used to conduct the Blue Rhythm Band? He's just taken his present orchestra on a trip to South America which will keep him at the Casino de Urca in Rio de Janeiro for several months. . . . Remember Booker Collins, the bass player with Andy Kirk's Orchestra? He's been politely requested to hand over ten thousand dollars' breach of promise "heart-balm" to a beautiful dancer. . . . Remember Helen Ward? She's become a wife and mother since you last heard of her with Goodman's band, but this month she's returned to music as guestar on the first Gene Krupa records, just released by American Brunswick. You'll be hearing them soon.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

ELLA FITZGERALD, swing singer outstanding



DISCOVERY OF THE MONTH

—Teagarden gets back in the groove

by

“ROPHONE”

trace any substantial recorded examples of his solo work.

In this coupling he has taken enough of the limelight to reveal himself as a player with the attack and style that combine all too rarely in this instrument, and the way he leads the reed section in the last chorus of *At Sundown* is a treat for sore ears.

The arrangements reach no great heights of inspiration, nor do the other soloists. The brass is thin and the rhythm section variable, with some occasional good drumming by Sammy Weiss.

But you're okay, Toots.

Billie Holiday And Her Orchestra
“He's Funny That Way”

“Now They Call It Swing”

(**Vocalion S.153)

First hearing: A bit rough and too much like all the other Holidays. *Second hearing:* Not really so rough—and it has something. *Fifth hearing:* Individual as ever, and quite fascinating.

CRUSTACEANS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Lobster
- ★★★ Crayfish
- ★★ Prawn
- ★ Shrimp

The attempt to adapt the lyric of *She's Funny That Way* to the opposite sex results in some curious rhyming, such as “plan” with “gal”; but it doesn't bother me.

Technical tit-bit: Study Billie's phrasing in the last half chorus of *He's Funny That Way*. Notice how she delays the words of the phrase “for me ev'ry day”—the similarly delayed and heavily accented “if” in “if I went away” and the way she slides on to the second syllable of “away” in the same phrase; and the slight anticipation of “I've” at the start of the last four bars. All typical Holiday traits—and they all spell swing.

Red Norvo And His Orchestra
“Always And Always”

“Please Be Kind”

(**Vocalion S.156)

The usual Norvo polish, Bailey vocals, and arrangements that make the most of indifferent material.

Duke Ellington And His Orchestra
“Jubilee Stomp”

Luis Russell And His Orchestra
“Savoy Shout”

(*Parlophone R.2523)

Jubilee Stomp was originally described as by Duke Ellington's Wonder Orchestra, on Parlophone R.144. One of the wonders was a banjo, but that's nothing to the tuba on the Russell side.

Ben Pollack And His Orchestra
“Have You Ever Been In Heaven”

“Mama, I Wanna Make Rhythm”
(*Panachord 25976)

Just commercial, but good in spots, with a bright little passage, after Frances Hunt's vocal on the second side, which is probably led by Muggsy.

Dick Robertson And His Orchestra
“Goodnight Angel”

“Somebody's Thinking Of You”

(*Panachord 25977)

Lil Armstrong And Her Orchestra
“Let's Get Happy To-day”

“Happy To-day, Sad To-morrow”

(*Brunswick 02597)

DISCOVERY of the month! *Goodnight Angel* is probably the first record that Jack Teagarden has made since way back in 1936. He sat in at this commercial session just for fun on his last visit to New York, and his chorus here, even if it adheres too closely to the somewhat banal melody, still has the Teagarden touch, noticeably in the typical phrase in bar thirty. But those long notes in bars eleven, twelve, twenty-seven and twenty-eight would never have blemished the real old Teagarden of the pre-Whiteman era. I am afraid that Jack will never be the same again.

Except for Robertson's appalling vocal this is not a bad record altogether.

The other side has some nice Bobby Hackett cornet and an inferior trombonist.

Lil Armstrong's two sides have the same personnel as *Goodnight Angel* (all white) with the same inferior slip-horn, Al Philburn, replacing T. Since they cost twice as much as the Panachord, without the Teagarden angle of interest, I can hardly eulogise.

“Toots” Mondello And His Orchestra

“At Sundown”

“I'll See You In My Dreams”

(**Vocalion S.151)

So, the mystery man, after years of hiding behind his veil of commercial radio work, has exposed himself for rhythmic inspection at long last. I had often heard hushed rumours that Toots was the only man comparable with the great coloured altos and I had certainly noticed his fine leadership of the Goodman sax section in its early days; but never had I been able to

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

NEXT week's late night dance music will be provided entirely by provincial bands. Here are their stories:—

Monday—Tim Wright and his Band, from Edinburgh, promise faithfully not to swing 'Loch Lomond', but they will introduce a Scottish element into their programme. Scottish country-dance music is one of their specialities, and they provide practically all the music for Highland gatherings.



Tim Wright

teen years with Jack Hylton) formed his own band in 1935, and is the only member who is not a Northerner. For this broadcast he will augment his forces with three men from another band of his own in Liverpool. Signature tune: 'Tea for Two'.

Wednesday—Jack McCormick leads his twelve-piece band on alto sax. Played with Henry Hall's pre-BBC band. Started at the Rialto Ballroom, Liverpool, six years ago.



Johnny Rosen

Thursday—Vincent Ladbrooke, unconventionally, has no wish to come to London, but prefers to become known as the leader of the finest provincial band. Believes that dance-music listeners prefer liveliness to sentimental playing.



Harry Evans

and announces from the piece band at the Grand Hotel, Torquay.

Saturday—Vincent Norman has played all over England and Scotland, has even given a concert in Dartmoor. His was one of the few combinations to pass the BBC's drive to find new band talent a couple of years ago. Is featured regularly in Midland programmes.



Vincent Norman

The last half of Saturday night's programme will be given by Billy Merrin and his Commanders. Merrin, at the age of seventeen, was an operator and wireless instructor in the Royal Naval Air Service. Later he played banjo with a dance band which took part in a broadcast of his own musical play from the old Nottingham studio in 1921.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

FREDDY GARDNER will give his first broadcast leading a full-sized band on Thursday. Previously he led a nine-piece combination. Still one of the most popular soloists in this country on alto and tenor saxophones and clarinet, he has promised to adapt next week's programme to suit all tastes. But it is perhaps significant that the new signature tune, his own composition, is entitled 'Swing as it comes'. Gardner, who



Joe Loss

is playing with Bert Firman's Orchestra at the London Casino, will coincidentally make a solo appearance as the 'Melody Man' guest star with Eddie Carroll's fifth 'Syncopation Piece' on the following evening, Friday, June 17.

The probable personnel of his band is as follows: Freddy Gardner, E. O. Pogson, Reg Pink, Frank Weir, saxes; Billy Farrell, Norman Payne, trumpets; Ted Heath and Paul Fenhoulet, trombones; Pat Dodd, piano; George Elliott, guitar; Sid Hieger, drums; and Dick Ball, bass.

* * * * *

Jay Wilbur, who is presenting another 'Melody from the Sky' programme on Saturday, June 18, announces a temporary alliance of his male trio, the Madhatters, with their feminine counterparts, the Cavendish Three. They will join forces in some six-part singing in this programme. The girl trio is led by Kay Cavendish, and one of the other members, who came specially from Canada to join the combination, is Pat Rignold, sister of Hugo Rignold, the violinist who leads one of the bands at the London Casino. Sam Costa will be missing from this edition of 'Melody from the Sky'. He has the best alibi in the world—a honeymoon.

Men Behind the Bands

(8) LESLIE VINALL

Joe Loss's star arranger occupies a unique position in this series as the only writer who has never been a member of a band and who, in fact, does not play any instrument. He finds arranging a perfectly adequate medium for expressing his musical ideas.

Born twenty-six years ago in Tunbridge Wells, he started writing orchestrations for amateur bands and once did a complete set of special arrangements for a private dance when he was only fifteen. After starting work in a furniture shop, he came back into the musical business as assistant to Ronnie Munro and Lew Stone when he was seventeen, later joining a music publisher as copyist and subsequently arranger. For the last two years he has written three or four orchestrations a week for Joe Loss.

In addition to having written arrangements in the stalls and box-office of a theatre, and in vehicles of all kinds, he has often worked all through the night in a publisher's office, watching the dawn rise over Charing Cross Road.

If Joe Loss plays any of these numbers in the late night programme next Thursday, you will be listening to Leslie Vinall's work: 'Got a new pair of shoes', 'Bugle Call Rag', 'Birth of the Blues', 'Bei mir bist du schön', and 'Alexander's Ragtime Band'.

FEATHER FORECAST & NEWS

TIME TO SPRING CLEAN

LET'S get this straight now. All this spring cleaning and reorganisation in the personnels of the principal white bands has resulted in such utter confusion amongst the personnel-hunters that it might be useful to get a clear perspective of the outcome of all these changes.

For those who want Goodman's latest line-up, following the re-vamping of the sax section, here is something to paste in cuttings books or on walls or under pillows until the next list of corrections comes along: Dave Matthews (ex-Jimmy Dorsey) and Milt Yaner (ex-Ray Noble) are on altos, Bud Freeman and Arthur Rollini on tenors. Harry James, Ziggy Elman and Chris Griffin are the trumpets; Vernon Brown, solo trombone; Red Ballard, trombone; Jess Stacy, piano; Ben Heller (ex-Wayne King, recently replacing Allan

Reuss) on guitar; Dave Tough on drums and Harry Goodman on bass. Edgar Sampson, arranger.

Rollini, Ballard and Harry Goodman are the only members who have been with the band since its inception in 1935. Odd to think that the incontinent Goodmaniacs who stampede theatres and imagine they have been worshipping the same band all along have, in fact, been tracing the career of what has been virtually a series of different combinations!

Incidentally, I have just received a dealers' sheet from the Victor Company announcing the release of recordings of Mozart's Clarinet Quintet played by the Budapest String Quartet with Benny Goodman. "Do not think for a moment," declares this sheet in ingenuous indignation, "that this is a stunt recording. The engagement of Benny Goodman, hero of a million swing fans, to play with so austere an organisation as the Budapest String Quartet, was not done to make talk or make advertising. . . ." In the following paragraph one reads: "This set will be included in our National record advertising for June, and a most

attractive poster will be made available. . . ."

Now let's get the Berigan business sorted out. This band has suffered fewer fluctuations than Benny's, presumably because it's only been in existence since March, 1937, and also because Berigan and his boys get along very well together. Here's the most up-to-date line-up I can find: Berigan, Steve Lipkin, Irving Goodman (frère to Benjamin) on trumpets; Sonny Lee, Al George on trombones; Mike Doty, clarinet and flute; Joe Dixon, clarinet soloist and alto; George Auld, tenor soloist; Clyde Rounds, saxes and clarinet; Joe Lippman, piano and arranger (was to be replaced last month by Joe Bushkin); Tom Morgan, guitar; Johnny Blowers, drums; and Hank Wayland, bass.

Bunny started out as a violinist at the age of eight, and it was only between bouts of football at the University of Wisconsin that he took up his first trumpet. It was Tommy Dorsey, with whom he worked for a while, who persuaded him to form his own orchestra, and it is Tommy's manager who handles the affairs of Dorsey, Berigan and Krupa.

Public Falling For Swing?

The Berigan bunch has guestarred in RCA Victor Magic Key programmes, Saturday Night Swing sessions and, despite its lack of a national reputation, has even hooked some commercial radio work. Its enthusiastic reception at scores of college dates, and its three-week run at New York's Paramount Theatre, indicate two conclusions: firstly, that Bunny has acquired definite name value with the public, which used to be all too difficult for a swing man; secondly, that it takes far less time than formerly to build up a reputation for a swing band.

Bunny is currently being featured at the Paradise Restaurant, one of the New York prototypes of the London Casino. He plays the way he likes, and makes 'em like it. British bandleaders, take a lesson!

BUNNY BERIGAN IN SHIRT SLEEVES

How Famous American Bands
Rehearse, as seen by

LEONARD FEATHER

LESS than eighteen months ago Bunny Berigan told me that he wanted to get his own orchestra together. His national renown as leader of the Saturday Night Swing Club sessions for the Columbia Broadcasting System had paved the way for such a move, and Bunny felt sure that the time had come to make it.

At the time the proposition seemed to me a doubtful one, for Bunny was as erratic in his personality as in his playing, and the scheme was one that might soon lose its attraction for him when all the tribulations of band-leading became stark realities for him.

Yet, during 1937, Bunny not only realised his ambition, but also persevered until he had what sounded, on its B.B.C. relay, like a first-class white swing combination.

WAX DEMANDS PERFECTION

After my arrival in New York in February I caught the band on a one-nighter at a dance hall frequented by college youngsters. The enthusiasm was instrumental in building up a fine atmosphere, in which the band sounded wonderful. My impressions, formulated on the broadcast many months before, were confirmed.

When you hear a band in person it is customary, indeed instinctive, to pardon a slip here and there, and if the ensemble work is less than perfect a few faults may not prove offensive. But it was not until I heard Bunny and his boys down at the Victor studios that I realised the difference between a band that sounds fine and a band that records well.

As I entered, Bunny was growling his way into one of those very low register choruses which have become his forte. The tune was a superior popular number, *Downstream*, and the arrangement

had been taken care of by the talented pianist, Joe Lippman.

Bunny had already made several masters of this number, but all had been spoilt before the end was reached, generally through some slip in his solo chorus. As the buzzer called for

tions by continuing to play for at least half a minute, kicking up the most appalling din imaginable.

Next time the band did not even get past the introduction, as Irving Goodman, trumpet-playing brother of Benny, took a bow for the fluff that held up the proceedings. Rose-cheeked

lunch, Bunny? Maybe that'll save you from getting stale on the number," called out the supervisor. Nobody seemed to remember that they had already had lunch. It seemed such a long way back.

Next time it was one of the saxophones that blurted out something faulty. Bunny remained desperately calm, and when his men continued talking after the buzzer had gone or when he was trying to give them some instructions, he treated them with admirable calm and good fellowship. Because he has been a rank-and-file musician and feels the way the boys do, Bunny is unlike many band-leaders. The master-and-pupil disciplinary method is entirely absent.

Possibly Bunny has even erred on the side of leniency, for it was difficult for him to maintain law and order between masters. Not that he made much effort to do so by now, for it was clear that no amount of rehearsal would pave the way for a perfect master of *Downstream*; it was just a matter of playing on until luck gave them three minutes of flufflessness.

"WRAP IT UP" —TAKE IT AWAY

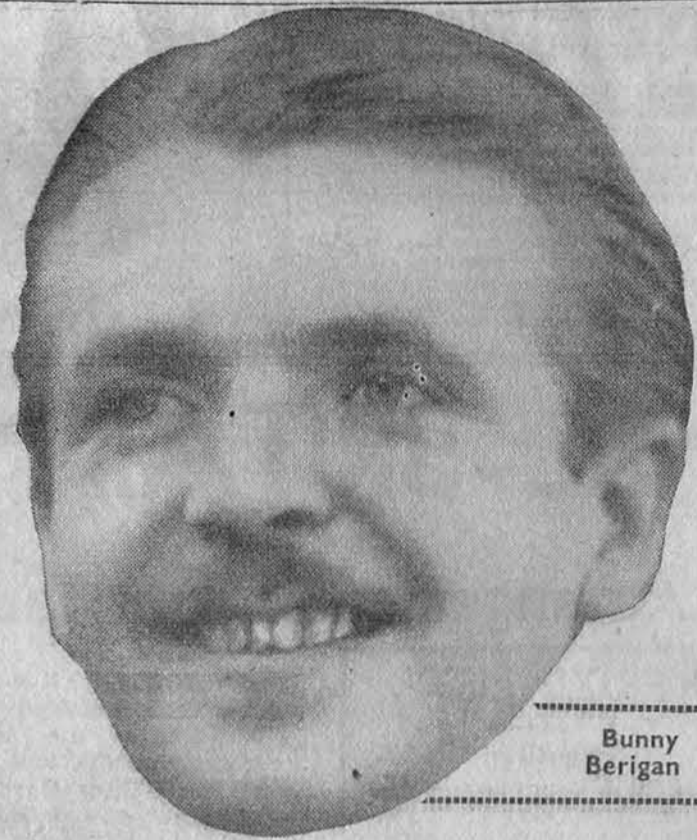
After the next master, Bunny called out "Wrap it up!"—in other words, "Take it away." They had got right through it this time, but only with obvious effort, and the result would never do for issue.

By now Bunny himself was feeling the strain, and to let off steam he started on a glorious impression of a street musician playing a cornet solo, Dickens' period. This was funny enough to take everybody's minds off *Downstream* for a minute, and there was a fresher approach to the next waxing.

The time had come for me to leave Bunny floating downstream by himself, so, with a hasty wish that the next master would turn out O.K., I slipped out, as the much too familiar strains of the introduction were striking up.

The following day I heard that a total of forty-two masters had been used before *Downstream* finally stopped floating.

That's why I'm asking (and if you look closely you'll see that there are two different questions here): Is this a record?



Bunny
Berigan



Different from the placid, sailing fellow at the top of the page—and yet the same man. Bunny Berigan in action.

silence and the next master went into action, Bunny got going nicely; then came just one sour note, a note that was too trivially wrong to be offensive in a dance hall, where your ear would automatically condone it; yet the moment he had played it, Bunny knew that the master was wasted. He played something completely wild to indicate this, and the whole band went into general chaos. Every time a master was spoilt, the boys relieved their emo-

and petite Gail Reese, Bunny's vocalist, sat in her chair waiting for them to make a master in which they would get as far as her vocal in the second chorus. Up to now fourteen waxes had gone on the waste heap and none had gone beyond the first chorus.

"Now, just take it easy; this is going to be the one," said Bunny quite calmly for the seventh time. Alas, this augury did not help. Fifteen waxes gone. "How about going out to get some

GLOBE TROTTERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Explorer
- ★★★ Tourist
- ★★ Tripper
- ★ Tramp

HOT RECORDS REVIEWED BY "ROPHONE"

JUST ANOTHER OF 'EM!



Frank Newton, the famous coloured hot trumpet

Ace Harris And His Sunset Royal Orchestra

"Rhythm 'Bout Town"

"One Little Word Led to Another"

(***Vocalion S.152)

Stuff Smith And His Onyx Club Boys

"Here Comes The Man With The Jive"

"I've Got A Heavy Date"

(***Vocalion S.154)

Your first reaction to *Man With The Jive* may be one of revulsion (glorifying the dope peddler and all that), but assuming you are now accustomed to the fact that all Stuff's production numbers have something to do with a Certain Subject—even *Got A Heavy Date* has some unison calls of "Light up! Light up!"—you can settle down and enjoy the musical qualities, which are plentiful. Stuff's violin and the drumming of Cozy the Killer, combined with the pervading sense of humour, make *Jive* a felicitous piece of work. Jonah Jones' trumpet inevitably sounds a little sharp.

Benny Goodman And His Orchestra

"Loch Lomond" (*)

"One O'Clock Jump" (***)

(H.M.V. B.8745)

What an ill-assorted couple! *One O'Clock Jump* is the best Goodman side released for months, and *Loch Lomond* is undoubtedly the worst.

Although never particularly enamoured of the Basie composition, I have a great weakness for the blues playing of Jess Stacy and for the trombone of Vernon Brown in this Goodman version, which ranks just about level with the Basie and Harry James recordings of the number.

Willie "The Lion" Smith And His Orchestra

"Old Stamping Ground"

"Blues, Why Don't You Let Me Alone?"

(**Brunswick 02598)

Two restful tunes sung very simply by O'Neil Spencer and notable for the wonderful alto work of Pete Brown, whose style will tell you all about him, even how fat he is. What a massive, full-blooded tone! Too bad that both Frank Newton and Buster Bailey are out of tune in *Old Stamping Ground*. The Lion reduces the two tunes to their lowest common denominator so as to put his usual phrases into them. It is all rather agreeable.

Lionel Hampton And His Orchestra

"I Just Couldn't Take It Baby"

"Baby, Won't You Please Come Home?"

(**H.M.V. B.8747)

You can generally count on two qualities in a Hampton disc: typical vibrate work and a good rhythm section. They are both here, but set against them are Lionel's vocals, both of which take up one long and slow chorus. Even if Lionel weren't the worst vocalist this side of Sharkey, there would be little excuse for his applying this branch of his activities to tunes of which Jack Teagarden and the McKinney's Cotton Pickers man respectively sang the last word, and very conclusively, several years ago.

The standard of the solo work does not measure up to that set by the previous session at which Johnny Hodges was present, and in the eight bars of collective improvisation at the end of *I Just Couldn't Take It* the B flat major seventh chord results in some nasty clashes in which you can hear A, B flat and D trying to fight it out between them.

Technical tit-bit: In the second bar of Lionel Hampton's solo at the end of *Baby, Won't You*, notice the subtle effect he obtains by flattening the E over C seventh chord.

Luis Metcalf (trumpet); J. C. Higginbotham (trombone); Albert Nicholas (clarinet); Charlie Holmes (alto); Teddy Hill (tenor); Will Johnson (guitar); Paul Barbarin (drums); J. Moore (bass). For backing see Ellington. Parlophone 2523.

Smith, Stuff, and His Onyx Club Boys: (N.) (New York, Spring, 1936). *I've Got A Heavy Date*. Stuff Smith (violin and vocalist); Jonah Jones (trumpet); James Sherman (piano); Bobby Bennett (guitar); John Washington (drums); Mack Walker (bass). (Summer, 1936) *Here Comes The Man With The Jive*. As above, with Cozy Cole replacing John Washington. Vocalion S. 154.

Smith, Willie "The Lion," and His Cubs: (N.) (New York, August, 1937). *Old Stamping Ground* (vocal, O'Neil Spencer). Willie Smith (leader and piano); Frank Newton (trumpet); Buster Bailey (clarinet); Pete Brown (alto); Jimmie McLin (guitar); O'Neil Spencer (drums); John Kirby (bass). (September, 1937). *Blues, Why Don't You Let Me Alone?* As above. Brunswick 02598.

TWO-SHILLING DISCS:—

Berigan, Bunny, and His Orchestra: (New York, March, 1938). *An Old Straw Hat; Lovelight In Starlight* (vocals, Gail Reese). Bunny Berigan (leader and trumpet); Stephen Lipkins, Irving Goodman (trumpets); Al George, Sonny Lee (trombones); Mike Doty, Clyde Rounds (altos); George Auld (tenor); Joe Dixon (clarinet); Graham Forbes (piano); Tom Morgan (guitar); Dave Tough (drums); Hank Wayland (bass). H.M.V. BD.5368.

Lewis, Willie, and His Orchestra: (N.) (Paris, end of 1937). *Basin Street Blues; Swing, Brothers, Swing*. Willie Lewis (leader); Bill Coleman, Jack Butler (trumpets); Billy Burns (trombone); Joe Hayman (alto and clarinet); Big Boy Goodie (tenor); Herman Chilton (piano); John Mitchell (guitar); Ted Fields (drums); Wilson Myers (bass and arranger). Columbia FB.1955.

Scott, Mabel (Vocal), with Bob Mosley at Piano: (N.) (London, April, 1938). *Mighty Like The Blues* (Comp. Leonard Feather); *More Than That* (Comp. Clarence Williams). Parlophone F.1125.

Stone, Lew, and His Orchestra: (London, April, 1938). *Dinner and Dance; An Amazon Goes A-Wooling*. Lew Stone (leader); Alfie Noakes, Arthur Mouncey (trumpets); Lew Davis, Paul Fenoulhet (trombones); Joe Crossman, Bill Apps (altos); George Evans, Ernest Ritte (tenors); Bobby McGee (piano); Ivor Mairants (guitar); Jock Jacobsen (drums); Arthur Maden (bass). Decca F.6679.

Waller, Fats, and His Rhythm: (N.) (New York, February, 1938). *I Love To Whistle; Am I In Another World?* Fats Waller (piano and vocals); Herman Autrey (trumpet); Eugene Sedric (tenor and clarinet); Albert Casey (guitar); Slick Jones (drums); Cedric Wallace (bass). H.M.V. BD.5360.

ONE-AND-SIXPENNY DISCS:—

Pollack, Ben, and His Orchestra: *Have You Ever Been In Heaven? Mama, I Wanna Make Rhythm*. Panachord 25976.

Robertson, Dick, and His Orchestra: (New York, Spring, 1938). *Somebody's Thinking Of You To-Night* (vocal, Dick Robertson). Bobby Hackett, Ralph Muzzillo (trumpets); Al Philburn (trombone); Don Watt (clarinet); Frank Signorelli (piano); Dave Barbour (guitar); Stan King (drums); Haig Stephens (bass). *Goodnight, Angel* (vocal, Dick Robertson). John McGee, Ralph Muzzillo (trumpets); Jack Teagarden (trombone); Tony Zimmers (clarinet); Frank Froeba (piano); Dave Barbour (guitar); Sam Weiss (drums); Haig Stephens (bass). Panachord 25977.

Complete Guide to Personnels of JUNE RECORD RELEASES

THREE-SHILLING DISCS:—

Armstrong, Lil, and Her Orchestra: (N.) (New York, March, 1938). *Out Let's Get Happy Together; Happy Today, Sad To-morrow* (vocals, Lil Armstrong). (Ralph Muzzillo, Johnny McGee (trumpets); Al Philburn (trombone); Tony Zimmers (tenor); Frank Froeba (piano); Dave Barbour (guitar); Sammy Weiss (drums); Haig Stephens (bass). Brunswick 02597.

Basie, Count, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, February, 1938). *Out The Window; Ev'ry Tub*. Count Basie (leader and piano); Ed Lewis, Bobby Hicks, Buck Clayton (trumpets); George Hunt, Dan Minor, Eddie Durham (trombones); Earl Warren, Jack Washington (altos); Lester Young, Hershel Evans (tenors); Freddy Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Page (bass). Brunswick 02595.

Carroll, Eddie, and his Swingphonic Orchestra: (London, March, 1938). *Creole Love Call; Dinner And Dance*. For personnel see Guide for January 1, Parlophone R.2522.

Dorsey, Tommy, and His Orchestra: (New York, November, 1937). *Little White Lies*. For personnel see Guide for January 1, with Emil Hagen replacing Walter Mercurio on trombone. Dorsey, Tommy, and his Clambake Seven: (New York, October, 1937). *Tears In My Heart* (vocal, Edythe Wright). Tommy Dorsey (leader and trombone); Pee Wee Erwin (trumpet); Bud Freeman (tenor); Johnny Mince (clarinet); Howard Smith (piano); Carmen Mastren (guitar); Dave Tough (drums); Gene Traxler (bass). H.M.V. B.8746.

Ellington, Duke, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, 1928). *Jubilee Stomp*. Duke Ellington (leader and piano); Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf, Arthur Whetsel (trumpets); "Tricky Sam" Nanton (trombone); Barney Bigard (clarinet); Otto Hardwick (clarinet and alto); Harry Carney (baritone and alto); Fred Guy (banjo); Sonny Greer (drums); Wellman Braud (bass). For backing see Russell. Parlophone R.2523.

Foursome, The (Vocal Quartet): (Los Angeles, November, 1937). *My Honey's Lovin' Arms; Blue*. Accompanied by Perry Botkin's Quartet. Brunswick 02594.

Goodman, Benny, and His Orchestra: (New York, January, 1938). *One O'Clock Jump* (comp. and arranged by Count Basie); (October, 1937) *Loch Lomond* (Arr. Claude Thornhill; vocal, Martha Tilton). For personnel see Guide for December, 1937. H.M.V. B.8745.

Hampton, Lionel, and His Orchestra: (Mixed) (New York, September, 1937). *I Just Couldn't Take It Baby; Baby, Won't You Please Come Home?* Lionel Hampton (vibraphone and vocals); Ziggy Elman (trumpet); Vido Musso (clarinet); Arthur Rollini (tenor); Jess Stacy (piano); Alan Reuss (guitar); Cozy Cole (drums); John Miller (bass). H.M.V. B.3747.

Harris, Ace, and His Sunset Royal Orchestra: (N.) (New York, November, 1938). *Rhythm 'Bout Town; One Little Word Led To Another*. Vocalion S.152.

Hayes, Edgar, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, March, 1938). *Sophisticated Swing*; (February, 1938) *Fugitive From A Harem* (vocal, James Clay Anderson). Edgar Hayes (leader and piano); Bernard Flood, Leonard Davis, Henry Goodwin (trumpets); Clyde Barnhart, R. H. Horton, David James (trombones); Rudy Powell (alto and clarinet); Roger Boyd, William Mitchner (altos); Joe Garland (tenor); Eddie Gibbs (guitar); Kenneth Clark (drums); Frank Darling (bass). Brunswick 02596.

Holiday, Billie (Vocal) and Her Orchestra: (N. except Claude Thornhill) (New York, September, 1937).

RECORD TUITION

RECORD OF THE WEEK.

Recommended to all musicians, irrespective of whether their particular instrument is featured:—

"Blues In The Dark" by Count Basie and His Orchestra (Brunswick 02581).

Tenor (Lester Young)
Trumpet (Buck Clayton)
Trombone (Section)
Bass (W. Paige)
Drums (Joe Jones)
Singing (James Rushing)
Swing Ensemble

Tenor (Prince Robinson)
Clarinet (Buster Bailey)
Piano (James Sherman)
Bass (William Braud)
Let's Call It Lone and You Mean So Much To Me by Lil Armstrong's Orchestra (Brunswick 02578)

Guitar (Frank Victor)
Vibraphone (Adrian Rollini)
True Confession and You're A Sweetheart by Adrian Rollini Quintet (Brunswick 02579)

Tenor (Eddie Miller)
Clarinet (Artie Shaw)
Drums (Ray Bauduc)
Swing Ensemble
Free For All by Artie Shaw's Orchestra (Vocalion S140)

He's Funny That Way. Buck Clayton (trumpet); Lester Young (tenor); Buster Bailey (clarinet); Claude Thornhill (piano); Freddy Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Page (bass). (January, 1938) *Now They Call It Swing*. As above, with Benny Morton (trombone) replacing Buster Bailey, and Teddy Wilson replacing Claude Thornhill. Vocalion S.153.

James, Harry, and His Orchestra: (Mixed) (New York, December, 1937). *I Can Dream, Can't I?* (vocal, Helen Humes). Harry James (leader and trumpet); Buck Clayton (trumpet); Eddie Durham (trombone); Earl Warren, Jack Washington (altos); Hershel Evans (tenor); Jess Stacy (piano); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Page (bass). (January, 1938) *It's The Dreamer In Me* (vocal, Helen Humes). As above, with Vernon Brown replacing Eddie Durham. Vocalion S.155.

Mondello, Toots, and His Orchestra: (New York, March, 1938). *At Sundown; I'll See You In My Dreams*. Toots Mondello (leader and alto); Charlie Margulis, Russ Case (trumpets); Wilbur Schwichtenburg, Jack Jenny (trombones); Arnold Brillhart, Ernie White (altos); Harry Wade, Frank Ross (tenors); Claude Thornhill (piano); Larry Hall (guitar); Sam Weiss (drums); Delman Kaplan (bass). Vocalion S.151.

Norvo, Red, and His Orchestra: (New York, February, 1938). *Always And Always* (vocal, Mildred Bailey). (March, 1938) *Please Be Kind* (vocal, Mildred Bailey). For personnel see Guide for mid-April. Vocalion S.156.

Russell, Luis, and His Orchestra: (N.) (New York, 1929). *Savoy Shout*. Luis Russell (piano and leader);

Weather Forecast & News

NEVER THE TWAIN SHALL MEET?

THOSE of you whose Shavian musical inclinations are powerful enough to warrant your searching for Artie Shaw on W2XE each Wednesday at 5 a.m. or Saturday at 11.30, may have noticed that in the last few broadcasts another girl singer has been employed in addition to Billie Holiday.

This queer situation, the presence of two girl singers in one band, has resulted from the pressure put upon Artie since he ventured to engage his favourite singer as a featured artist with his band, ignoring the complaints that Billie's colour and her style would not be acceptable to audiences.

The difficulties are deeper than that. Song pluggers have been telling Artie that he needs a singer who will do commercial songs and cater to the melody. Billie's commitment of their stuff doesn't

suit them, because it doesn't help them to sell sheet music. So between these pluggers and a manager who also considered Miss Holiday "too artistic," this harassed band-leader had to consent to take on a white girl to grind out the pop songs.

Having heard Billie in person when she made her debut in this band (thoroughly well liked by the white audience who came to hear her), I am more than suspicious of the intrigues, whispering campaigns and alien influences that are mixed up in every case of colour-mingling in jazz. You can't imagine what opposition Benny Goodman has had to fight; and the recent news of Jimmy Dorsey's dismissal of his coloured singer, June Richmond, has another story of prejudice behind it.

That is why it is reaching for a millennium to expect that a real mixed-colour orchestra such as Mezz tried to organise last December will ever conquer America during our jazz lifetime. Even Nick's in Greenwich Village, a true swing haunt if ever there was one,

Billie Holiday ... because of her colour ... is being denied the full scope of her talents. The Colour Bar is still up.



was the scene of a disagreement a week or two back when it was proposed to include Zutty, that grand old-timer and buddy of Armstrong's, in Bobby Hackett's band. It seems that Red McKenzie, who is a very race-proud Irishman, wouldn't hear of singing with the group any longer if such a change were made; and Nick, an Italian-American who runs the spot, felt the same way about it. Result: Zutty is still in the ranks of the unemployed, and Hackett has a mediocre white drummer.

Chicagoans, sit up and take notice. A new batch of recordings by the Commodore Music Shop has been made on similar lines to those mentioned here a couple of months back, and although I haven't received copies yet, it is safe to assume from the personels that they will be just as genuine connoisseurs' pieces as the previous set.

With Jack Teagarden taking his foot out of the Whiteman grave long enough to jam in among some old

pals, you can hear him singing playing in a twelve-incher, *See To A Shylock*, backed by *Embra You*, under the name of Eddie Don's Windy City Seven.

The same gang plays on a ten-Diane and *Meet Me Tonight Dreamland*, and the Freeman Wettling trio come to life again pairings: *At Sundown* and *Keeping At Trouble*, *My Honey's Arms* and *I Don't Believe It*.

Finally, there are two solo Stacy, which should be of pa interest to those whose curios aroused by his picture on the of this month's *Rhythm*. The ti *Ramblin'* and *Complainin'*.

Leonard Feather
3510 Wrightwood Drive
North Hollywood, Cal.

Hot Records Reviewed, by "ROPHONE"

BASIE'S ★ ★ ★ ★ GEM

Backing "No Piece Of Paste"

DEEP SEA FISHERMEN'S GUIDE

- ★★★★ Whale
- ★★★ Tuna
- ★★ Cod
- ★ Sprat

Count Basie and his Orchestra.

"Every Tub."

"Out The Window."

(***Brunswick 02595.)

UNHESITATINGLY a four-star record, of the type of music Englishmen would be afraid to write and even more afraid to play. Seldom have I heard a more completely uninhibited, galvanisingly spirited performance as *Every Tub*, and if this Basie composition is a gem, the Durham opus on the other side is no piece of paste either.

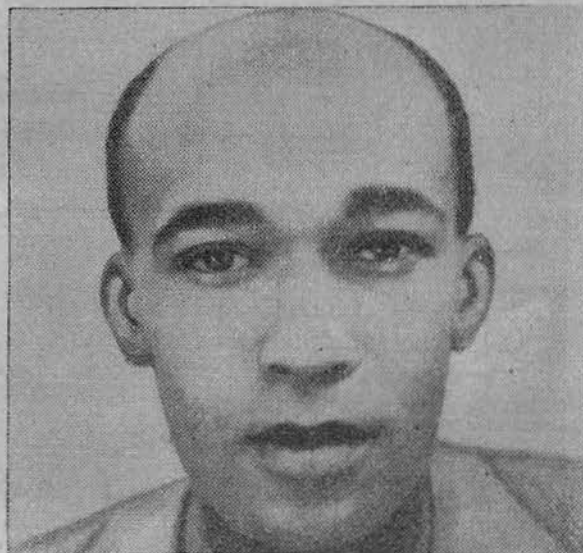
Either this sort of jazz will sweep you away with its ardour or else give you earache. I am happy to belong to the former fraternity. I am quite satisfied, too, to accept the slightly Christopher Columbian riffing towards the end of *Every Tub*, for it is played as if the phrase had been newly invented.

There is no vocal chorus and no tune on either side; merely an abundance of breath-taking solos

on brilliant backgrounds. There is such a welter of opportunities for technical tit-bits that once I get going, that old devil Pressure On Space will soon stop me. At random, take the hand-over-bell effects of the brass section behind the tenor in the first chorus of *Every Tub* (short for a Harlem phrase "Every tub sits on its own bottom," viz., every man for himself); the increasingly fascinating effect Basie produces by treating his piano as a xylophone, and mixing his Wilson and his Waller in a series of familiar but cunningly renovated phrases.

Notice also the solid impression made in the last chorus of *Out The Window* on bars 1-4 and 9-12, where the accents come right down on the beats without the expected syncopation; a striking study in contrast with the highly rhythmic contortions that precede and follow this passage.

It seems almost a crime to be analytical about music of this kind, where the reaction is primarily the sheer physical sensation of being "sent." But I think by now you've got my point that this is a platter that matters.



Herman Chitison, French piano-player extraordinary

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.

"I Love To Whistle."

"Am I In Another World?"

(**H.M.V. BD5360.)

Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra.

"An Old Straw Hat."

"Lovelight In Starlight."

(**H.M.V. BD5368.)

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.

"Little White Lies."

Tommy Dorsey and his Clambake

Seven.

"Tears In My Heart."

(**H.M.V. B8746.)

All commercial, the only distinction being that the last coupling costs an extra shilling. Fats reintroduces the plectrist who was concerned in the problem of why Hawaiians sang aloha on a previous issue. The Berigans have vocals by Gail Reese.

There is very little of the doughy heat of a clambakery in *Tears In My Heart*, which is a subaueed affair with an Edythe Wright vocal. The other side is ordinary, with no honourable mention for Tommy's slightly corny solo and Bud Freeman's unusually gutless chorus.

Willie Lewis and his Orchestra.

"Basin Street Blues."

"Swing Brothers, Swing."

(*Columbia FB1955.)

Very disappointing. Nothing of Chitison or Big Boy Goodie, and only a short passage by Bill Coleman on the second side. Rest is mediocre ensemble, with doubtful intonation, plus copious singing on both sides by Willie Lewis, whose amusingly old-fashioned style sounds like something out of a Kentucky Minstrels' show, and corresponds neatly with the average elderly white man's idea of the average coloured man.

Lew Stone And His Orchestra

"Dinner and Dance"

"An Amazon Goes A-Wooing"

(**Decca F.6679)

The notable part about compositions like this is that they give any competent band the chance to cover its personal characteristics so as to sound exactly like any other band playing the same two tunes. *Dinner and Dance* works up to a wonderful rehash of some phrases borrowed from *Sugar Foot Stomp*. It's all too, too original.

Eddie Carroll And His Swingphonic

Orchestra

"Dinner and Dance"

"Creole Love Call"

(*Parlophone R.2522)

I am getting sick and tired of complaining that this band is being wasted on poor material. *Creole Love Call* is music for, with, by and from Ellington alone.

upper, Renee Gu...
did silver, gold...
tips, low pitch...
other in...
set bar...

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

SWINGTIME is icumen in. The news of the SBBC's plans for an American dance-band relay in the National programme each Saturday from 10.30 to 11.0 will evoke a chorus of gratitude from jazz connoisseurs. They should take heed, however, that some of the programmes will subscribe to the more docile influences in jazz, and that we are likely to hear Guy Lombardò and others of his type as a concession to those who are not yet fully prepared to appreciate the art of Ellington, Norvo, and Goodman.

These three swing bands are all on the list of possible subjects for the series, as well as other swing notabilities such as Artie Shaw, Gene Krupa, Count Basie, Jimmie Lunceford, Bobby Hackett and his Jam Band, and Paul Whiteman, featuring the contingent known as Jack Teagarden and his Swing Wing.

You can take it from Leslie Perowne and me that we shall all be tuning in as a Saturday-night habit from July 9 onwards.

* * * *

Two record recitals next week promise to be of particular interest. One is another 'Battle of the Bands', concocted ingeniously by Stan Patchett to depict an imaginary contest between the orchestras of Duke Ellington and Bob Crosby. This will be heard on Wednesday at 6.0, while on Friday afternoon Eric Child, who is better known as 'Disc-Course', the record reviewer of a musical monthly, will present 'At Home and Abroad', featuring such artists as Joe Venuti, Benny Carter, Coleman Hawkins, and Spike Hughes.

* * * *

Judy Shirley, whose fame came rapidly with her change of status from ordinary dance-band vocalist to singing commère in 'Monday Night at Seven', was heard in all but one of the forty-eight shows in this series. She never arrived late and never missed a cue.

* * * *

The ill-fated 'Hickory House' programme featuring Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans is scheduled again, this time for the National wavelength on Friday, June 24.

Let us hope it will be a case of 'third time lucky'. The original broadcast had to be cut off owing to poor reception; then a recorded transcription of the performance in March had to make way at the last minute for a talk on the Anschluss crisis. Unless Broadcasting House is the victim of a Guy Fawkes plot, you are likely to hear Marsala next week.



JOE
MARSALA

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE news that Benny Goodman is arriving in London on July 18 for a nine-day visit has caused a minor flutter amongst the fans. The clarinet king plans to devote his time purely to a holiday from the exhausting business of earning £2,000 a week. But in spite of his request that the trip shall not be attended by too



Bill Ternent

much publicity he will doubtless be besieged by rhythm clubs, pressmen, instrument manufacturers, and other would-be endorsees.

The deadlock which has existed for years between the British and American Musicians' Unions, preventing the bands of these two countries from working in one another's territories, shows no signs of being lifted. Curiously enough, Goodman was definitely set, just before the ban became effective, to visit this country with an all-star white-and-coloured band including Benny Carter, Teddy Wilson, Jack Teagarden, and other jazz celebrities. At that time his band-leading career was in the embryonic stage and he would have accepted £35 a week for the tour. Unfortunately the project fell through.

* * * *

The permit situation does not affect interchange with Continental bands. I understand that the next broadcast by the quintet of the Hot Club de France, on Saturday, July 2, will be given from a London studio as the noted string swingsters are planning to cross the Channel for a second visit.

Another Continental band, Teddy Petersen and his Orchestra, from Copenhagen, a well-known Danish combination, will be heard in the Regional programme on Monday.

Men Behind the Bands

(9) BILL TERNENT

Bill Ternent, the man behind Jack Hylton's Band, is a Newcastle man, who claims to be able to play any instrument. (I haven't asked him about the bagpipes.) He won a five-pound prize for playing twenty different instruments when 'Vasco the Mad Musician', who did this feat on the stage, was appearing in a South Shields theatre.

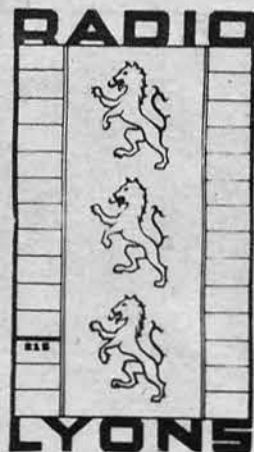
Like many of the arrangers in this series, he has done some of his best work at the most outrageous times and in the most awkward places. One of them was started in a train going from Budapest to Berlin. He put the finishing touches to it in the car on the way to a Berlin recording studio; the number was rehearsed once, recorded, and became one of Hylton's best-selling discs. He has also written in aeroplanes, noisy hotel bedrooms, and boats.

Sub-leader of the band and captain of the Hylton football team, he has travelled throughout Europe and America with Jack and can deputise for any member of the band at a moment's notice.

In a week or two you will hear Ternent on the air, leading a ten-piece unit of his own with an unusual combination—trumpet, three tenor saxes, three violins, and rhythm-playing in a style somewhere between Shep Fields and Eddy Duchin.

Radio Lyons Calling!

215 metres



It's All Accordion!

HERE'S a piece of information that may surprise you. Did you know that the piano-accordion is the most increasingly popular musical instrument in Great Britain? That we are second only to America in the number of accordionists? And that there is a British College of Accordionists, to say nothing of six hundred clubs all over the country, formed with the object of getting together accordion bands?

These figures are revealed in connection with an interesting new programme to be aired from Radio Lyons next Wednesday, June 29, at 10.15 p.m., featuring Phil Green, one of the leading broadcasters and recorders on this instrument. The Selmer instrument company, who are presenting this programme, report that women and children, too, are helping to make the country accordion-conscious. It's the easiest instrument to learn, and a fine way of entertaining your friends.

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 29

10.0 p.m. Dance Music
Your favourite dance orchestras bring tunes of yesterday and the modern popular melodies of to-day.

10.15 p.m. SELMER'S SERENADE
Featuring Phil Green and his Accordion. Compered by Leonard Feather. Presented by Selmer.

FRIDAY NATIONAL

JULY 1, 1938

DROITWICH 200 kc/s, 1500 m. LONDON, AND NORTH 1149 kc/s, 261.1 m. For Scottish National see page 2

4.0 'COTTON CLUB PARADE'

The famous Cotton Club started in Harlem and later moved to the White district. Many world-famous stars made their first appearance there, such as Florence Mills, Josephine Baker, Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway. This afternoon Leonard Feather will describe, with the help of gramophone records, some of the phases in the history of the Club.

MELODY MAKER. 25.6.38

SELMER GO ON THE AIR

IT has frequently been a matter of speculation that the musical instrument trade of this country has not employed commercial broadcasting for the propagation of their industry.

All sorts of manufacturers use time on the commercial transmitters abroad to advertise their wares, but surely none could do so more logically or effectively than a business dealing in musical instruments.

It is left to Selmer Ltd., to realise this self-evident truth, and the firm will therefore make history when, between 10.15 and 10.30 p.m. next Wednesday, from Radio Lyons, a programme called "Selmer Serenade" will be broadcast.

This will principally feature Phil Green, the accordion virtuoso, in a demonstration of accordion music designed to convince the general public that it is the ideal home instrument of to-day.

Phil Green is so magnificent a performer that squeeze-boxers will eagerly tune in to Radio Lyons for this novel occasion.

M.M. 25.6.38

Friday (July 1), 4.00 to 4.30 p.m. (Nat.). — "Cotton Club Parade," a gramophone production by Leonard Feather.

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

NEVER RAINS BUT IT POURS



Red Norvo—Mildred Bailey's matrimonial and musical partner.

Bob Crosby And His Orchestra.
 "Dogtown Blues."
 "South Rampart Street Parade."
 (****Decca K 876.)

Mildred Bailey And Her Orchestra.
 "I Can't Face The Music."
 "Don't Be That Way."
 (****Vocalion S 157.)

Slim And Slam (Guitar and Bass).
 "Flat Fleet Floggee." (****)
 "Chinatown, My Chinatown." (**)
 (Vocalion S 158.)

IT never rains but it pours! After several weeks almost entirely bereft of four star discs, along comes a whole crop of stuff that must unquestionably fall into that category. Your consolation, if you indulge in the orgy of spending recommended above, should be that it'll probably be a long time before anything like this happens again.

If white jazz is to become an entity, let the Crosby Band formulate it. Unlike the school which does it best to assimilate the styles of Harlem, this combination plays music which, even with its authentic New Orleans touch, has something different, something which it owes to no coloured trend.

The blues, which combines odd spots of four and eight bar phrases with the usual twelve bar passages, has more originality than anything the other white bands have done since don't ask me when. The Parade, without quite degenerating into cheap programme music, succeeds in creating the Louisiana street march atmosphere at which even Louis failed in his *High Society* years ago. (By the way, *High Society* pretty nearly creeps into this Haggart-Bauduc opus at times.) This is one of those rare instances where you won't regret having spent four bob on a record.

Technical tit-bit: Observe the chorus in the blues built on this phrase:—

Ex. 1



The use of the major third is one trait that identifies this as white music. No coloured arranger would have written this phrase without flattening the D. Hell, no coloured band would have played the phrase at all anyway. Which reflects no credit or discredit on either race. It's just an interesting point.

Mildred Bailey's loveliest record for a long, long time is *I Can't Face The Music (Without Singin' The Blues)*. A grand tune (even the lyrics are acceptable) with a brilliant treatment by Eddie Sauter, played by Norvo's band, and sung with more warmth and sympathy than you would think could be jammed into ten inches of wax. *Don't Be That Way* is so purely an instrumental number that Mildred can get an extra bow for handling the

almost unsingable melody with lyrics that have lately been added to Edgar Sampson's old tune.

Now in re Slim and Slam, either you're going to go plain nuts about the first side or accuse me of being nuts for recommending it. Suffice it that this number made Slim and Slam the rage of Harlem, that the two bar riff on which it is founded has now become a fully-fledged composition played by all the big bands. There's no sense to it, but on what method in the madness! It hardly sounds feasible that such a fascinating, swinging performance could be made out of this:—

The flat fleet floggie with the floy floy.

The flat fleet floggie with the floy floy.

The flat fleet floggie with the floy floy.

A floy-joy, a floy-joy, a floy-joy, a floy-joy!

—but wait until you've heard it!

Danny Polo And His Swing Stars.
 "Jazz Me Blues."
 "If You Were The Only Girl In The World."
 (***Decca F 6615.)

Chief surprise is the excellent guitar chorus by Norman (Mills Bros.) Brown in *Jazz Me*. Chisholm, who has a characteristically inspired solo on this side, takes the whole first chorus, muted in, *If You Were*; it's a grand solo, but there is altogether too much rhythm sectional rumbling which almost drowns him.

Danny's two choruses at the end of *Jazz Me* are a treat. *Technical tit-bit:* Note the contrast effect here: the first chorus in Chalumeau register with organ harmonies, and the second in high register with a very rhythmic figure background.

Chick Webb And His Orchestra.
 "I'll Chase The Blues Away."
 "Moonlight And Magnolias."
 (**Bruns. 02602.)

Both oldish. There is some excuse for unearthing the first title, which at least has nice Fitzgerald and Taft Jordan and a Sampson score; but why at this late date excavate the magnolias, with Charles Linton, Chick's tender-throated tenor, articulating silly words in a spineless way?

Jimmie Lunceford And His Orchestra.
 "Chillun Get Up."
 "Because You're You."
 (**Bruns. 02601.)

Each with rather insipid vocals. Eight bars of swell Willie Smith alto in *Because*. Other side is a very half-hearted semi-spiritual, waxed once before during the band's H.M.V. era. Why on earth was this pairing unearthed from the 1935 files?

Milt Herth, Willie Smith, O'Neil Spencer.
 "Sissy."
 "Popcorn Man."
 (*Bruns. 02600.)

The roundabouts-and-swings tone colour helps to mitigate the corn of Mr. Herth's organ, but there's not nearly enough of the Lion on these two sides, and Mr. Spencer sings out of tune.

I owe everybody an apology for dismissing too hastily the previous

CRIMINALS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Killer
- ★★★ Kidnapper
- ★★ Footpad
- ★ Fence

coupling by this trio. After my review, I found *The Campbells Are Swingin'* an increasingly (if oddly) attractive noise.

Dick Robertson And His Orchestra.
 "Oh Ma-Ma!"
Jimmy Dorsey And His Orchestra.
 "Two Bouquets."
 (*Decca F 6692.)

I only mention this in case, on the evidence of other recent Robertsons, you might have expected to find some hidden talent here. You won't. And the Dorsey side is just commercial, with spots.

Harry James And His Orchestra
 "It's The Dreamer In Me" (***)
 "I Can Dream, Can't I?" (**)
 (Vocalion S.155)

Talking about sharp trumpet players, Harry James is inclined just a very little that way in the first of these two sides, wherein he plays around with a very elegant tune written by Jimmy Dorsey, before modulating somewhat clumsily to step back for Helen Humes' charming vocal chorus. *Can't I* is okay within the confines of the tune, and, believe me, confines they are.

The Andrews Sisters.
 "Shortenin' Bread."

"Oooh Boom!"
 (***Brunswick 02582.)

These girls must be good if they can make me tolerate a piece of idiocy as consummate as Mike Riley's *Oooh Boom!* They know how to sing in tune, how to work exciting effects with unison (listen to that second chorus!) and they have just the sort of accompaniment I was suggesting above for Mabel Scott.

A sort of combination hilly-billy-boogie-woogie makes *Shortenin' Bread* even more attractive. If these damsels don't record too often they will continue to have good sales, and to please this pair of ears.

Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra.
 "Fugitive From A Harem."
 "Sophisticated Swing."
 (**Brunswick 02596.)

"Greeny" Hayes has a good band which should not be wasted on such phony Turkish tapestry as *Fugitive From A Harem*. Hats off to the tenor and trumpet for getting the Oriental odour out of their nostrils long enough to turn in good solos.

Sophisticated Swing, in spite of its coy title, is one of Will Hudson's less offensive compositions. Played from the commercial orchestration, this is a pleasant but slightly lethargic performance.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE series of weekly American dance-band relays will start next Saturday with the music of a very advanced master of the cult of swing music, William 'Count' Basie.

Before a band can reach the front rank in America, it generally needs to raid and conquer New York. Formed a couple of years ago in Kansas City, the Basie orchestra survived a long spell in a smoky and obscure night club there before the advent of a young millionaire's-son jazz-patron gave it the 'break' of an engagement in New York City.



'Count' Basie

Since then the band has enlarged to thirteen pieces. Its musical style is in the vein that might be regarded by the less initiated listener as 'all rhythm and no melody', though it would be nearer the mark to say that rhythm motivates and controls the melody, and that the improvised solos for which the arrangements leave considerable space have so much melody that at first it is difficult to see the wood for the trees.

* * * *

Benny Goodman, who goes to hear Basie on every possible occasion, has confessed his admiration for the ensemble and wishes his own band could play like that.

Basie, a stocky figure with big hands, sits pounding away without betraying any outward emotion, and uses the piano rather in the style of a xylophone. He also contributes most of the band's orchestrations. Soloists are Buck Clayton and Bobby Hicks, trumpets; Lester Young, tenor sax and clarinet; Herschel Evans, tenor sax. A prodigious rhythm emanates from the drummer, one Jonathan Jones.

* * * *

One of the veterans of British broadcast dance music comes back on the air next Saturday. Since his last broadcast some three years ago, Alfredo has been touring the music-halls, playing at Ideal Home Exhibitions and radio fairs. He is in his forties, still plays the violin and leads a large orchestra similar to that which has been with him during the majority of his twenty-four years in this country. Born in Newark, New Jersey, of Irish-American parentage, he changed his name to Alfredo to get the Continental touch. His old friend Archie de Bear will compeere the broadcast.

Ten Years Ago in Jazz

Jack Payne has left the Hotel Cecil and is leading the BBC Dance Orchestra, with an arranging staff that includes Ray Noble.... Jay Wilbur, at the Tricity Restaurant, has a guitarist, banjoist, and cellist all named Bram Martin.... Peter Yorke is in Percival Mackey's theatre pit band.... Jack Smith, the whispering baritone, is touring England.... Teddy Brown's band has just left the Café de Paris.... the ukulele is still fashionable.... and the bands are playing the new Show Boat hits, 'Ol' Man River' and 'Can't Help Lovin' dat Man'; also 'Constantinople', 'Ramona', 'That's My Weakness Now'; and two numbers called 'Rosalie' and 'Let Yourself Go', not connected with recent tunes of the same names—proving that there's no copyright in titles!

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE success of a band-leader should be commensurate with his ambitions and with the wisdom of his musical policy. In view of this, it is certainly to be hoped that Ken Johnson is headed for big things since he has gone to unusual trouble to ensure an interesting programme next Friday.



KEN JOHNSON
(Next Friday)

British band, and the effect of this venture will be worth studying.

Secondly, Johnson expects to enlarge the band to thirteen pieces for the occasion by adding Bertie King, the Jamaican tenor sax man; Leslie Hutchinson (no relation to 'Hutch') on first trumpet; and a second trombonist.

* * * *

From the roof of the Astor Hotel, several hundred feet above the bustle of Times Square, New York City, Hal Kemp and his Orchestra will provide the Saturday-night half-hour of dance music next week.

Although the word 'swing' is a current catchphrase which may therefore slip into the announcements, don't be confused into thinking that this is anything but an essentially sweet band; in fact, a recent American popularity poll revealed it as nearly twice as popular as any other orchestra in this category.

HAL KEMP
and his
Orchestra
Next Saturday

Kemp may thus be called the complement to Goodman in American dance music.

The band relies chiefly on simplicity for the effectiveness of its orchestrations, and has therefore been widely imitated. The chief vocalists are Judy Starr and Bob Allen, who look as if they have just stepped out of a Hollywood romance; and comedy vocals are supplied by the round and genial saxophonist, Saxie Dowell.

Men Behind the Bands

(10) PHIL CARDEW

To conclude this series of sketches, here is one case of a man behind the band in which there is also a band behind the man. Although Phil Cardew writes orchestrations for Geraldo, he was personally in charge of the Band Waggon, and will be on the air again Monday, in a selection of all his own arrangements from previous programmes in the series. Cardew, whose biography appeared in this column in February, wrote the 'Musical Comedy Switch' and 'Waltz Medley' items for Henry Hall. His hardest job for Geraldo was the recent non-stop-selection programme for which he had to work for five days uninterrupted at a rate of nine-minutes' worth of selection per day. Favourite own jobs for Geraldo: 'In the Still of the Night', 'A Pretty Girl is like a Melody'. Favourite working hours, 10 p.m. to 4 a.m.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

JUST a year ago this week the BBC Dance Orchestra disbanded, and Henry Hall started to organise the combination with which, in a tour of the country's music-halls, he has established himself firmly in the visual entertainment world.

Despite the continual moving and the infrequent visits to London (every six weeks or so) Henry Hall says that he is enjoying the life tremendously. It is the first time he has been on tour since 1920, when he played trumpet, concertina, and piano with a three-piece musical novelty act.

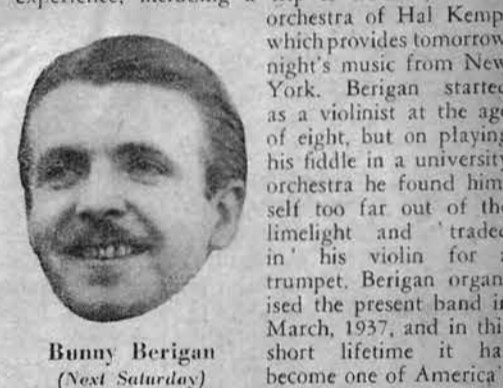
Having completed the round of the principal towns, he is embarking on a second similar tour. He will be broadcasting about twice a month.

* * * *

Bert Read, who was familiar to listeners as featured pianist and arranger with Henry Hall for two years, has made a surprise return to radio prominence by rejoining Ambrose's Orchestra, in which he replaces Bert Barnes. This marks the renewal of an old association, Read having worked with Ambrose for a long period which ended in 1935.

* * * *

Interesting to note in connection with Bunny Berigan, whose orchestra provides next Saturday night's transatlantic relay, that he earned much experience, including a trip to London, in the orchestra of Hal Kemp, which provides tomorrow night's music from New York.



Bunny Berigan
(Next Saturday)

George Auld, tenor saxophone, and Joe Dixon, clarinet, are among the featured soloists.

* * * *

Berigan being considered by some critics as the modern counterpart of Leon 'Bix' Beiderbecke, who died in 1931, I am reminded of 'Young Man With A Horn', a new novel which derived its inspiration from the brief career of that noted jazz trumpet player.

Since this is the first work of fiction to treat jazz as its central theme, and since it succeeds in this object extraordinarily well, the book provides absorbing reading for anyone wishing to understand a little more of the environment in which jazz stars live and come to love their music. This story of an artistic temperament and the efforts to fit it into a colourful life is the work of Dorothy Baker, thirty-year-old wife of a Harvard English teacher. The book is published by Gollancz at 7s. 6d.

* * * *

Lew Stone, who has broadcast only once in the last year, has assembled a new band to play at one of the big holiday camps. This group will be heard next Friday on National from 8 to 8.50. Joe Crossman, Lew Davis, and other old Stone-wallers are back with him.

"ROPHONE" AND SID PHILLIPS

Sid Phillips has pointed out, and quite rightly, that in my review of two recordings of his "Dinner and Dance," in the June 18 issue, there were a couple of misleading statements. In describing the "rehashing" of some phrases from "Sugar Foot Stomp," I was not attempting to make the slightest suggestion of plagiarism, and, since I find on a further hearing that the resemblance is only superficial and not to be compared with, for instance, "Nittwit Serenade," in which whole choruses correspond almost exactly with "Sugar Foot Stomp," the question does not arise anyway.

Also the description "laughable if it were not so grotesque" might have been construed as referring to the composition rather than the interpretation.

My sincere apologies to Sid for any misunderstandings that may have arisen through my trying to cramp too many unamplified assertions into a limited space.

—"ROPHONE."



UNA MAE CARLISLE with (l. to r.) Bertie King, Hymie Schneider, Len Feather, David Wilkins, Alan Ferguson and Len Harrison.

Recent Radio Reported

by - - - - - "Detector"

apart from the usual Wednesday night "Swing Time" the only swing feature we had was Leonard Feather's "Cotton Club Parade."

Returning to England, we come to: ****"Cotton Club Parade," arranged and presented by Leonard Feather—Friday, July 1, (4.00 to 4.40 p.m., Nat.), from Broadcasting House, London. (Received on a Murphy A40C.)

Records: When My Sugar Walks Down The Street—Aileen Stanley

MELODY
MAKER
JULY
9

(Bruns. 01722); Black Bottom—Johnny Hamp's Kentucky Serenaders (H.M.V. B5173); Lindy Hop—Ellington (H.M.V. B6355); Truckin'—Ellington (Bruns. 02080); Doin' The Suzi-Q—Lil Armstrong (Bruns. 02372); Peekin'—Ben Pollack (Variety VA556+); The Skronch—Ellington (Am. Bruns. 8093+); Cotton Club Stomp—Ellington (Victor 38079+); Minnie The Moocher—Calloway (Bruns. 01339); Stormy Weather—Ellington (Bruns. 01527); Happy As The Day Is Long—Ellington (Voc. S.84); Si j'étais blanche—Josephine Baker (Col. DB1175); Porgy—Ethel Waters (Bruns. 01522); Wrap Your Cares In Rhythm—Nicholas Brothers (Bruns. 02588); Doin' The New Lowdown—Bill Robinson (Bruns. 01521); If You Were In My Place—Johnny Hodges' Orchestra (Am. Voc. V4046+); Swing Time In Honolulu—Ellington (Am. Bruns. 8131+); I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart—J. Hodges' Orchestra (Am. Voc. V4046+); Carnival In Carolina—Cooty Williams' Rug Cutters (Am. Voc. V4061+).

†Unobtainable in England.

In many ways this made up for all the other swing programmes we didn't get from the B.B.C.

Young Leonard not only knows his subject, he knows also how to deal with it on the air.

Cotton Club's Cabaret Creations

He hadn't got past his second record before he arrived at his first interesting fact. It dealt with the dances for which the Cotton Club floor shows have been responsible, and I confess it was news to me to hear that the

Black Bottom, Lindy Hop, Truckin', Suzi-Q, Peekin' and the Skronch were all originally created as cabaret features of the Club.

Apparently it was news to other people, too—such good news that they could not refrain from adding a bit to friend Leonard's list out of their own vivid imaginations. For instance, in reporting on the broadcast the "Daily Sketch," with more generosity than accuracy, gave the Cotton Club credit also for the Big Apple, which, of course, did not originate there at all, but down South, where it came into being as a modern folk dance, the only square dance that jazz has inspired.

Leonard's Latitude Left Listeners Limp

From dances the worthy Leonard passed on to the bands and cabaret artists, not forgetting the dancers, such as Bill Robinson and Peg-Leg Bates, the Berry Brothers and the Nicholas Brothers, who have appeared at the Club, and from them to the songs the club has made famous and their composers. During his travels Leonard collected a very nice supply of records unavailable in this country, so, as you will see from a glance at the above list, he was not only never at a loss for recordings of the various artists he mentioned, but was able to give us a programme which was something fresh even to those most familiar with the English swing catalogues.

All round, this was a broadcast that might well have been given a better hour than four o'clock in the afternoon.

UNA MAE-KES BATON BOW

While Maxine and Ella Fight It Out Back To Back

Una Mae Carlisle and her Jam Band.

"Don't Try Your Jive On Me."

"Love Walked In."

(***Vocalion S.162.)

THE feminine element in this department being usually restricted to vocalists, I hereby offer a genuinely elated welcome to Una Mae Carlisle, one of the very few instrumental girl stars jazz has produced. On the strength of

her first recording she can take her place in this rare gallery of she-swingers which harbours such people as Mary Lou Williams and—er—well, come to think of it, who else is there but Mary Lou Williams?

To brand Una Mae as a Fats Waller imitator is a natural and facile course. Certainly in her contact with Fats she learnt plenty from him, and there are phrases here and there which almost

lead you to expect her to turn to the mike and murmur "with acknowledgments to Mister Waller." But Una has a feminine touch and a different type of humour in her playing.

Of the six sides she made on this London session (I have test pressings of the others) Love Walked In is the only pop tune

and, not being one of Gershwin's best tunes anyway, doesn't measure up to the standard of the others. But

Don't Try Your Jive On Me "sent" me the first time I heard it and continues to give me a great kick.

The combination is just tenor, trumpet and rhythm, but sounds much fuller than you would expect. David Wilkins, the trumpet player, turns in a solo on this side which confirms my suspicion, formed on

the Ken Johnson broadcasts, that he has no superior in this country, and the tenor of Bertie King has much more attack and style than his few contributions to Benny Carter's recordings last year.

The rhythm section, thank good-

TREASURY GUIDE

- ★★★★ Bank
- ★★★ Strong Box
- ★★ Cash Register
- ★ Purse

ness, relies on variety and subtlety instead of plain walloping volume, which gives it a great lead over the average British jam band rhythm section. Hymie Schneider's drumming is solid and provides a fine foundation, while Len Harrison's bass work has some of the ingenuity of a Kirby.

Don't Try Your Jive works up to a climax like this: Una takes a chorus, then the trumpet and tenor fix up a little riff which they repeat for sixteen bars while Una's piano continues, interplaying with them. Then come eight bars of general jamming, and for the final eight

Una's vocal reprise. Coda: two bars piano and two bars all-in.

That's my idea of how a jam record should be made.

Maxine Sullivan.

"It's Wonderful."

"You Went To My Head."

(***Vocalion S.194.)

Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight.

"It's Wonderful."

"I Was Doing All Right."

(***Brunswick 02605.)

Maxine and Ella offer a neat study in contrasted treatments of the same tune. The Fitzgerald forthrightness is as pleasant a palliative for one mood as Maxine's modest mournfulness is for another. The Thornhill arrangements, though still overdoing the quiet business, are at least unaffected abstract music this time instead of self-conscious atmosphere stuff. You Went To My Head is an unusual number, weirdly constructed in phrases of odd lengths. I don't think anyone will improve on Maxine's interpretation of it.

Nota particularly bene Tommy Fulford's half-chorus of swell piano in I Was Doing All Right.

Artie Shaw and his New Music.

"I'll Be With You in Apple Blossom Time." (***)

"The Chant." (**)

(Vocalion S159.)

First side good, typical Shaw. Backing has too much jungle drumming, which you'll like if you went for Krupa's work in Sing Sing Sing.

HOT

RECORDS

REVIEWED

by "ROPHONE"

Walters Out!

Great amusement was caused in New York circles the other week when it was announced that Count Basie's fifteen-piece band was booked for the



w
it
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e
sort of a fellow this Al Brackman is, who sends such well-informed news to the "M.M." from New York.

In the first place, Al is just about New York's greatest musical host. His hospitality during my American trips has been embarrassingly generous, and he is just naturally disposed to take any visitors under his wing and show them around the swing spots he knows so well. Nobody could be in a better position as guide and informant, for Al works in the publicity office of Irving Mills, to whom he is related, and needs to keep constantly in touch with developments in every side of the musical world.

Twenty-six years old, tubby (he'll resent that), and cheerful, Al is one of the few Broadway characters for whom everybody has a good word, and he knows personally every musician worth knowing. Blessed with the sort of smart sense of humour that produces the kind of wisecracks you thought only existed in film dialogue, he sometimes puts this talent to practical use, as when he collaborated with vocalist Jeanne Burns on *The Lady With The Fan*, and other compositions.

Whether he's lunching at Dave's Blue Room, the famous song-publishers' rendezvous just beneath his office, or making the rounds on Fifty Second Street, or stomping at the Savoy, or excursioning in the newly-bought sailboat which is his current enthusiasm, Al is always bound to be good company. As our American newshound, he's the ideal man for the job.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

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Melody Maker

JULY 2, 1938 Vol. XIV. No. 26



West Indian Cleric who had nine children and a trumpet player

FEATHER FORECAST
 goes biographical about
Dave Wilkins
 (seen at left)
 trumpet with
Ken Johnson

Indian Orchestra, who can be heard making a very successful and a suspicious recording debut in the first Una Mae Carlisle record, just released on Vocalion.

I have often given melancholy thought to the paucity of inspiration among British coloured musicians and attributed this phenomenon to lack of environment and other handicaps similar to those which hold the white British swing men back. Wilkins contravenes this reasoning by dint of a background that you might think the last on earth to produce such a first-class jamster.

Born twenty-three years ago in Barbados, he started his musical career in a Salvation Army band when ten years old. He is the youngest of the ten children of a Barbados clergyman and a songstress from a local church choir. The five sisters, Davis relates, are all pianists, and of the brothers there is one in Panama playing saxophones, another playing bass, and another who is no mean drummer.

David had just joined a military band when a West Indian talent scout heard him and inveigled him into the then strange world of dance music. When he was seventeen he left home to travel all round the West Indies, and had been playing in various combinations in Trinidad when Ken Johnson, touring the territory for possible stars to bring to Europe for his all-British swing combination, ran across him and singled him out immediately for the round-up.

Considering that he has only been listening seriously to North American swing records for a year or two, David Wilkins' flair for improvisation is quite remarkable. Though his style is not yet completely distinctive, he has a nice sense of phrasing and a more than competent general technique, the product of his all-round musical training.

Ken Johnson has some more broadcasts this month, and there are further Una Mae Carlisle records to appear soon, so you will be able to watch the work of this youngster who has provided the first new kick in British jazz since George Chisholm.

NEW personalities in British swing music are so rare that it is a treat to find, once in a while, an individual whose playing is likely to make anyone except himself interested in his life story.

One exceptional case in point is David Wilkins, the trumpet player from Ken Johnson's West

WHAT'S A FLOOGEE?

Feather Forecast And News

A COUPLE of years ago it was *The Music Goes Round* which had Fifty-Second Street in a dither. Since then there have been many other nine-day wonders in the way of goofy so-called swing songs, but the latest looks like outstripping all of them both in fatuity and popularity. Need I tell you that I am referring to the *Flat Fleet Floogee*? (printed on the song copies as *Flat Foot Floogee*).

When I heard Slim and Slam, the originators, working this number in such Harlem resorts as the Elks' Rendezvous, everyone regarded it as a grand riff played with a swell swing. Later, when I heard their recording, the fascination grew. Currently, with every band hounding the number to death on the American air, I'm hoping that this relentless hackneying won't make it end up by becoming a bore.

"Slim's" name is Gaillard. He brought his guitar to New York

Al
 Brackman
 (yes, he
 plays it!)



from Detroit last winter and met Leroy Stewart (alias "Slam") in a Harlem night club. The "floogee" first rippled in February and is now a giant wave breaking all over America. Slam is 24 and Slim 23. Both are tall, slim, good-looking in the usual Harlem sleek-moustached way. They spend their week-ends at the home of Slam's parents in New Jersey, and are still a little dazed by this sudden fame.

Flat Fleet Floogee is a corruption of "flat footed floozie," and a floozie in Harlem means a lady of a certain type; but the radio censors don't seem to have cottoned on to that yet!

Famous Door, which holds less than a hundred people. A rumour started that in order to make room for the customers, the waiters were being thrown out and self-service installed! Maybe we'll be able to guess from the acoustics of to-morrow night's broadcast (10.10 to 11 on National) whether the place has been enlarged or not.

Apart from a new second trumpet, Harry Edison, Basie's line-up remains as on the latest discs. You'll hear Buck Clayton, Hershel Evans, Lester Young, and that fine trombonist, Harry Sterling Morton.

Generous American Hospitality

I have often wanted to tell you (and you must have often wondered) what

Throwing The

HOW MANY OF THESE RECORDS HAVE YOU GOT?

by "ROPHONE"

During the first six months of 1938 the following have received the comparatively rare four-star commendation. These stars are NOT a guide to comparative artistic merit. They indicate which records are most likely to be worth the average reader's attention.

- Bailey (Mildred) and her Orchestra.
I Can't Face The Music; Don't Be That Way. Vocalion S157, 3s.
- Basie (Count) and his Orchestra.
Ev'ry Tub; Out The Window. Brunswick 02595, 3s.
- Crosby (Bob) and his Orchestra.
Royal Garden Blues; Squeeze Me. Decca F6622, 2s.
Panama. Decca F6658, 2s.
Dogtown Blues; South Rampart Street Parade. Decca E2in. K876, 4s.
- Goodman (Benny) and his Orchestra.
Changes; Minnie The Mocher's Wedding Day. H.M.V. B8683, 3s.
Life Goes To A Party; If Dreams Come True. H.M.V. B8727, 3s.
- Holiday (Billie) and her Orchestra.
Summertime. Vocalion S130, 3s.
- Polo (Danny) and his Swing Stars.
Don't Try Your Jive On Me. Decca F6604, 2s.
- Slim and Slam.
Flat Fleet Floogee. Vocalion S158, 3s.
- Sullivan (Maxine).
Darling Nellie Gray; The Folks Who Live On The Hill. Vocalion S139, 3s.
- Teddy Wilson (Solo).
Don't Blame Me; Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea. Decca J9, 2s. 6d.
- Teddy Wilson, Red Norvo, Harry James, John Simmons.
Blue Mood (Parts I and II). Decca J10, 2s. 6d.
- Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra.
I'll Never Be The Same. Decca J14, 2s. 6d.

Coleman Hawkins and his All Star Jam Band.

- "Honeysuckle Rose" (***).
- "Crazy Rhythm" (****).
- (H.M.V. B.8754.)

IT is appropriate that the first of the French "Disques Swing" to be put out by H.M.V. here was also the first issued in France; and even more salutary is the quality of the record.

The idea of the session was to present a swing group of four saxes and rhythm, with a few arranged passages by Benny Carter. Considering that Hawkins blew into Paris at 6 p.m. and the session was decided upon and scrambled together and recorded all within five hours, the entente between the saxophonists is remarkably cordiale. *Crazy Rhythm* is intensely interesting in its presentation of the four reedsters in successive solos. Ekyan's alto is a bit too busy to be really inspired, but the ensuing tenor chorus by Combelle is one of the best I've ever heard from a European, with real punch, tone and melodic succulence.

Benny Carter starts off his chorus by forgetting the chord sequence, causing an awkward moment in Bar 3, but subsequently gets into a typical groove without betraying any perturbation at the



killer-diller tempo. Then Hawkins' two choruses, from the first jumping phrase to the last, bear magnificent witness to his undiminished greatness.

Honeysuckle starts with a hastily scribbled but delightfully conceived four-sax chorus, after which Hawkins again has sixty-four bars to himself, and earns every one of them. The last chorus has a fascinating repeated phrase written by Benny, which alternates with the anti-climatic guitar intrusions of Django Reinhardt, whose very instrument, let alone his style, is a bringdown after such a great buildup.

Though the piano is completely inaudible, the rhythm section backs the soloists up nicely, thanks largely to d'Hellemmes' bass.

CARTER & HAWK GET TOGETHER

Hot Records Reviewed

by "ROPHONE"

days. This rose-scented swing has its charm. Tram and Lang put one in mind of a golden-headed child gambling without a thought for the material world into which he is to grow up. Just the child that jazz was itself at that time.

Six plays very characterless piano throughout both sides and picks up his cornet for exactly two bars in the codas. This so mystified somebody when the original issue on Parlophone R.3419 was scheduled that the name of Arthur Schutt was added on the label, it being assumed that nobody could possibly play two instruments at two different times!

Dick McDonough and his Orchestra.

"Dardanella."

"Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea."

(**Vocalion S.174.)

When Ed Lang died, Parlophone brought out two excellent memorial records. Now that another noted guitarist has gone, the same procedure gives us McDonough's last session, in which he gives solo contributions on both sides. The session has an added curiosity value in being the last to which Adrian Rollini bothered to lug his bass sax along. There are a few bars of that old familiar sound in *Devil*, but *Dardanella* takes him back to his usual polite vibe work.

Toots Mondello has some good clarinet moments; Berigan does very little; the rhythm section, despite Cozy Cole, sounds lame, and the arranged passages are nothing much. Of the two sides *Dardanella* gets the edge,

chiefly because the backing has a vocal by Chick Bullock or somebody of that sort.

The Ink Spots.

"Oh, Red!"

"That Cat Is High."

(***Brunswick 02606.)

Ink Spots return to form! *Oh, Red!* is the blues at jig tempo, with personable singing and guttaring, some rifling pinched from Armstrong's old *St. Louis Blues* (why?) and the nice soft tone colour these boys generally get.

Translation of second title: that man is drunk. (Lyrics include noted Harlem password: shoot the likker to me, John boy.) Well, all right then!

Sandy Williams, of Chick Webb's Orchestra, sings out the blues.

For the next Disque Swing may I suggest Dickie Wells' *Between The Devil and Bugle Call*. Merci in anticipation.

Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra.

"Don't Be That Way" (**).

"Sentimental And Melancholy" (***).

(Vocalion S.188.)

Talking of reed sections, here is Teddy Wilson of a sudden writing out a first chorus for three saxes in *Don't Be That Way*. I think I prefer his records jammed. This is not typical Wilson. Though the alto and tenor of

Tab Smith and Gene Sedric are okay and Pee-Wee Russell conveys more in his eight bars of clarinet than either of them, the disc as a whole lacks the Wilson personality. And Bobby Hackett's work is by no means representative, so until the right disc comes along you'll still have to remain in doubt about the "new Bix."

To return to vintage 1937 Wilson (with a Holiday bouquet), try the other side. Henry Allen runs a little wild, but the tempo is slow and that feeling is there.

Frankie Trumbauer, Lang and Bix.

"Wringin' And Twistin'."

"For No Reason At All In C."

(***Parlophone R.2532.)

Play this and you may glimpse the mentality of the older jazz generation who write in lamenting the good old

WATER BOARDERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Reservoir
- ★★★ Tank
- ★★ Cistern
- ★ Sink



Ambrose's Big Offer From U. S.

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON—Once again the possibility of an Ambrose visit to America looms, but this time it seems likely that the rumor will materialize. The British maestro has received an offer from Rockwell-O'Keefe which would take him to the States for six months with contracts to the tune of \$325,000, to conduct an all-American combination for six months on a tour of the States.

Ambrose hit the front pages in London and New York this month as a result of his appearance at the King's Derby party in Buckingham Palace, where Evelyn Dall, his American vocalist, entertained the royal party with *Nice Work If You Can Get It* and other American numbers.

When the news of this story was cabled to New York, several offers to Ambrose for American engagements resulted. Negotiations, according to the leader, had been in progress for some time, but it was the royal favor that spurred the New York agents into definite action.

The Rockwell offer includes \$10,000 a week for vaude work over a period of either thirteen or twenty-six weeks, plus a weekly broadcast for \$2,500. If either offer is accepted, Ambrose will leave London in August, planning to open with his American combo some time in September.

Band would be twenty strong, probably including Evelyn Dall and Ambrose's comedian drummer, Max Bacon, also perhaps Danny Polo, who is, of course, an American and still in the Union; but the rest of the aggregation would be assembled after the leader's arrival in the States. What would happen meantime to his English band is a doubtful point.

Noble Disappointing

Ray Noble and his Orchestra (alias Trump Davidson's band from Canada) began their series of broadcasts and vaudeville appearances here the first week in June. First broadcast impressions were, to be honest, very disappointing; the band lacks the Noble touch or, indeed, any individuality at all, and it would have been possible for Noble to get together a more satisfactory combination of English musicians, which might also have saved him the embarrassment caused by the objections over here to his importation of Canadian men when so many English musicians are out of work.

A recommendation was made by the London District Committee of the British Musicians' Union "that no member of the London branch be permitted to accept employment with Ray Noble's Canadian Band, and that we strongly oppose this orchestra in every way possible."

Fats Waller is still in the market for London engagements, having been tentatively booked for the Lon-



Una Mae Carlisle

don Palladium week of September 12, doubling at Jack Harris's Ciro's Club. Fats' agents want \$2,500 a week guaranteed for him, but it is quite likely that he will be coming across. He was in Europe once before, teamed with Spencer Williams, but, after playing Paris, departed suddenly without explanation, leaving his London bookings unfulfilled.

Heart Throb

Fats' former WLW broadcasting partner, Una Mae Carlisle (recommended for METRONOME'S Heart Throb of the Month Dept.) came over from Paris the other day for her first recording session. Six sides were made for the English Vocalion label, using a combination similar to Fats' recording sextet. The results sounded quite un-English and Una Mae plays some swell Waller-esque piano.

BBC has arranged for weekly relays of dance music from America from 10:30 to 11 p.m. London time. Orchestras scheduled for inclusion in the series are: Ellington, Goodman, Shaw, Norvo, Crosby, Lunceford, Krupa, Whiteman and other combos mostly of the swing type, so the fans here are quite het up.

Benny Goodman for London

Cable received from John Hammond states that Benny Goodman sails for London on Wednesday, July 13, planning a brief vacation visit to the British capital, possibly accompanied by Hammond.

Immediately the news became current in London, various parties such as Jack Hylton and producer C. B. Cochran expressed considerable interest, hinting that they will do their best to prevent Benny from making this an entirely non-business trip.

Top songs in England at press time are *Thanks for the Memory*, *Whistle While You Work*, *Ti-pi-tin*, *Lambeth Walk* (British, Cinephonic), *Some-day My Prince Will Come*, *I Love to Whistle*, *Mamma*, *I Wanna Make Rhythm*, *Heigh-Ho*, *Tears in My Heart*, *Don't Ever Change*. Sheet music tops, in addition to the above, include *Somebody's Thinking of You*, *Girl in the Bonnet of Blue*, *Donkey's Serenade*.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED JULY 22, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE big name in this week's dance music news is Billy Cotton, who has three important broadcasts this coming week with his stage band. Here is one band that can be described as an institution. Since leaving Ciro's in 1931 Cotton has toured continuously in Variety, and seems likely to keep this policy in perpetual motion.

He was born thirty-nine years ago in Westminster. He has had a lengthy experience of his profession, if you can count under the heading of experience such adventures as being a drummer boy in the Army at fourteen. His extra-musical adventures, as a pilot in the R.F.C. in his seventeenth year, were considerably more exciting.

After demobilisation he started a small band of his own, playing drums, and in 1921 worked at an Ealing *palais de danse*. Later he worked at the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, subsequently fulfilling several provincial jobs before an engagement at the Astoria Ballroom, London, in 1928.

His proudest possessions are two sons (ten and fifteen) and a racing car. His Brooklands exploits are without number, and his log for the last two years includes five firsts, a second, and four thirds in big races.

Only five of the fifteen instrumentalists in his band are Londoners. One, the trombonist-tap-dancer Ellis Jackson, is a coloured veteran from New Jersey, born in 1891 and featured with Cotton since 1930.

Alan Breeze, the vocalist, son of an operatic singer, was born twenty-nine years ago in London and appeared in musical comedy and revue before joining the band in March, 1932.

Peter Williams, who hails from Tonypandy, is three years older than his fellow-vocalist. He was with the D'Oyly Carte company prior to Cottoning-on in 1935.

* * * *

Because they are generally out of reach of landbound listeners, little is known of the orchestras providing dance music on Britain's greatest ships. Next Friday night will set an interesting precedent when two such bands provide the late session from the Marine Club, Angmering-on-Sea, where they have been engaged for a special gala week.

The orchestras are those of the R.M.S. *Queen Mary*, in its original Atlantic form and directed by Commodore Bandmaster Bernard Rowe; and a composite group drawn from the band of Canadian Pacific boats, under the direction of Commodore Bandmaster Edgar Avanzi of the *Empress of Britain*.

* * * *

Billy Bissett, who recently came back to town for a temporary engagement at the Café de Paris on Ambrose's departure, has a new combination which will be broadcasting on Tuesday. The personnel includes Eric Wild, well known to viewers for his television jam sessions.



Billy Cotton

Tuesday, 10.25
Thursday, 6.40
Saturday, 5.0

MENDELSSOHN

arr. RED BONE!

Tommy Dorsey Continues to Raid the Classics

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.

"Black Raspberry Jam."

"My Very Good Friend The Milkman."

(***H.M.V. BD5376.)

IT'S too bad that Fats will be all on his lonesome, unable to produce music like this, when he visits England. *Jam* is the original backing of *Paswonky*, released at last after my special requests.

It's an impressively hectic noise, combining sound and fury with rhyme and reason. *Milkman* is slow, straightish, pleasant.

Hundred-proof, unadulterated Waller.

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.

"Rosetta."

"I Want To Be Happy."

(***H.M.V. B8753.)

Of these two typical Mundy arrangements you'll find *Rosetta* the better. *Happy* is just not outstanding; Benny takes a neatly constructed if hardly inspired chorus, Elman is too wild and Musso doesn't quite get off. In *Rosetta*, recorded a couple of hours later, he manages to. Alan Reuss has a brief solo on this side.

Tommy Dorsey And His Orchestra.

"Mendelssohn's Spring Song."

"Shine On Harvest Moon."

(**H.M.V. B8752.)

Mendelssohn, arr. Red Bone! But they don't even retain the chord sequence, and except for the first chorus it might be *Stinkeroo Stomp*. Solos by Dorsey's trombone and Slats Long's clarinet (good), Berigan's trumpet and Freeman's tenor (fair).

LEO WATSON,
ex-Spirits-of-Rhythmite,
lets it go during a recording
session.



Harvest is rather a different band, with Mintz's even better clarinet and Erwin's trumpet. Some of the arranging is pretty ribby, though I have a silly weakness for the peculiar merry-go-round accordions effect previously noted in *Maple Leaf Rag* and evidenced again in the last ensemble chorus here.

Louis Armstrong's Original Washboard Beaters.

"Candy Lips."

"Nobody But My Baby."

(*Parlophone R2531.)

Ten years too late.

Adrian Rollini And His Orchestra.

"Singin' The Blues."

"Bill."

(**Vocalion S.191)

The old contemptible is still churning away at his bass sax, and the pleasant tone-colour combination of this instrument with trumpet and clarinet is the reason why I like *Bill*. Sprinkled with short semi-arranged passages and average solos, it just makes a noise that is easy on the ears,

nothing more. Al Duffy gets near to expressing some ideas on violin; Jack Rusin's piano has resolved into a frustrated mélange of Wilson and Tatum.

The other side means rather less, because there is a straight vocal (if you would believe the label, there's a vocal in *Bill*, too) and because the arranged passages aren't so hot.

Making Maxine Merely Silly

Maxine Sullivan

"Please Be Kind."

"Moments Like This."

(**H.M.V. B8749.)

"Black Eyes."

"It Was A Lover And His Lass."

(*H.M.V. B8759.)

I warned Claude Thornhill, in a review of Maxine's last Vocalion disc, that he is ruining the gal by ironing out the Harlem in her style and her accompaniments. The same com-

Hot
Records
Reviewed
by

"ROPHONE"

TAXPAYERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Super-Tax
- ★★★ Tax
- ★★ Toll
- ★ Rebate

plaint applies to the foregoing, from which you couldn't deduce that Maxine was once a swing singer, and, even more singular, you couldn't realise her colour.

Black Eyes is identical with the Vocalion version. *Lover and Lass* (what, isn't even Shakespeare sacred?) is incredible. Twittering bird effects, unconscious humour galore. Thornhill, you're making this girl look a fool.

Doesn't Like British Swing

Sid Millward And His Band.

"Someday Sweetheart" (**).

"From Monday On" (*).

(**Parlophone F1151.)

Phil Green's Swing On Strings.

"Howdja Like To Love Me?"

"Sweet As A Song."

(**Parlophone F1151.)

The Six Swingers.

"Who Stole The Jam?"

"Park Lane Strut."

(*Columbia FB1975.)

Now there may be some quality missing in my musical make-up which renders me insensible to the beauties of these British swing records; but to me they seem to lack the three cardinal assets: sincerity, vivacity and personality. Sid Millward's *Someday* gets nearer these objectives with its rhythm section and Bruce Campbell's trumpet and trombone.

Phil Green's music is quite neutral and negative, pleasant enough for the family if not for the fans.

"MUSICIANS ARE REQUESTED TO KEEP THEIR HATS ON"

"MUSICIANS ARE REQUESTED TO KEEP THEIR HATS ON."

Although there was no notice of this kind to be found on the walls of the Brunswick studio, one could well visualise it, for the majority of swing men, especially the coloured boys, seem to have a point of never removing their headgear from the start to the finish of a recording date.

When I walked in on a recent date assigned to the Onyx Club Boys in this fourteenth-floor room in a Broadway skyscraper, the custom was observed as rigidly as

ever. Billy Kyle, at the piano, had a startling green peaked cap which never left him. Apart from their hats, the others went in for some striking outfits, the red corduroy jacket of trumpeter Charlie Shavers being a dazzling example.

However, since this is not a fashion report, we'll skip the rest and come to the more technical details. The interesting point about the recordings up at Brunswick is that a non-directional microphone is employed, which means that if the men stand in a circle around the black billiard-ball-like mike at equal distances, they will all be picked up at equal strength.

Using One Mike Only

This enables them to make the ses-

placed six feet away, the bass three feet, the soloists generally three to six feet (except open trumpet, which had to retire to a distant corner), and the drummer ten feet away.

Impervious To Studio Noises

Over in the corner, huddled in the angle of the walls, fast asleep, was Danny Barker, the guitarist, whose services were not required for this number, and who remained dormant as long as I was in the studio. No music on earth could disturb him.

The session was being held under the auspices of Buster Bailey. Although the personnel was the same as that of

the Onyx Club Band, which is directed at the club by the bassist, John Kirby, these waxings were to feature original compositions by the youthful veteran clarinetist and were scheduled for the Vocalion label as "Buster Bailey And His Rhythm Busters."

The method in which these "compositions" were concocted was characteristic of the spirit of true jazz. Buster invented a simple theme for the first chorus, fixed up second and third part harmonies between himself, Shavers on trumpet, and the fat, genial Pete Brown on alto; then, the first chorus being disposed of, nothing remained but to fix backgrounds for the improvised solos that were to ensue, and another simple ensemble passage for the ending.

Manuscript paper was conspicuously absent, and the boys worked faster without it than many a non-swing man would with reams of it.

The studio helped to lend the appro-

with the composition, Buster and the boys were ready for a playback. The masters at Brunswick are not made on the usual thick, heavy waxes, but on flat black discs composed of a material called Instantite.

One of the immediate advantages for the musicians is that they can take away tests of their recordings on the very day of the session, instead of waiting the usual week or so before they can be heard.

By way of contrast, let me add a few words about another session which took place a few days later, featuring several of the same boys from the Onyx Club together with the one and only Onyx Club Girl, Maxine Sullivan (alias Mrs. John Kirby).

Maxine's dates are, of course, under the auspices of Claude Thornhill. Here again simplicity and swiftness of action could be found, but through a different method. Instead of arranging details amongst themselves, the boys merely had to read the parts

handed out to them by Thornhill and take any subsequent orders from him if a certain phrase were to be played more legato or a rallentando introduced at the end.

Bass Drum Wasn't Wanted

Thornhill had gone about everything in so methodical a manner that after the boys had run through the first song twice, with Maxine sitting beside Claude at the piano, singing the lyrics softly to herself, everyone was ready to make a record.

Owing to the characteristically Sullivanesque softness of the performances and the size of the band, no bass drum was required. Accordingly O'Neil Spencer made himself comfortable by sitting on his bass drum and using only a side drum and a wooden chair for the percussion effects!

Thornhill is a believer in variety of



Buster Bailey



Billy Kyle, Onyx Club pianist

Usari, playing bass clarinet and flute. So, as Maxine whispered her words into the microphone only a few inches away, another little masterpiece of soft, subtle swing went on record.

Oh, and by the way—I forgot to mention that O'Neil Spencer went one better than the other boys throughout this session. Defying every tradition in New York in general and Harlem in particular, he wore a bowler hat!

tone-colours, as could be recognized from his inclusion in the personnel of a West Indian musician, Raymond

Melody Maker

JULY 16, 1938

Vol. XIV. No. 269

Coleman Hawkins—Europe's Musical Vagabond

Feather Forecast and News

MORE news of Europe's musical vagabond, C. Hawkins, Esq. The erratic Coleman has recorded a session in Holland with his trio (Freddy Johnson on piano and Maurits van Kleef, described optimistically as "the best drummer in Europe").

Material Chosen At Random

The boys enjoyed themselves a lot and chose their material very much at random, ending up with six titles: *Swingin' In The Groove*; *When Buddha Smiles*; *I Know That You Know*; *Way Down Yonder in New Orleans*; *Dear Old Southland*; and, as you might have expected, a blues, described as *Blues Evermore*.

They'll be out on Vocalion eventually, but before them will be a couple which Hawk and Freddy made after their session with Benny Carter last year, which owing to some contractual con-

fusion had to be held up. They are an original Hawkins-Johnson theme entitled (no doubt with genuflections to Fats Waller) *Well All Right Then!* and a new version of *Star Dust* with accent on swing instead of on rhapsody, in contrast to Hawk's previous waxing of the same title.

* * *
In the issue of October 23 last I tabulated all the recordings by Elling-



And here's another musical wanderer—Connie Boswell, who has strayed from the thorny path of swing to the wide fairway of commercialism—but does it better than anyone else.

ton's band and contingents from the band, released on Irving Mills' labels, in an effort to show that Duke's quality and quantity of output were greater than ever before. Since then the standards have been maintained, and I should like to bring the table up to date. Catalogue numbers indicate Brunswick (8000 series) or Vocalion (3000-4000), but they won't appear on

the English labels of the same name, or any other English label.

BARNEY BIGARD AND HIS JAZZOPATERS.

*3842.—*Jazz A La Carte*; *Demi-Tasse* (previously listed as *Sauce For The Goose*; *Each Day*).

3985.—*Drummer's Delight*; *If I Thought You Cared* (Bigard, Carney, Rex, Tizol, Duke, Guy, Greer, Taylor).

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS FAMOUS ORCHESTRA.

*8004.—*Diminuendo and Crescendo In Blue*.

8029.—*Chatterbox*; *Dusk In The Desert*.

8044.—*Black Butterfly*; *Harmony In Harlem*.

*8063.—*Stepping Into Swing Society*; *New Black And Tan Fantasy*.

8083.—*Riding On A Blue Note*; *Lost In Meditation*.

ALL above: Whetsel, Rex, Cootie, Jenkins; Tizol, Tricky, Brown; Bigard, Hodges, Hardwick, Carney; Ellington, Guy, Greer, Alvis, Taylor.)

8093.—*The Skrontch*; *If You Were In My Place*.

8099.—*Carnival In Caroline*; *Braggin' In Brass*.

8108.—*The Gal From Joe's*; *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*.

8131.—*Swingtime In Honolulu*; *I'm Slappin' 7th Avenue With The Sole Of My Shoe*.

(Wallace Jones replaces Whetsel; one bass only, Taylor, used.)

JOHNNY HODGES AND HIS ORCHESTRA.

3948.—*My Day*; *Silvery Moon And Golden Sands*.

4046.—*If You Were In My Place*; *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*.

*4115.—*Jeep's Blues*; *Rendezvous With Rhythm*.

(Hodges, Carney, Cootie Brown, Duke, Guy, Greer, Taylor; plus Hardwick on 3948.)

REX STEWART AND HIS FIFTY-SECOND STREET STOMPERS.

*3844.—*Love In My Heart*; *Sugar Hill Shim-Sham*.

(Stewart, Jenkins, Hodges, Carney, Duke, Brick Fleagle, Jack Maisel, Alvis.)

COOTIE WILLIAMS AND HIS RUG CUTTERS.

3890.—*Watching*; *I Can't Give You Anything But Love*.

3922.—*Jubilesta*; *Pigeons and Peppers*.

(Cootie, Tizol, Hardwick, Carney, Bigard, Duke, Guy, Greer, Alvis.)

3960.—*Echoes Of Harlem* (Cootie's Concerto); *Have A Heart* (*Lost In Meditation*).

(As for Hodges' Orch. on 3948.)

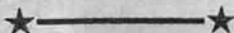
4061.—*Carnival In Caroline*; *Swingtime In Honolulu*.

*4086.—*Ol' Man River*; *A Lesson In C*.

(Cootie, Tricky, Hodges, Carney, Bigard, Duke, Guy, Greer, Alvis.)

Space forbids me to say any more now, but I'll try to squeeze in a few advisory details next week. For the present, suffice it that those marked with an asterisk are quite indispensable to any self-respecting jazz library.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.



Benny Goodman hides from British fans

BENNY GOODMAN, £2,000-a-week king of swing and headman of all the jitterbugs, crept into London last night looking fearfully bronzed and tired and timid.

He jumped in the Normandie at the last minute with two suit-cases he carried himself. All the way over the Atlantic he kept himself to himself.

To dodge the rush he is by now used to, sick of, he held back at Southampton yesterday morning, caught the second boat train to Waterloo.

Even so, he found waiting for him on the platform bandleader Eddie Carroll, who made the big gesture, offering him his own B.B.C. time on Thursday night. Said Goodman, "Thank you, but no."

Visiting friends

Music publisher Jimmy Green said hello, but swing fan Leonard Feather said nothing, bundling the swing king into the oldest taxi in sight, driving off with him to visit friends.

Goodman, slim, fair, spectacled, stays here nine days and hopes to do some rubbernecking unrecognised. Doubts he'll get by.

He will. If he keeps away from the dance palaces in the suburbs (as no doubt he will) not a soul is likely to spot him. That should be refreshing.

His life this past year has been a mad kaleidoscope of flatfoot floogies (rabid jitterbugs, ma'am) and floy-floys (rabid jitterbugs in the process of enthusing at a swing passage).

Mr. Goodman has left his clarinet, instrument at which he is acknowledged world master, at home.

by
PAUL

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

IF you remember the atmosphere created by Millward's little band in 'Monday Night At Seven', you will hear it re-created, with a big-



SID MILLWARD

Thursday (Reg. 3.0)

band background this time, in his broadcast on Thursday. He is augmenting to include four saxes, four brass, and four rhythm. Sid Colin, guitarist and swing vocalist, is writing the script. Another featured vocalist will be Pete Barry, the bassist, formerly with the Casa Loma Orchestra, whom Millward considers a great discovery.

Millward leads his combination on clarinet.

During the last six years he was lead saxophonist with Bert Firman, Harry Roy, Jack Payne, and Jack Hylton. Short, stocky, and blond, he is a keen musician with a desire to infiltrate as much real swing as possible between the entertainment items.

* * * *

The tour of provincial dance halls continues next week with programmes by two bands from Blackpool. One of these, Larry Brennan's, has an unusual history. Brennan, son of an Army bandmaster, was brought up in a Yorkshire vicarage, where he learned that the Church was to be his

LARRY BRENNAN From Blackpool

Wednesday (Nat. 5.20)

vocation. One day he walked out and casually presented himself at a recruiting office. He was drafted into the regimental band and sent to

Kneller Hall, where he learned clarinet and violin, later taking up saxophone.

After war service he came into jazz on the ground floor, playing at exclusive London clubs, at the Moulin Rouge in Paris, and in Germany and Sweden, and all over Great Britain, broadcasting from Cardiff as early as 1923.

Six or seven years have passed since he came to Blackpool. 'I have never regretted it', he adds, 'and I hope to retire here. Music isn't my whole life. I collect antiques; Chinese carvings and ivories, jugs and plaques.'

* * * *

Next week's American relay (from Atlantic City) will introduce to you the man who started the first jazz rage in Athens. I refer to Athens, Ohio, where at the very start of his career Sammy Kaye refurbished an ancient abandoned dance hall, installed his first band to supervise the entertainment, and soon had the town rocking.

SAMMY KAYE

American Relay

Saturday (Reg. 10.30)

Born in 1910 in Cleveland, Sammy Kaye distinguished himself as a high-school athlete. All the men in his present band are college graduates, and recent ones at that. The orchestra is run on the lines of a college fraternity, applicants for positions being subjected to an inquiry as to ability and personality.

Kaye has developed an original musical style, introducing the numbers by singing their titles. Despite his catch-phrase 'Swing and Sway with Sammy Kaye', the combination has not the remotest connection with swing music, hot jazz and the like. According to a recent poll it is the tenth most popular 'sweet band' in America.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

SOMETIMES one becomes tired of calling every band one of the most versatile in the world, or in Europe, England, or Marble Arch,



HUGO RIGNOLD

Saturday (Nat. 5.0)

W.1. But permit me the use of some such cliché in connection with Hugo Rignold's orchestra, which, booted and spurred for every musical emergency, has spent its eighteen months of life accompanying the stage show at the London Casino, a job that calls for multi-instrumentalism as well as an all-round knowledge of every manner of music to accompany a limitless variety of acts.

Rignold himself has a varied enough life behind him. English by birth, Canadian by education, and a R.A.M. scholar, he was once heard as solo artist under Sir Henry Wood at Queen's Hall.

The normal combination of the orchestra, which has its first broadcast next Saturday (August 6), is four saxophones, five brass, three strings, and four rhythm, but there is considerable 'doubling' on flutes, oboes, and strings. All the four sax men are flautists, two of the brass are also violinists, and with Rignold himself on viola a full contingent of seven strings is available.

'Anything from Tchaikovsky to swing' being the password of the programme, Rignold has promised to include several surprise items. One will be an arrangement of 'Song of India' (not the jazzed-up version) scored by his violin-violoncello-sax-flute-clarinet virtuoso, Dennis Moonan. Another sax man, Norman Maloney, has arranged Berlin's old tune 'Remember', and a Chopin piano solo scored for strings, woodwind, and horn. Other featured items will be Norman Impey's arrangement of 'Crazy Rhythm', and swing-trombonist Bruce Campbell's arrangement of 'Please be kind'. Rignold himself has arranged 'Still of the Night', featuring his viola with a four-flute background, 'Darktown Strutters' Ball', and an unnamed signature tune.

Moonan and Impey and Campbell and Rignold will form a vocal quartet.

* * * *

The plans for the American relays have been shifted around more than somewhat, but at the time of going to press it seems probable that the Hal Kemp programme, announced here recently but postponed, will be heard next Saturday, August 6. Tomorrow, July 30, will bring the first European relay of Gene Krupa, famous drummer, who formed his band after leaving Benny Goodman's orchestra in March, bringing under his wing a few birds from the Goodman nest, including the tenor-sax star Vido Musso.

Krupa was born in Chicago in 1909 of German and Swedish parents. He gave up ecclesiastical studies to go barnstorming with vagabond bands, joined Red Nichols in 1929 and Goodman in 1934, and was earning £100 a week when he left to form his own band. American audiences go wild when they observe the violent, almost epileptic trance that seems to come over him when he plays the drums. Intense excitement, not showmanship, is responsible.

Melody Maker

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JULY 23, 1938

THREE

FATS WALLER'S BRITISH APPEARANCES

Scotland, August 1 : London, August 8
AND HE'S VERY WELCOME INDEED!

THE alterations which have been made in the plans to bring Fats Waller to England involve no little excitement for the fans on this side of the Atlantic, for instead of opening on September 12 as originally planned, the cheerful keyboard wizard is due to sail to-day (Friday) on the *Transylvania*, which will take him direct to Glasgow, arriving next Friday in time to open in Glasgow on Monday, August 1.

His London debut will take place the following week, August 8, at the Palladium. There are four more weeks in England to be booked, and then Fats goes, on September 12, to Scandinavia for a fortnight and Holland for a week.

During the tour Waller will be unaccompanied, and while in Europe, Don Donaldson and His Orchestra, who have been featured with him in his work for many months, will go their separate ways.

This will not mark Waller's first trip to Europe. In 1932, partnering Spencer Williams, he visited Paris briefly, and had contracts for London and elsewhere, but departed abruptly for America, leaving Spencer Williams, who has remained ever since.

Other recent news of Fats tells of his reunion with Andy Razaf in two new song hits, *I Had To Do It* and *Stayin' At Home*. The Waller-Razaf combination, often regarded as the greatest coloured song team of this generation, was, of course, responsible for *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Honeysuckle Rose* and scores of other hits.



At the station (left to right): Benny Goodman, Eddie Carroll, Jimmy Green



Fats Waller—London's next distinguished visitor

Benny Goodman Does Nothing, Sees Nothing, And Even Says Nothing CONFUSION ABOUT A COCKTAIL PARTY

MID-DAY LAST MONDAY BENNY GOODMAN CREPT INTO LONDON AND, ON WEDNESDAY AFTERNOON, HE CREPT OUT, WITH RECOLLECTIONS OF A FORTY EIGHT HOURS SPENT IN ENGLAND WHICH CANNOT BE WORTH WHILE REMEMBERING.

He left to go to France where friends in Paris were whipping him off by road to the Riviera, and he actually has to be back in America on August 2, to resume his Camel broadcasts.

While he is holidaying, his band, under Guy Lombardo, has been carrying on, presumably on the see-saw of sweet and swing.

Benny has had a lot of publicity here in connection with his holiday trip, but it was not of his seeking and it has resulted in an unfortunate experience.

TO BE ALONE!

Actually, he came over seeking to get his first real rest after three years of driving activity and embarrassing adulation. He should have realised that England was the last place where he might escape the attentions of the jitterbugs and professional worshippers.

After all, his fame was founded in England, although this is the first time he has ever visited the country.

Had it not been that the news got around that he was going to Paris before London, there would have been a big crowd at Waterloo to see him in. Actually there were only a handful of people who chanced their arm in meeting the boat train, including three "M.M." representatives, one of whom, Leonard Feather, an old personal friend, saw him to his hotel.

When it became known that he was here, Benny Goodman's smoked glasses were insufficient to disguise him, and he had more or less to keep himself locked up.

He had given it out that he was leaving for Paris on Thursday, but having

learnt, through an intermediary, that Ambrose and some of his boys wanted to act as his hosts over cocktails at the Dorchester Hotel on Wednesday last at 6 p.m., he readily acquiesced.

This was on Tuesday morning, but later in the day he had to expedite his departure to Paris and consequently phoned Ambrose to ask if the meeting could not be brought forward to the lunch time. Then it was, for the first time, he learnt that Ambrose had organised a cocktail party on a large scale, with a hundred invited guests, all of whom Benny, of course, had perforce to disappoint. The party was cancelled in time.

He explained to THE MELODY MAKER that had he known that a cocktail

party on this scale was being planned when he accepted the invitation he could have avoided backing out, but the news came too late.

"The only thing I can do," he said, "is to come back to England again very soon and meet all the boys properly. I was overwhelmed when I found that everybody knew I was coming, and the whole object of my visit was defeated."

Poor Benny Goodman! Little does he know what is awaiting him in France. The jitterbugs there are even more aggressive, and he will find that he cannot escape the limelight which for the last three years, has flooded him so intensely and so profitably.

—And I believe told me, that I was one of the first musical directors performing on outside broadcasts. I was on the air regularly from the Shepherd's Bush Pavilion every Tuesday afternoon for an hour from 2LO in—let me see—I think it was 1923.

When talkies came in, my little world was rather upset. But I did what you might call some more pioneering—added a sound background to a silent picture that they'd just finished, *High Treason*—and since then I've handled symphony orchestras, dance, military and brass bands in hundreds of British films.

And what are you doing in films at present? Well, I've been working on the background for the screen version of Cronin's book, *The Citadel*. And Honegger has written an original score for Shaw's *Pygmalion* which I shall be conducting with a 70-piece symphony orchestra.

By this time Louis Levy was the centre of a circle of messengers, subordinates, musicians, press-men, and parasites. He has earned himself a great name at the price of a restless life. Reluctantly I said goodbye and left him to it.

S. R. F.

CONTRAST BETWEEN TWO ARTISTES SHOW UP THE WORST IN BOTH

says "Rophone" in his Review of Hot Records

Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight.

"This Time It's Real."

Teddy Grace.

"I'll Never Let You Cry."

(**Brunswick 02607.)

QUERY: Is it advisable to mix two artistes on one disc? These comparison couplings generally tend to show up the inferior qualities of each side. If it weren't for the clean efficiency of Teddy Grace's white accompaniment I might not have winced so violently at the sluggish out-of-tunefulness of the Savoy Eight.

And if Ella's personality had not been so firmly imprinted on the reverse, I might have passed over the stiltedness of this performance by Miss Grace.

As soloists, however, Miss Grace's



Ken Johnson and his band rehearsing for a session. In the centre is Betty Dale, the band's vocalist.

lads are undistinguished, with one urgent exception. The eight-bar trumpet (beg, pardon, cornet) solo is quite obviously the work of Bobby Hackett, and it is a tribute to young Hackett that even in so transient a showing he manages to leave the imprint of his grand musicianship, tone and style.

It is too bad that his Irving Mills contract means the real Hackett records won't be released over here, so that you will be reduced to little snatches like this for a glimpse of one of the most important persons in swing music to-day.

Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra.

"Oh, Boy!" (***)

"Thunder" (**)

(Brunswick 02608.)

Once again an old Lunceford coupling is unearthed. Eddie Durham has written many better pieces than *Oh, Boy!*, which earns its third star for the ensemble performance and for interesting solos by tenor (Joe Thomas) and trombone (presumably Russell Boles). The two ultimate bars are a real 1925 corn phrase. Fie, Eddie!

Thunder has a boring ballad vocal and a boring arrangement. There must be other records available which will give a more genuine picture of this fine band.

Andrews Sisters.

"Oh, Ma-Ma!"

"It's Easier Said Than Done."

(**Brunswick 0260.)

If ever a comedy number made me sicker quicker than the next, it is *Oh, Ma-Ma!* The Andrews Sisters have made their version a colossal hit in the States. As I see it, it merely drags their standards down, though they make an effort to buy back their reputation on the other side.

Bob Howard and his Orchestra.

"If You're A Viper."

"Raggedy But Right."

(**Vocalion S.193.)

"Orchestra" is a bit of a misnomer. It's Bob Howard and a rhythm section. *Viper* is the song that has caused a sensation in Harlem and the Narcotic Bureau. This is not the original authentic best-selling version, waxed earlier by Rosetta Howard, so contain yourselves until my urgent request for its issue over here is answered.

Still, Bob's version is of interest to guitarists, containing a good chorus by Teddy (ex-Spirits of Rhythm) Bunn.

Backing too much vocal and monotonous Froeba piano

Claude Hopkins and his Orchestra.

"Who?"

"In The Shade Of The Old Apple Tree."

(*Vocalion S.176.)

Who is without exception the worst record I have heard for years. There is absolutely no defence that can excuse the arranger for having arranged it, Orlando Roberson for having warbled it, the trumpet for having bleated it, or English Vocalion for having released it.

Earl Hines and his Orchestra.

"Dominick Swing."

"Good - night, Sweet Dreams, Good-night."

(**Vocalion S.169.)

If you listen to this band just after Basie, it doesn't get there; the brass needs

some team-work and a tonic, the trumpet soloist is off. But as second-string Harlem swing *Dominick* has its moments. Hines plays a tense, gripping bit of piano, once again reminding you that he still knows the way. Too bad he's complacent enough to think he can get by with any old band. **The Sophisticates** (directed by Matt Malneck).

"Swing Low Sweet Chariot."

"Liebestraum."

(*Brunswick 02609.)

I haven't examined the personnel, but am willing to bet that it includes Borrah Minevitch and/or Larry Adler, Harpo Marx, Clyde McCoy, a Boy Scout contingent, and H.M. Coldstream Guards.

Tell me, warder, do they know that they are making noises like that?

OFFICERS' GUIDE

★★★★ Field Marshal

★★★ Colonel

★★ Sergeant

★ Tommy

RADIO TIMES ISSUE DATED JULY 29, 1938

HIGHLIGHTS OF LIGHT MUSIC

Louis Levy

HIS head portraits give the impression of a big-built, full-featured man. My first meeting with Louis Levy was thus a considerable surprise. Somewhere in the five-foot-nothing zone, with thinning fair hair, horn-rimmed glasses, and a sensitive, smiling face, he addressed me in a cheerful and unmistakably London voice.



'Life story? Well, you'll have to give me a moment to think back. So much has happened to me in the last few weeks that I've forgotten all about the forty-five years before them!'

A minute later I had extracted the cardinal facts: his family was poor and not outstandingly musical; his musical studies began when he was seven years old—'If you can call them studies', he added, 'because they cost three-half-pence a lesson, two lessons a week! That's all we could afford for the first steps in my musical education.

I started in show business about a year after that in Charlie Austin's juvenile troupe. I remember singing "On, On to Victory" and playing "The Broken Melody" on the violin. Still, thirty bob a week was thirty bob a week, and it did help towards my first chance for a real academic training, under Guido Papini; I studied harmony with him here and in Italy.'

In the Cinema

Our conversation drifted towards his entry into the cinema world, and he told me how in 1910 he took his fiddle round a circuit of early picture palaces which were mostly converted small shops. His next job, as musical director at the New Gallery in Regent Street, brought him prestige and a consequent demand on his outside services for exhibitions, recording, opera-house work under Oscar Hammerstein, and the then fashionable Hungarian orchestras.

By watching the screen and ensuring a well-matched musical accompaniment, Levy set a precedent which, at the expense of a musical library totalling over 50,000 works, made him a hero of the film industry.

DESERT ISLAND DISCS

Here are some more selections from readers:

DANNY POLO'S SWING STARS

More Than

Somewhat

BENNY CARTER'S ORCHESTRA



Blues Of My Heart

LEONARD FEATHER AND YE OLDE ENGLISH SWING BAND

There Is A Tavern In The Town

THE RAMBLERS Farewell Blues

DUKE ELLINGTON Black and Tan Fantasy

Chosen by G. BUTCHER, of Framlingham College, Suffolk.

RNY THM
Aug. 1938

JULY 23

RADIO: 3 in 4 GRAMOPHONE: 1 in 4 are the statistics of American Home Music

ENGLISH record companies, take heart! You're not the only people suffering from a big slump. According to some new revelations in the American statistical field, radio has done as much in the States as it has here to oust the gramophone from the home.

Even pianos, if we are to believe the Agriculture Department, are more popular with farm families, and of the small town families only twenty-five per cent. now count a gramophone among their furniture, though three in every four homes have radio.

The best relative business for discs is centred in the Negro homes, particularly in the Southern States of Carolina, Georgia and Mississippi, where more people have gramophones than radios.

* * *

Latest developments in the Flat Foot Floggee affair: following a complaint from one of its biggest commercial radio customers, the Foot Health Institute, an American station, WDAS, has ruled this number off the air. Reason for the ban is that the song glorifies something the Institute is fighting against—flat feet.

All right, call me a liar.

* * *

"Out Of The Window" and "Every Tub" by Count Basie and his Orchestra. These two foxtrots beat the band for queer noises, a mixture of bagpipes, saxophones, etc. But they made me laugh! (Record review in *The Star*.)

But we've got the last laugh. . . .

* * *

I promised to outline briefly the chief qualities of the Ellington discs listed last week. Bigard's titles are all so delightful that there is little to choose between them; they belong in the class of the best discs

from the old Harlem Footwarmers days.

The big band discs are headed by the most advanced and fascinating sublimation of twelve-bar blues Duke has yet concocted, *Diminuendo and Crescendo in Blue*, the most important Ellington advance in years.

For those who don't care about progress, *Harmony In Harlem* and *Steppin' Into Swing Society* are just simple tunes with magnificent scoring and solos by Hodges and the usual gang. The last four couplings are more commercial, with Ivie singing, except the excellent *Gal From Joe's*.

Hodges' first two pairings are commercial with white vocals, but *Jeep's Blues* is a masterpiece of slow, wistful Hodges soprano sax, and the backing is a disguised *Honey-suckle Rose* with exquisite tone colours. Rex's *Love In My Heart*, written by bassist Alvis, is another gem which I could play for a week.

Jerry Kruger, a white girl who knows her Billie Holiday, sings on *Watching* and both sides of Cootie's last two pairs, of which *Old Man River*, ingeniously rearranged and re-lyricized, is the best. *Jubilesta* is Tizol's minor lament, with much of his valve trombone solo work, and *Pigeons* is the first waxed work of Duke's son, Mercer Ellington; promising.

Even the weakest of all these records has something that no other band could have: the Ellington hallmark. Whether you're a "Mike" acolyte who imagines Ellington has declined, or a back-to-natureite who prefers jam to complex arrangements, or a progressivite who thinks Duke has stagnated, you'll find something in this batch to broaden and rationalise your viewpoint towards one common conclusion: Duke Ellington has the greatest jazz orchestra in the world.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.





Willie Bryant, whose latest record is reviewed herewith.

THE SILLYSYLLABIC SCHOOL

- Chick Webb and His Orchestra.
"A Tisket A Tasket" (****).
"Liza" (***).
(Bruno, 02614.)
- Don Albert and His Orchestra.
"Liza."
"Rockin' And Swingin'."
(***Vocalion S.160.)
Slim and Slam.
- "Flat Foot Floogee" (****).
"Ti-Pi-Tin" (***).
(Parlo, R.2542.)
- Milt Herth Quartet and Trio.
"Flat Foot Floogee."
"Three Blind Mice."
(** Bruno, 02613.)
- Wingy Mannone and His Orchestra.
"Flat Foot Floogee."
"Martha."
(*Regal-Zono, MR.2812.)

THE passport to success for a hit song to-day, it seems, is a title which to the general public is utterly meaningless. This has been going on from time immemorial starting in the jazz era with Doo-Wacka-Doo. Dr. Spaeth has pertinently hailed this as the Sillysyllabic School of Song, and unabated it continues; after tiring of tipping it in we are now ready for a procession of flat-footed floogees (or, as Iain Lang has brilliantly called them, fallen women with fallen arches). To cap it all comes Ella Fitz with a song

start.
Take my solemn oath, this is the sort of record that will still give you and me a thrill ten years from now. There aren't many like that.

- Willie Bryant And His Orchestra.
"On The Alamo" (***).
"Neglected" (**).
(Vocalion S.196.)

Willie Bryant has a new band, and it's good; incredibly good, when one reflects that it was still in the labour-pains stage a few weeks before this waxing. The team-work is that of a band that might have been together years; the arrangements show promise. Bouquets to pianist Sonny White, trumpet Renald Jones, tenor Prince Robinson, and trombone, perhaps Bob Williams. Willie's no more than passable singing takes up a little too much time; but let's not emphasise that in appraising a first effort that positively should not be neglected.

- Fletcher Henderson And His Orchestra.
"I'm Coming Virginia."
The Charleston Chasers.
"Delerium."
(***Parlophone R.2540.)

Previously issued on Columbia 4561 and 4562 respectively. An interesting re-issue; but hear it for yourself.

July 30, 1938

THE MELODY MAKER

Chappie Willet, arranger for Louis Armstrong, coaching Belle Powell, vocalist with the Willie Bryant Orchestra.



Feather Forecast and News

BENNY GOODMAN'S IMPRESSIONS OF LONDON—what he saw of it!

once in a while, Benny only had two topics, and widely diverse they were. First and foremost, Count Basie, for whose band his enthusiasm is unbounded.

"We played a farewell party at the Famous Door, where Basie's working. It was really a kick. That band . . ."

And secondly, the records Benny made with the Budapest String Quartet of Mozart's Quintet for Clarinet and Strings. Benny says they turned out fine; wants to know all about how, where and when they will be released here. Rex Palmer of HMV told him early in the autumn.

John Hammond did not, after all, accompany Benny on the trip. Nor did any of the boys in the band, who, during his absence, were on holiday except for the weekly Camel broadcast.

Regarding future plans, Benny is already set for a long concert tour immediately after his return; he will also be playing Brahms, Mozart and Prokofiev in a recital at New York's Town

Hall. For the 1938-39 season the band has been booked into the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel, rendezvous of Manhattan's élite.

A very genuine and sincere tribute was paid by Benny to Artie Shaw's band, which he tells me is sounding as great as ever, though Maxie Kaminsky has left.

But He Can Be An Oyster, Too

As a personality among friends the swing deity is as charming and unaffected as one could wish; but in the presence of a song-plugger or anyone unwelcome he shuts up like an oyster, which is precisely why so many people have spread false reports about him.

The real Goodman is as grand a person as he is a musician, and it only remains to be hoped that his next visit will give everyone a chance of hearing him in the flesh.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

BY the time you read this, Benny Goodman will be on his way back home from France aboard the *Normandie*. Amazing to relate, he spent four months planning arrangements so that he could take three weeks off for his first visit across the Atlantic to meet a few friends, buy a few clothes and see a few sights.

The sight that impressed him most was the televising of a macabre playlet, which he watched in a Bond Street record shop. Nothing like that had ever reached his eyes in America,

where the most they ever do seems to be the transmission of pictures from one floor of a skyscraper to another.

The clothes impressed him around Bond Street, too; so much so that he bought dozens of pull-overs and ties as souvenirs for all the boys in the band. And it may give you an idea of how busy he has been when I tell you that our first evening together in London was spent at "Golden Boy," a play featuring the original American cast which he never had a chance to see in New York!

When I persuaded him to bring the conversation round to music



From Mr. Leonard G. Feather, Devonport House, 14 Hart street, London, England, came the following letter of criticism (which I like very much): "Dear Mr. Roberts, your remarks in the PITTSBURGH COURIER dated June 25 concerning the British Broadcasting Corporation (which you erroneously refer to as the British Broadcasting System), are, if I may say so, extremely misguided and foolish. I am an Englishman who has worked both for the BBC and for the American Negro Press, I think I can be considered impartial. I insist that your statement that 'The British Broadcasting Corporation is not seeking to broadcast Maxine Sullivan, Duke Ellington etc. is utterly opposed to the truth. . . The party responsible for fixing these broadcasts is the last person who would ever think of putting the 'Uncle Tom' type of Negro show on the air. When there are so many sources of genuine prejudice to combat, why pick on one where prejudice is non-existent? Very truly yours, Leonard G. Feather." Dear Mr. Feather, I am sure that you mis-read me, please reread that paragraph. Thanks. (By the way, got any more merchant ships to be sunk?)

FRENCH JAZZ GETS A BREAK

Hot Records Reviewed - by 'ROPHONE'



Adelaide Hall, who is teaming up with Robin Richmond in a double act called "Sophisticated Swing."

"After You've Gone."
"Bugle Call Rag."
(*Col. FB1989.)
Willie Lewis and his Orchestra.
"Swing Time."
"Ol' Man River."
(*Col. FB1990.)

FRANCE and/or Frenchmen are associated with all these five discs. The sudden Gallic surge is mere co-

incidence, connoting no boom in French jazz or any such nonsense. In fact, the best record of the five is one in which four Americans are very nearly demolished by one interfering Frenchman.

For not even his most rabid fans could deny that Django Reinhardt is vilely over-recorded in *Sweet Sue*, upsetting the rhythm section

(which should have had a piano instead of guitar) and putting the soloists into false perspective. The dreary three-trill effect (bars 23-24, chorus before last) bobs up yet again.

As for his solo in the *Boudon* blues (especially the last four bars in the maximum-of-notes-minimum-of-reason style), here is conclusive proof that Reinhardt not only has no feeling for blues, but is in no way a genuinely great swing musician.

Fortunately, Reinhardt plays well in the ensemble passages of the blues, which altogether is an admirable production. Wells' trombone, Bill Coleman's trumpet and scat singing fill the wax, apart from the regrettable guitar solo. On *Sweet Sue* Coleman steals the show from Wells; his phrases are more inspired, more decisively and accurately formed and performed, while Wells flounders around in ideas that are too big for his technique.

Coleman is a very great trumpet player. Observe, for instance, his superb use, in the blues coda, of G flat against the chord of B flat.

Some Good —Others Not So Good

In Reinhardt's solo record there is far less flamboyance; the result is a pleasant performance, with some rather Fred Astaire piano from Grappelly. The first chorus of *If I Had You* is an example of how Django should, but all too seldom does, use his talent.

The mouth-organ-and-quintet combination is nothing if not novel. I might be rude and say it's still nothing. Larry, brilliant technician though he is, finds himself in no man's land trying to play swing music, and the result is at times unconsciously funny. It was not tactful or kind of Columbia to include this in the "Super Swing Series."

Ventura's effort will bitterly disappoint those who have heard the band

in person. Ninety per cent. of the trouble lies with the arrangements. Do all French arrangers play with elementary phrases as a child builds with toy bricks?

Aside from which the ensemble is not clean, the recording resonant and not even Philippe Brun has a chance to liven things up with a solo.

Willie Lewis calls for similar comment, except that Bill Coleman's short solos on either side are a saving grace. The band is still out of tune.

Not Their Happiest Efforts

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.
"Lost And Found."
"Beat It Out."
(**H.M.V. BD377.)

I wish Fats' arrival could have been celebrated by a more salutary coupling than this. *Beat It Out* has only the distinction of being very short (2 mins. 10 secs.), and *Lost And Found* . . . that of having Herman Autrey playing sharp throughout.

Jimmie Lunceford and his Orchestra.
"By The River Sainte Marie."
"My Melancholy Baby."
(**Brunswick 02615.)

This band is the anomaly of jazz. Still fighting against unsuitable material, it might be called a square peg in a white hole of Calcutta. The sooner it returns to its own colour environment the likelier we are to hear some real music. Some fine arranging is wasted here, and to add to the general lethargy the rhythm section contributes an ironic touch with its um-ching-um-ching from start to finish.

Both sides have crooning vocals, and in the one about the river comes an incredible line: "Thuh Angelus rang out upon thuh sea; I saw her kneel and say a prayer for me."

Get out from behind those prayer books, Lunceford!

Dicky Wells and his Orchestra.
"Hangin' Around Boudon."
"Sweet Sue."
(**H.M.V. B8763)
Django Reinhardt and Stéphane Grappelly.
"If I Had You" (**).
"Torneraï" (**).
(Decca F6721.)
Larry Adler with Hot Club Quintet.
"Lover, Come Back To Me."
"I Got Rhythm."
(*Col. DB5037.)
Ray Ventura and his Collegians.

JULY 30

THE MELODY MAKER

Fats arrives in Glasgow to-day
Palladium August 8



A FATS FALLACY

by
Leonard Feather

IT has frequently been bruited abroad that Fats Waller makes all his records with the aid of a bottle of gin on each side of the piano. This was the first fallacy to be exploded when I called at the Victor studios to see Fats at work on a typical **small-band** date.

The truth is that his surroundings comprise a beautiful girl on one side and a bottle on the other. Moreover, it was brandy, not gin.

Thus amply provided with two-fold inspiration, Fats had already worked his way through the song copies of several pop tunes on the music stand of his impressive Steinway grand. *Florida Flo*, *Something To Tell Someone*, and a couple of other titles had already been waxed, and the boys were now at work on *Lost And Found*.

None of the abandon that characterises the finished product could be found in the atmosphere of the studio during this session. The musicians sat calmly in their places, scarcely even talking, except to confirm details with Fats as he hastily sketched out a routine for the number.

The tunes were unfamiliar to the musicians, who were provided with skeleton arrangements consisting for the most part of chord sequences. Fats was faced with the doubly difficult task of reading off the music and lyrics simultaneously of tunes with which he was completely unacquainted.

While Fats projected his vocal chorus into the directional mike suspended over the piano, Herman Autry and Eugene Sedic blew their trumpet and tenor accompaniments into a second, with Cedric Wallace, the bassist, a couple of feet behind them. Yet a third microphone could be seen fac-

ing Albert Casey's guitar and Slick Jones's drums. The band was on a separate platform some ten feet away from Fats.

"Now get this—here's a thing we can use for the introduction." Fats rippled an attractive little phrase, suggested the parts for Sedic and Autry in a short vamp—all-ready, and suggested that Autry end with a long glissando for a pick-up to the opening vocal chorus.

Master Record Produced In Ten Minutes

They ran through the first chorus. From the control room came the report: "That's one-thirty." A minute and a half into three minutes—"We can stand about two choruses, that's all," decided Fats. Again they played the opening chorus, and on arriving at the last bar he called out "Take it, Sedic." The second chorus was soon fixed, and within ten minutes a master record had been made.

"Cigarettes!" called Fats, and took another swig at the rapidly diminishing brandy. "Now watch out for that second chorus. In that last part, I want it solid. No variations, no flowery embellishments, nothing." They tried it. "Yeah, that's what I'm talkin' 'bout, yeah!"

Another master was made. The

one, the session record the pop tune. After further verbal engagements, to appease Mr. Waller, a wax was used on *If You're A Viper*, after which the pop was again insisted upon and Fats struggled his way through it, though with such difficulty that he did not even attempt to play piano during his vocal.

The following week I enquired what had happened to *If You're A Viper*, adding that I felt sure it would be Fats' best record in many months. I was told that the wax had been destroyed, and that the pop tune would be used instead.

The first picture of Fats Waller's recording group, which is drawn from Don Donaldson's full orchestra with which Fats tours in America. The big band is composed as follows, with recording men shown above indicated in capitals:—
Saxes: Lionel Simmons, William Allsop, Freddy Skerritt, James Powell, EUGENE SEDRIC; trumpets: John Hamilton, Courtney Williams, HERMAN AUTREY; trombones: John Haughton, George Robinson; pianos: FATS WALLER, Don Donaldson; guitar: ALBERT CASEY; drums: WILMORE "SLICK" JONES; bass: CEDRIC WALLACE.

buzzer informed them that all was well, and Fats called out "Relax!"

Everything moved quietly and swiftly so that it seemed likely Fats would turn in six titles instead of the four normally managed in one session. Next came a 1925 opus entitled *Don't Try To Cry Your Way Back To Me*. "Now please," came the voice of commercialism from the control room, "stick to the melody as much as you can on that first chorus." And then, as a tactful follow-up, "Is that your last bottle?" "No," said Fats emptying it, "this is my first."

A playback was made of the latest title, on which Fats commented: "It needs a little more punch." So in the following waxing the rhythm section gave out more freely and everyone was happy. A good master was made, with an amusing comment tagged on at the end (Fats actually improvises a different comment for each master of the same title, no matter how many are made before the O.K. one is secured).

When "Fats" Couldn't "Get Going"

Then came an impasse. The next number was *You Went To My Head*, an unusually constructed piece with a 25-bar chorus which had Fats quite baffled. Time and again he tried it, but despairingly threw the copy aside with the comment that he had not had time enough to learn the piece.

Pressure was put upon him to wax the number, as it was already scheduled for release, but Fats wisely remained stubborn, claiming that the material did not suit him.

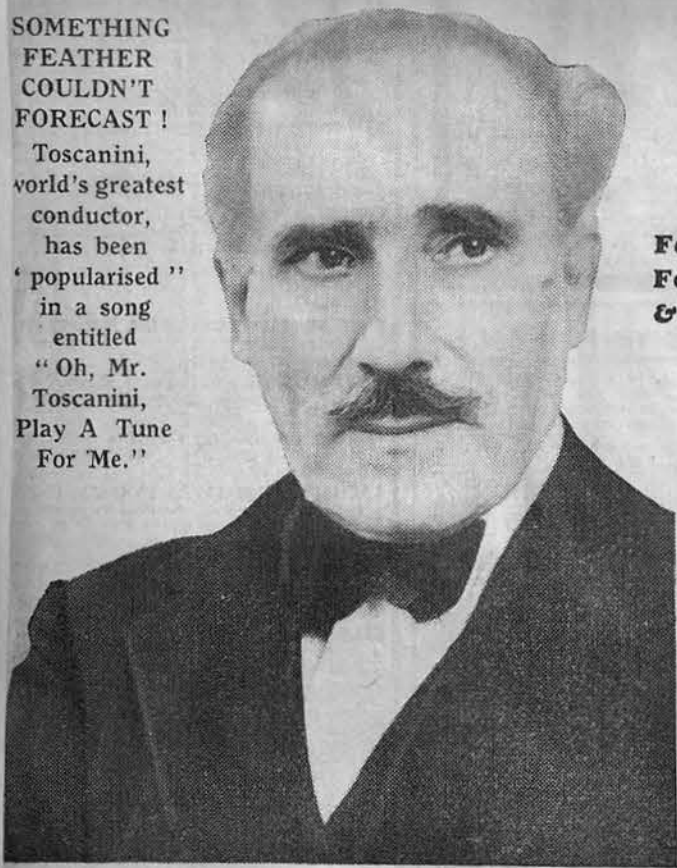
Then he started strumming the recently popularised Harlem hymn to rijuana, *If You're A Viper*. Sedic and Autry worked out a grand riff to carry right through the record, Fats played a wonderful chorus on the spot with his right hand accompanying himself on piano with his left.

Everyone could see that *If You're A Viper* was going to "UH 'SO

TEAGARDEN'S COMEBACK

SOMETHING FEATHER COULDN'T FORECAST!

Toscanini, world's greatest conductor, has been 'popularised' in a song entitled "Oh, Mr. Toscanini, Play A Tune For Me."



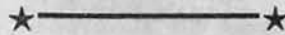
Feather Forecast & News



now arrived, and to my amazement Jackson T. plays as much trombone and sings as much blues as he did in the golden twenties.

Which only goes to show that atmosphere is what counts. When I heard him in featured numbers with Whiteman, and with his poorly-selected "Three T's" jam band at the Hickory House in December, 1936, I concluded that Teagarden would never be the same again.

In the company of Bobby Hackett, Bud Freeman, Jess Stacy



and Pee-Wee Russell, he makes *Serenade To A Shylock* one of the most exciting things I have heard for months. The ten-incher, *Diane* and *Meet Me To-night In Dreamland*, corroborates the impression.

If that idea materialises of building a new band, a real one this time, around Teagarden, you can at least rest assured that Mr. T. will make it worth the effort.

Mention above of Pee-Wee Russell, who plays magnificent clarinet in both records (and also in *Da-Da Strain* by Bobby Hackett's Orchestra, an Irving Mills waxing), reminds me of some new details that have come to light regarding the career of this pioneer.

If sheer inspiration were everything, health and character nothing, Pee-Wee would to-day be a famous name alongside of Goodman and Shaw, for his music is at least of equal stature. But his career has been one of ups and downs through some of the most intense and hectic periods in jazz. When I first met him, playing at the Famous Door with Louis Prima, he was seriously ill; nowadays, though always jittery and nervous to the nth degree, things are a little steadier.

Ranks With Goodman and Shaw

He is Charles E. Russell, and unlike the other Pee-Wees he isn't particularly short; rather a lumbering fellow with heavy features and deep-set, strange eyes. Born in St. Louis of an unmusical family, he studied piano, fiddle and drums before joining a military school band on clarinet.

Pee-Wee used to listen to Louis Armstrong and Fate Marable on the Mississippi river boats. In 1925 came his first real job, playing with Bix in Trumbauer's band at the Arcadia Ballroom, St. Louis. Around this period he made his first records, with Henry Berger.

Best known for his records with Red Nichols, his Pennies and his Louisiana Rhythm Kings, Russell also played on the Mound City Blue Blowers' memorable *One Hour* and *Hello Lola* (HMV).

Some Outstanding Recordings

Fine examples of his exciting work can be found in the Chicago series such as Billy Banks' *Spider Crawl* and *Oh Peter* (Brunswick); *Bald*, *Headed Mama* and *Who's Sorry Now* on the Vocalion list, which also contains a good sample of his tenor sax work in *Mean Old Bed Bug* and *Yellow Dog Blues*.

Pee-Wee lately made a Teddy Wilson record session in New York. He is still working at Nick's under Bobby Hackett, and you can bet his tone is as dirty as ever. Personally, I wallow in it.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

GR^EAT news! The jazz - in - decline theory suffers another severe setback. One star whom the most optimistic of us had

given up for lost, Jack Teagarden, has made a sensational comeback. The special Commodore jam recordings which I mentioned a few weeks ago have

FATS WALLER RECORDS WITH BRITISH BAND

EXCITING news for his thousands of record fans, who had been hoping for some permanent souvenir of his visit to this country, is the announcement that Fats Waller has made a session here for H.M.V., the first coupling of which will be made available very shortly.

At first it seemed dubious whether the possibility of his recording over here could be realised, not only because his sales in America have made him an expensive artist, but also on account of the absence of his usual accompanying combination.

JAM BAND

However, Ed. Kirkeby, Fats' manager, and Leonard Feather convinced the company that the interest in his current tour would justify a session, and that a suitable jam band could be assembled here. The H.M.V. folks far-

sightedly agreed to the plan, and accordingly the waxing took place at the Abbey Road studios on Sunday afternoon.

An amazing rush was necessitated in the round-up of musicians. David Wilkins, featured trumpet man from Ken Johnson's Band, came down specially from Glasgow and hurried off immediately afterwards for Liverpool, where he is playing this week with Johnson.

George Chisholm is probably the first musician ever to interrupt a honeymoon for a recording session; he flew over from Jersey and flew back the following morning! Leonard Feather, who got the band together, also postponed a holiday at the eleventh hour.

The rest of the personnel included Alfie Kahn, swell tenor sax and clarinet; Ian Shepherd, a Scottish boy, doubling on fiddle and tenor; another Scotsman, Alan Ferguson, on guitar; Len Harrison on bass, and the West Indian drummer, Edmundo Ross, from the Nest Club.

Titles recorded first were *Flat Foot Floogie*; Spencer Williams' latest, *Pent Up In A Penthouse*; the current No. 1 song in America, *Music, Maestro, Please*; and Ella Fitzgerald's *A-Tisket, A-Tasket*.

SWINGING ON ORGAN!

After this, however, came a real sensation. Fats decided to take up the challenge made two weeks ago in the "M.M.'s" Feather Forecast and News alleging that even the great Waller could not swing an organ.

Fats, with the help of the band, went into a genuine organ swing disc, and ironically enough the number he chose to do it with was *Don't Try Your Jive On Me*, which is Leonard Feather's own composition!

Finally he made another organ title, recording the tune which, though perhaps better known than any of his other songs, has not been waxed by Fats and His Rhythm: *Ain't Misbehavin'*.

Fats was at the top of his form throughout the session, expressing himself with great enthusiasm about the work of the British boys and wishing he could take them all on the stage with him. These discs should be a landmark in British swing recording, and H.M.V. deserves a vote of thanks from the fans for taking advantage of this unique opportunity.

Union Saves British

Musicians Finally Get Good Pay . . . London News

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

British musicians are finally realizing the importance of unionism. After allowing their apathy to lead them into a situation where hotel jobs were reaching a new low in pay, they have followed the American example of strengthening the M.U., and soon it looks as though the depression may really be lifting. For the first time you can find whole bands composed of Union members (until recently even Ambrose had one or two men who were not members) and consequently the London branch is able to set about the task of grading all dance halls and hotels in order to establish a scale.

Twenty-six West End places such as the Savoy, Dorchester, Ritz and May Fair have been ranked as Class A, for which minimum rate to any musician will be ten guineas (\$52.-50) per week. Classes B and C are currently being fixed. The Union will insist on its members adhering to these rates, which means that before long a large number of hotels will be forced to add a tidy sum to their overhead expenses if they want to keep their bands.

Quintette in Trouble

The Quintette du Hot Club de France is touring England's music halls for a few weeks, under a different management from the one which brought them over once before for a concert, and which claims to have had a claim on their exclusive services. This means that the Reinhardt-Grappelly group will be involved in a dispute that may work out badly for them, since the original agent, Leslie Macdonnell, had plans practically set to send the boys to Hollywood, but now threatens to enjoin them from working either here or in America.

(Turn to page 40, please)

England's Best

Best ten on the air at press-time are as follows:—

1. Lambeth Walk (English; publ. Cinephonic).
2. Thanks for the Memory.
3. Mamma, I Wanna Make Rhythm.
4. Ti-Pi-Tin.
5. Whistle While You Work
6. Heaven in the Pines
7. Goodnight Angel
8. Heigh-Ho
9. Someday My Prince Will Come
10. Cry Baby Cry

But publishers are grumbling that even the best sellers today aren't selling as many as the tenth best did a couple of years ago. That's the way things are over here.

England

(Continued from page 10)

Bert Read, who was playing piano with Ambrose until 1935 and subsequently worked with Henry Hall, has rejoined the Ambrose aggregation, replacing Bert Barnes. Ambrose's American plans are still indefinite, the only set proposition for the band at present being a trip to Holland at the end of July. Billy Bissett has replaced Ambrose at the Cafe de Paris and Lew Stone will move in to start the fall season.

The new Ambrose film, entitled *Kicking the Moon Around*, should be watched for by American fans who would like to get a good look at the band. Evelyn Dall shows acting ability and appearance that destine her for a big future in films.

Louis Levy, musical director of

Gaumont British Pictures, has hooked a big job with the BBC, for whom he has started a series of programs somewhat on Kostelanetz lines called *You Shall Have Music*. Remarkable angle is that despite BBC's strict anti-commercial rule, Levy will still retain his movie job while working for Broadcasting House, and is featuring Jessie Matthews, Gaumont Star, as guest artist on the air.

Bill Ternent, star arranger with Jack Hylton for many years (he toured with the American Hylton band), is very seriously ill following a recent collapse. Hylton is taking a road show, *Cavalcade*, round the provincial music halls, with Peggy Dell still featured for vocals.

Jack Harris, of Ciro's Club, is angling for Bing Crosby, Eddie Cantor, Jack Benny and other big names to appear at the club in the fall, with Fats Waller already booked. Fats is expected in Holland and Scandinavia shortly.

Ray Noble made his London debut at the Palladium on July 4 with Trump Davidson's Canadian orchestra. As reported last month, the outfit is not sensational, but notices and attendances have been fairly good.

BBC's series of weekly exchange programs with CBS started successfully on July 9 with an excellently received program by Count Basie.

Melody Maker

AUGUST 13, 1938

Vol. XIV. No. 273

HARLEM GOES ALL CONTINENTAL!

Feather Forecast and News

IT seems to be an epidemic. I mean, this gradual spread of the Continental atmosphere in Harlem. Not content with being themselves and offering us something authentic in the way of local colour, the American Negro entertainment world is developing multi-lingual symptoms that are becoming positively a menace.

I've mentioned before that Slim and Slam go in for phony dialects (e.g., the mock-Chinese stuff in *Chinatown*), but now comes news of an even weirder excursion. On Rudy Vallée's broadcast the other night they started a new sensation with their own "Hungarian version" of *Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen*.

Going All Linguistic

Bob Howard, whom you may have seen on the music halls over here, is making a feature of Hildegard's hit, *Darling Je Vous Aime Beau-coup*. Hazel Scott, a new vocal star heard on the American airwaves lately, was spotted in the audience

Slim and Slam
America's
latest sensation,
rode to fame
overnight on one
song—
"Flat Foot
Floogee."



at a while New York theatre the other night and, asked to come on the stage and do a number, responded with a Yiddish ditty which (according to one report) "literally tore the roof off the house." Almost too literal.

And Maxine Sullivan, who has always featured *My Yiddisher Momma* and the Russian *Ochi Chornya* in her repertoire, has burst into *L'Amour, Toujours L'Amour!* This is her latest Victor record, backed by *St. Louis Blues*, in which she makes an unexpected return to Harlem for atmosphere. Bobby Hackett plays cornet and Babe Rusin tenor in the accompanying group.

A chorus by Billie Holiday in Italian from some grand opera, and a folk song from Fats in the original Bulgarian, is all we need to make us die happy.

* MISPRINT OF THE MONTH *

"Lionel Hampton's phrases are as appallingly melodic as they are ingeniously rhythmic."—Edgar Jackson in the *Gramophone*.
Just too bad.

* * *
Maybe you saw that some months ago I was drawn into a long dispute about the possibilities of swinging on an accordion, an achievement which I claimed hadn't and couldn't be managed.

After seeing *Sing, You Sinners*, the excellent new Bing Crosby picture, I

am almost tempted to tuck tail between legs and slink away. The small accompaniment which serves Bing during his principal numbers here, featuring clarinet, guitar and accordion, really seem to get going.

Quite apart from which, as Stanley Nelson will, no doubt, have told you, the presence of Joe Sullivan, restored to health and playing some grand barrelhouse stuff behind Hoagy Carmichael's speciality *Small Fry*, calls for special celebrations. (Hoagy must have heard a lot of *Shoeshine Boy* before he composed this opus.)

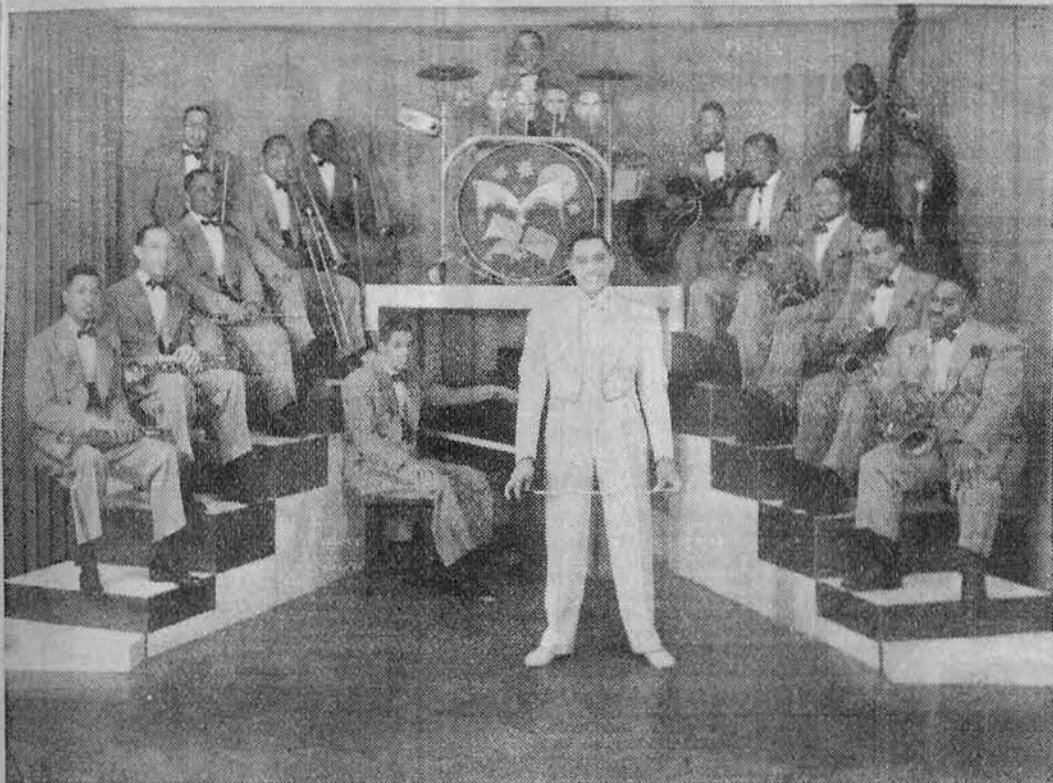
Even Fats Couldn't Do It

All the same, coming back to the squeeze-box argument, I feel certain there's something about both this instrument and the organ which militates against swing, and for proof you only have to listen to Fats Waller, who, playing the identical phrases he has pianoed for years, can't instil an ounce of swing into them on the organ.

Maybe Fats would like to take me up on that!

LEONARD G. FEATHER.





Cab Calloway usually gets knocks from the jazz critics, but raves from the lay critics . . . but, seen here, he doesn't seem to be caring much about the former.

STANDS BENNY WHERE HE DID?

Hot Records - by "Rophone"

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"I Would Do Anything For You" (***)
"Sandman" (**)
(H.M.V. 8764.)
Benny Goodman Quartet.
"Ida."
"Dizzy Spells."
(****H.M.V. B8765.)

TO my mind Leonard Hibbs' open letter could have been summed up in one sentence: Fletcher Henderson is a better arranger than Jimmy Mundy, who is not such a good arranger as Edgar Sampson. There you have the chronological explanation for the lapse in Goodman's style, and now that Sampson is on his staff (with Fletcher and Benny Carter also contributing) there should be no complaints.

But the above band pairing dates from the pre-Mundy era. *Anything For You* is not one of

Smack's greatest arrangements, but Benny has a good chorus and Pee-Wee Erwin gets off at some length. *Sandman*, even earlier—late 1935—is more likely Spud Murphy's work than Fletcher's; at all events it's musical, but not distinguished.

Qualifies for Top Marks

However, the quartet issue immediately qualifies for top marks. *Dizzy Spells*, composed by the Quartet (though the main phrase derives from Fats' *Handful of Keys*, previously waxed by this foursome) is the first release featuring Goodman with Dave Tough replacing Krupa. At this breakneck tempo there is little to pass judgment on except his restraint and discretion, which one hopes will be maintained.

Getting Along With Lionel

The feature of the opus is Benny's breath-taking collaboration with Lionel Hampton in "ensemble" passages in harmony for clarinet and vibes, cunningly done with fantastic technique used as a means to an artistic end. In fact, none but an amazing technician could have participated in composing such a piece as this.

Ida, from the Krupa dynasty, is swell quartet music in which the frequent doubling and halving of tempo is so neatly done that for once I won't object. Teddy Wilson's obbligato to Benny's almost-straight first chorus is one of the greatest things I've heard from him in many moons.

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.
"Yearning."
"Comin' Thro' The Rye."
(**H.M.V. B8766.)

Bits of Bud Freeman, bits of straight and bits of naughtily warm from Tommy; a swing choir vocal in *Yearning* which you'll like if you still like swing choirs; and in *Rye* a very Scottish atmosphere created by the extremely subtle subterfuge of "bag-pipe-fifths." (What? It's been done before? Incredible.)

I seem to be more and more blasé when it comes to the latest Dorsey dervish. Maybe it's my liver. Or maybe it's Tommy's.

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.
"So Little Time."
"Love Walked In."
(**Decca F6716.)

Everything just as you would expect

it, with Louis adhering very obediently to the melody. Even when it takes him down to his boots in *Love Walked In* he sings blithely on; the low F's mean nothing to him. They come out a bit queer.

Big Chocolate Dandies.
"Cherry."
Frankie Trumbauer and his Orchestra.
"Love Ain't Nothin' But The Blues."
(*Parlophone R2541.)

The Dandies, alias McKinney's Cotton Pickers, directed by Don Redman, were quite a big-time coloured band in the late 20's, *mes enfants*, though you mightn't suspect it from *Cherry*.

Lang's work throughout is the chief interest in a generally dull Tram side. Both this and the backing have stereotyped vocals.

Reginald Foresythe and Arthur Young.

"Solitude."
"Mood Indigo."
(**H.M.V. BD577.)

The embellishments are ornate rather than hot or swing, but the effect is not disagreeable and will match any drawing-room's furniture.

Ray Noble and his Orchestra.
"Crazy Rhythm."
"Moon of Manakooa."
(*Columbia FB2002.)

The attempts of "sweet" bands to play hot are usually at least worth something as curios. Noble's *Crazy Rhythm* is no exception. Starting fast with a fairly good trumpet solo, it breaks into drag tempo. In this passage are eight bars of intriguing guitar. Alas, the tempo soon doubles again and it's one of those repeated-riff things.

Manakooa, with Tony Martin and all, is not my department.

RECORD TUITION

RECORDS OF THE WEEK.

Recommended to all musicians, irrespective of whether their particular instrument is featured:—

"Dizzy Spells" and "Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider," by Benny Goodman Quartet (H.M.V. V8765).

- Clarinet (Benny Goodman).
- Piano (Teddy Wilson).
- Drums (Gene Krupa).
- Vibraphone (Lionel Hampton).
- Dizzy Spells* and *Ida, Sweet As Apple Cider* by Benny Goodman Quartet (H.M.V. B8765).
- Trumpet (Bill Coleman).
- Trombone (Dicky Wells).
- Guitar (Django Reinhardt).
- Hangin' Around Boudon* and *Sweet Sue* by Dicky Wells' Orchestra (H.M.V. B8763).
- Tenor (Joe Thomas).
- Trombone (Russell Boles).
- Swing ensemble.
- Oh, Boy* by Jimmie Lunceford's Orchestra (Brunswick 02608).



Which Record Contains the Greatest Number of Jazz Celebrities?

Feather Forecast and News

Celebrities?

A Teaser for the Swing Record Enthusiasts

ANDY RAZAF, ex Grand Duke turned songwriter

Paul Razafkeriefo, a descendant of the royal family of Madagascar "before that country was broken by France's legions," he boasts a knowledge of economy, prosody, world history and folklore that surpasses many a college graduate's.

The Duke Gets a "Lift"

At sixteen he left school to help support his mother by running a lift and doing odd jobs.

Meticulous in speech, delicate in mannerisms, he is a friend and co-writer of Reginald Foresythe's and, by way of contrast, an old buddy of Fats Waller, with whom he has created the most successful coloured song-team ever.

One Christmas I had a greeting card from him which he'd had printed and circularised to all his acquaintances.

It is too good not to quote in full, so here you have it verbatim:—

"The joyful inspiration that inspired me to write *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *S'posin'*; *My Fate Is In Your Hands*; *Memories Of You!*; *Aintcha Glad*; *Honeysuckle Rose*; *My Handy Man*; *Black And Blue*; *If It Ain't Love*; *Porter's Love Song*; *How Can You Face Me?*; *On Revival Day*; *Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now*; *Lovely Liza Lee*; *What Harlem Is To Me*; *Reefer Man*; *The Night, The Wind, And Me*; *Concentratin' On You*, etc., does not compare with the joy I feel in wishing a friend like you a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year, Andy Razaf."

And the same to you!

Leonard G. Feather.

BROWSING through my record library the other evening I was struck by one of those useless but interesting thoughts that may provide much food for discussion. Which, by present day standards of fame, is the record containing the greatest number of jazz celebrities?

For the quantity of folks who have become band-leaders in their own right or earned similarly individual fame, I imagine Hoagy Carmichael's *Rockin' Chair* on H.M.V. would be hard to beat. This has four band-leaders of to-day—Tommy Dorsey, Joe Venuti, Benny Goodman, Gene Krupa—as well as three men whose death increased their fame—Bix, Bubber Miley and Ed Lang—plus Bud Freeman and Hoagy.

Then there is the Jack Teagarden version of *You Rascal, You*, on Columbia, which has both Teagarden, Tommy Dorsey, Artie Shaw, Bud Freeman, Fats Waller and the late Dick McDonough.

Adrian Rollini's *Sugar* has both Teagarden, both Rollinis, Goodman and others.

Reginald Foresythe's American waxings included five band-leaders of to-day: Foresythe, Goodman, Mondello, Kirby and Krupa. For notabilities such as Chick Webb, Benny Carter, Willie The Lion, Kirby, Bud Freeman, the Mezzrow *Apologies* session ranked high.

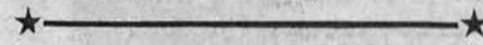
A "Grand Duke" And Other Celebrities

Among the all-coloured combinations a good choice is the original Chocolate Dandies' *Six or Seven Times* on Parlophone, reputed to include Hawkins, Redman, Carter, Higginbotham, Rex Stuart, Fats Waller et al.

Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra at one time contained Louis Armstrong, the late Joe Smith, Buster Bailey, Don Redman, Coleman Hawkins; and so on for a long time, but it depends what you understand by the word celebrity.

Can anyone beat the above? I'd be interested to hear.

Herewith you see a picture of Andy Razaf, one of the most singular characters in Tin Pan Alley. Claiming to have been born Grand Duke Andrea



Aug. 19

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

THE dance-music cognoscenti should be interested in the announcement regarding plans for the last quarter of 1938 in the way of broadcast gramophone recitals. The Wednesday evening period from 11.30 to midnight, which has for some time been run under the heading 'Swing Time' and compiled by Leslie Perowne, will from October be transformed into a sort of swing fans' haven.

Well-known exponents and critics will be invited to take over this period to devise their own record recitals very much on the lines of features presented previously on Friday afternoons. In fact, it is likely that some of the most interesting afternoon programmes you may have missed will be revived at this more convenient time.

One of England's best rhythmic pianists, Gerry Moore, can be heard in a special little recital on his own on Wednesday (National, 7.20).

Gerry, who was known as Gerald Moore until the confusion between himself and the 'straight' pianist of that name became amusingly and mutually embarrassing, is London born, but has always been one of the most earnest followers of American ideas in style. He has attempted to model on the lines of Earl Hines and 'Fats' Waller, who has been having such a success in London these past two weeks.



Dennis van Thal

For more than a decade Gerry Moore has played in small night clubs, preferring this work to the surroundings of a full-size band. He is unusually touchy about studio acoustics, piano tone, and touch, but if he feels at home in Broadcasting House the recital should be worth studying.

During the absence of Hyam Greenbaum and the regular television orchestra on holiday, a new band has been playing at Alexandra Palace for the past week, and will be heard during the next two weeks as the resident combination in the television presentations at Radiolympia, some of which you will be hearing in the ordinary sound transmissions.

Dennis van Thal, the enterprising organiser of this group, is a twenty-nine-year-old Londoner with a record of experiences in the textile trade (which bored him), photography, and advertising (which kept him busy for five years, but not too busy to broadcast furtively under the pseudonym of 'Van Dennis' in duets with Jean Melville during his spare time).

This 'new band' of his might better be called an old one in new guise, for it consists of eleven of the men who have left Roy Fox following the complete disruption of the latter's organisation. Fox is now faced with the task of getting together an entirely new orchestra.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE usual summer exodus is on, and most of Britain's dance bands are endeavouring to combine business with leisure by securing engagements at seaside resorts and holiday retreats both here and abroad.



Billy Merrin

Ambrose was recently in Holland on a short tour of that country's principal dance halls, but the band is at present enjoying three weeks' vacation.

Syd Lipton, having left his orchestra in the hands of a deputy leader, is on a month's Continental holiday.

Of the band's that are still at work, complete with leader, you may hear Jack Jackson and his usual ensemble in a broadcast from the Merrie England Ballroom in Ramsgate, playing Monday's late night dance music. Henry Hall and his Orchestra will be on the air from Southport on Friday for the lunch-time session.

Billy Merrin, who has worked in Ramsgate for the past five summers but has never previously broadcast from this seasonal *pied-à-terre*, breaks the spell with a programme on Wednesday from 5.20 to 6 p.m. coming from the West-cliff Theatre Ballroom.

Yet another seaside programme will be given on Tuesday night, when the late session is to be divided between two bands, both subsidiary organisations run by leaders whose own orchestras are nationally known. One is Joe Loss's Shadows, under the direction of Arthur Copper-smith, and the other is led by Roy Fox's protégé, Peter Fielding.

* * * * *

Jack White has just entered his second year of broadcasting, and can be heard in another programme—his third this month—on Wednesday night, sharing the time with Alec Freer's Band, as both these combinations are playing at the Astoria during the absence on tour of Joe Loss.

Featured vocalist with Jack White is Tony Morris, saxophonist, once a member of his school band at the Liverpool Collegiate. After studying dentistry, he decided to become a crooner (a characteristic *jazz non sequitur*), joining Jack White in 1930 and remaining with him ever since.

* * * * *

Benny Goodman, now back in America, will be heard with his band once again, providing next Saturday's 'America Dances' broadcast.

During his forty-eight hours in London Goodman heard practically no jazz, having expressed an intense desire to get away from it all for a while. The entertainment that impressed him most was a television programme.

Present highlights of Goodman's programmes are the tenor saxophone of Bud Freeman, Harry James's trumpet, and in the quartet items the vibraphone of Lionel Hampton and piano of Teddy Wilson. And Goodman is still a wonderful clarinetist.

* * * * *

If you can pick up the Wales programme, then on Saturday, August 20, to Evered Davies and his Band from Aberystwyth. The town is described as 'the Biarritz of Wales' and the band as 'the Ambrose of Wales', so it should add up to something interesting.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

BRITISH rhythmic vocal acts, being few and far between, seldom seem to occupy much space in this column. One that deserves more than a passing mention, though, is 'Miff' Ferrie's Jakdauz, a trio popularised chiefly through its eighteen weeks on the air with the Band Waggon.



'Miff' Ferrie

Started three years ago by Freddy Latham, vocalist with Jack Jackson, the act was introduced with Jackson's band on the air. Later the direction was handed over to George 'Miff' Ferrie, who had had some experience at writing vocal arrangements and was at that time touring in an orchestral act headed by Al Bowlly.

Eighteen months ago, the three singers—Latham, Ferrie, and George Crow—began to acquire a national reputation. Latham has been replaced by Teddy Prince, and the group broke away some time ago from Jackson's orchestra, which now employs a different trio by the name of the Three Jackdaws.

All three vocalists are also instrumental artists, Teddy Prince playing alto sax, George Crow piano, and Ferrie himself trombone. Joe Ferrie, his brother, replaced him in Jackson's band.

'Miff' owes his nickname to a star American trombonist, 'Miff' Mole, after whom he was sarcastically named by friends when all he could play was a couple of scales!

Born in Edinburgh in 1911, 'Miff' learned trumpet, clarinet, and euphonium, began his professional career at sixteen, came to London 'on spec' at eighteen. He retains his native accent, his trombone, and an insatiable ambition to make the Jakdauz really famous.

* * * * *

Joe Marsala and his Chicagoans make a welcome reappearance in the American relay tomorrow night (August 27). Here you have the most potent example of a 'jam' band, i.e., one which relies almost entirely on extemporisation.

Marsala's clarinet, and the trumpet of his brother Marty, are still principal features, while the rhythm section will probably consist of Nat Jaffe, piano; Jack Lemaire, guitar; Buddy Rich, a very exuberant young drummer; and Artie Shapiro, string bass.

* * * * *

During the absence of Charles Shadwell and the BBC Variety Orchestra on a month's holiday, the deputy work has been placed in the hands of Percival Mackey, whose sixteen-piece orchestra has already been heard in the 'Radio Roadhouse' programmes.

Though he vaguely believes himself of Irish descent, Mackey was born in London in 1894. He was with Jack Hylton's Orchestra in the early 'twenties and later conducted theatre bands for many shows, including both the English and French versions of *No, No, Nanette*. He has run subsidiary bands and sent them to Scandinavia, Central Europe, and India.

He is a busy arranger, and has also written original compositions such as 'Boomerang' and 'Scram' for the Roadhouse shows.



Percival Mackey

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

ONE of the most noteworthy results of the Roy Fox upset, recently reported here, has been the acquisition by Ambrose of the services of Denny Dennis as vocalist-in-chief.

Born in Derbyshire in November, 1913, Dennis Pountain started his professional career as an electrician's apprentice. During his spare hours he played with the Mayfair Super Seven, a Derby semi-professional combination. He developed a certain amount of talent as a guitarist and drummer in addition to singing.

* * * * *

It was in the unpropitious atmosphere of a drill hall, where he was singing in a dance-band contest, that Dennis, then seventeen years old, was spotted as a future star and recommended to Roy Fox for an audition.

Fox approved, but advised the lad to wait a year and continue training his voice. During the twelve months, however, Dennis sang with Freddy Bretherton's band, and late in 1933, his name changed to Denny Dennis, he joined Roy Fox.

In spite of sounding more like Bing Crosby than any other British singer I can call to mind, this young man has a secret vice of singing in a real 'low-down' swing style. But then Bing Crosby, too, is a swing singer at heart and a close friend of the first of all vocalists in this idiom, Louis Armstrong.

Denny Dennis's career with Ambrose starts officially next week with the opening in Birmingham of a Variety tour by the full orchestra.

* * * * *

The series of provincial broadcasts of late-night dance music continues in the coming week with a programme from the Isle of Man on Monday evening, which will be divided between the orchestras of Joe Kirkham and Phil Richardson.

Joe Kirkham has the distinction of being known in jazz circles as 'the William Powell of dance-band leaders' on account of his remarkable facial resemblance to the Hollywood star. As far as I know, the similarity ends here and Mr. Powell does not play the trombone.

* * * * *

Phil Richardson, who earned much academic kudos and two degrees at the Manchester College of Music, has been leading orchestras since 1925. This is his fifth successive season in the Isle of Man.

* * * * *

Thomas Waller (whose wife never calls him 'Fats') is the centre of a story of a jazz reunion which took place recently in Sunbury. This Thames-side retreat is the home of Spencer Williams, and it was here that Waller spent his first day after arriving in London for his current vaudeville tour.

It is six years since Williams and Waller crossed to Paris together as a songs-at-the-piano team. Williams has been on this side of the Atlantic ever since, writing such hits as 'Dere's jazz in dem dere horns' and still reaping royalties from such early successes as 'I ain't got nobody', 'Basin Street Blues', and 'Everybody loves my baby'.

The inimitable Mr. Waller, besides being an ace pianist, is the writer of 'Honeysuckle Rose', 'Ain't misbehavin'', and other hits. The reunion in Sunbury means that these two writers of jazz evergreens have been co-operating on some new material which you will hear on the air very shortly.

FATS WALLER OFF RECORD

WHEN Benny Carter was big news in this country an article appeared in these pages in which I tried to give an intimate picture of the man behind the music. A non-technical fan piece on Fats Waller is a very different and in some ways more ticklish task, as Fats' caprices of character are too manifold to pin down on paper.

My first day chez Waller was Christmas Day, 1935. The cosy apartment on the outskirts of Harlem was crowded with gay Christmas trees which the younger Waller generation was helping to dismember. Fats had a new piano, and was as generously happy about this as were his children about Christmas presents.

His Father Was A Mini'

We spent some hours between the piano and the gramophone, on which were a pile of his own records, and the cupboard in which was a liberal supply of what Fats, with his liberal poly-syllables, described as "libations."

In that first meeting could get the essence of his personality and the imprint it has upon his performances. So as he has plenty of good friends and plenty of "libations."

Behind this complex character you would be surprised how hardy, hardships, the mention of colour prejudice and temptations to the point of himself has told me the life he leads is the direct result of the restrictions imposed on him in childhood. Because he is a minister,

considered that an evening spent at a dance was an outrageous thing as soon as he was free from parental shackles Fats went right out and did to the fullest degree everything he had been held back from doing in childhood and adolescence.

Jazzing 'Em To Paradise

You hear this in his music, and you heard it long ago. "The trouble I had," he told me, "when I was playing organ at the movie houses in Harlem! There they'd be playing some death scene on the screen, and likely as not I'd grab a bottle and start swingin' out on *Squeeze Me* or *Royal Garden Blues*. Managers used to send complaints around all the time, but they just couldn't stop me!"

When he arrived in London it was the guy who wrote *Squeeze Me* with him a generation ago, Spencer Williams, who was at the station to meet him and hustle him off for the day to his home in Sunbury-on-Thames, where we all ate ourselves silly on the greatest Southern fried chicken meal I've tasted since leaving Harlem.

Wasn't In A Swingy Mood

After the meal, Fats sat down at the piano, and what do you think was the first thing he played? You who imagine him inexorably tied up with swing will be shocked. He played his latest composition, a waltz. Yes, a real melodic waltz, and an agreeable piece, too, for which his old pals Andy Razaf and J. C. Johnson wrote a set of lyrics tentatively titled *Say Yes*.

Then Fats looked out of the window. A slow drizzle had started. "Watch out there, I'm getting my inspiration. Let's see now. Sunday afternoon, rainin' outside, a country cottage." He strummed a few bars. Spencer joined him at the piano, and within five

says
LEONARD FEATHER

minutes they had evolved the outline of *A Cottage In The Rain*. Whether you will ever hear it is questionable, for Fats can turn out songs faster than he can remember them.

Fats Is Good Company

For hours his gigantic, banana-like fingers curled over the keys while kept suggesting old favourites. The sight of a piano is an immediate cue for him to start playing—unless even one starts to persuade him to. As even after these twelve years of married life, Anita Waller doesn't get bored by his music.

Here, by the way, is someone who has played a vital part in Fats' career, who understands his foibles and makes a magnificent job of his position. Before I met her Mrs. Waller was described to me by John Hammond as "The most intelligent musician's wife I have ever met," and my meeting did nothing to destroy this impression.

At home the Wallers take great pride in their two sons and their little adopted daughter. Maurice, the elder boy, was recently interviewed in a Saturday Night Swing Session. Asked his favourite instrument, he said, "Piano," and asked which he liked next best after that, he said "More piano."

Mrs. Waller's anecdotes of this kind would fill a whole volume of *Bright Sayings of Children*. It was Ronald, the younger son, who, asked at school what his father did for a living, replied, "He drinks gin." They're still trying to puzzle that one out.



Fats and his band with a very big Big Apple

But Mrs. Waller and manager Kirk call their charge Thomas; in fact don't recollect hearing any of his mediate friends ever calling him Fats.

Like most men of his size, Fats has a byant good humour that makes him a grand company. He is the sort of guy who says, "Pardon me while I play the harmonica" when he eats coron-the-cob; and instead of thanking you he offers a portentous "God we bless you for that!" while, at the end of his huge chicken meal, he said, "Well, would you rather feed me or board me?" ("Board you!" darted Spencer.)

All that stage and record five, though he has most of it off by heart now, started out spontaneously. It was while crossing to Paris with Spencer as a double-turn in 1932 that he was persuaded for the first time to blossom forth as a vocalist, and the ship's concerts were an augury of how he was to strike fame and fortune.

Scotland Made Him McWaller

In America, particularly in Hollywood among the stars, he has made as many white friends as coloured. His contacts with white people date back to 1920, when he used to make mixed-colour recordings with Ross Gorman, Chet Hazlett, Buddy Christian and the old-timer banjoist Cali. Thus the idea that his series of waxings around 1929, with Larry Binyon, Condon, Krupa and the late Charlie Green, were the first mixed records ever made, is almost a decade out.

So far Fats likes England tremendously. He enjoyed Scotland; came away saying "Nae bother at all,"

and "Clare-ty, clare-ty" incessantly. His flat off Piccadilly has all the necessary records, piano, and "libations." A for the audiences and their response to his performance, he has been sincerely moved by this, to him, unexpected enthusiasm.

So to the thousands of fans and MELODY MAKER readers who have been glad to help him enjoy this trip, Fats offers a hearty vote of thanks, and hopes the visit may turn out to be a precedent for many others. "Well, aaaaaaall RIGHT, then!"

Aug. 20th



MARY LOU,
tagged "the
Blonde
Daughter
of the Golden
West,"
singing with
Lud Gluskin

Coleman Hawkins and Freddy Johnson.
"Well All Right Then!"
"Star Dust."
(****Vocalion S.123.)

IF the word "genius" has a place anywhere in jazz it belongs to Coleman Hawkins, who stands for the zenith of achievement in swing improvisation, and whose reputation is unbelievably maintained, untarnished after years in Europe playing in uninspiring bands

In the mood is the first few moments, nothing our old friend *Hot And Anxious* taken from Henderson's disc. The orchestration subsequently betrays the unmistakable stamp of Joe (Bass Sax) Garland, and in parts it's as good as the grand *Edgar Steps Out* with which this band made its disc debut.

Yet, again, some of the unison riffs are very moth-eaten. If you attach as much importance as I do to performance and tone-colour you will agree with my bricks-out-of-straw theory and conclude with me that *In The Mood* is a nice record.

The band only appears for a few bars in *Star Dust*, which for the rest is a much too florid piano solo in which, to fill in time, Edgar repeats notes ad infinitum, plays scales, and generally misbehaves.

No, Edgar, Hawkins has the first and last words on *Star Dust* for this week.

HOT RECORDS REVIEWED - - by "ROPHONE"

WHO SAID HAWKINS WAS FALLING OFF?

Latest Disc with Freddy Johnson leaves little to be said but plenty to be "gaspd"

The first phrase in the last chorus is so fantastic that you could swear it was premeditated. It wasn't.

Star Dust, less exciting but still great, is Hawkins from start to finish. This is infinitely superior to the previous *Star Dust* made by Hawk with a mediocre French accompaniment.

All this may sound like infantile hysteria, coming from one so reluctant to bestow exorbitant praise. Turn off the lights and melt into this music before you start mumbling that you can't see what's so marvellous about it.

Mildred Bailey (Vocal) and her Orchestra.

"Loving You."
"Just A Stone's Throw From Heaven."

(**Vocalion S.161.)

Typical commercial-tune-tackling jobs by Mildred and the full Norvo band, with Red taking solos on both sides.

The Ramblers.

"Sunday In The Park."
"Cry, Baby, Cry."

(**Decca F6735.)

The above-mentioned Freddy Johnson reappears, this time in the unexpected guise of vocalist. He has the fashionable plum in his throat. For the rest, both sides commercially competent. It's getting so that even Dutch bands sound a trifle like Goodman nowadays.

Louis Armstrong with Mills Brothers.

"Flat Foot Floogie" (***)

Mills Brothers Without Louis Armstrong.

"Caravan" (*).

(Brunswick 02622.)

Poor Norman Brown. He's a good guitarist, but so under-recorded in *Floogie* that the result, rather than a

vocal record, sounds more like a recitative. Louis gets muddled between the floy-doy, floy-joys, floogees and floozies (you'd think these lyrics would be bungle-proof) and takes a trumpet chorus that might, alas, be almost any trumpeter.

Still, it's the second best record of *Floogie* to date.

The American recording of *Caravan* doesn't sound very different from the previous version made in England, though if possible it's even more out of tune.

Count Basie and his Orchestra.
"Sent For You Yesterday And Here You Come To-day."
"Swinging The Blues."
(****Brunswick 02619.)

You can tell from the rhythm of the title that the first side is going to be plain twelve-bar blues sung by James Rushing, and you can tell from the title that the second side is going to be twelve-bar blues with maybe a dozen choruses instead of seven.

A friend of mine listening to *Swinging The Blues* said: "Will Hudson played those same riffs years ago and everyone said they were corny." How can one explain that Basie's music is a law to itself, that the same phrase can sound entirely dissimilar coming from two widely contrasted bands?

Swell, And Completely Captivating

The riffs are, granted, rather worn on this side, especially the one from Armstrong's *St. Louis Blues*, the resuscitation of which is inexcusable. But such is the band's vitality that it can bring even this antiquated material to life. Passages by Basie, the trombones, Young, Clayton, Evans and the other trumpet, in that order, are swell.

But the vocal side is completely captivating. The piano, Evans, tenor, Rushing's two mighty choruses, and a

Complete Personnel Guide to Mid-August Record Releases

THREE SHILLING RECORDS.

Mildred Bailey (vocal) and her Orchestra (N.Y., Winter, 1937). *Loving You*; *Just A Stone's Throw From Heaven*. With Red Norvo and Orchestra, usual personnel. Vocalion S.161.

Count Basie and his Orchestra (N.Y., February, 1938). *Sent For You Yesterday And Here You Come To-day* (Vocal: James Rushing); *Swinging The Blues*. Earl Warren, Jack Washington (altos); Lester Young, Hershel Evans (tenors); Buck Clayton, Ed Lewis, Bobby Hicks (trumpets); George Hunt, Dan Minor, Eddie Durham (trombones); Basie (piano); F. Green (guitar); Joe Jones (drums); Walter Paige (bass). Brunswick 02619.

Coleman Hawkins (Tenor Sax) and Freddy Johnson (Piano) (Amsterdam, Summer, 1937). *Well All Right Then!* (Comp. Hawkins-Johnson); *Star Dust*. Vocalion S.123.

Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra (N.Y., February, 1938). *In The Mood* (Comp. Joe Garland); *Star Dust*. Roger Boyd, Wm. Mitchner (altos); Rudy Powell (clarinet); Joe Garland (tenor and bass sax); Bernard Flood, Leonard Davis, Henry Goodwin (trumpets); Clyde Barnhart, R. H. Horton, David James (trombones); Hayes (piano); Eddie Gibbs (guitar); Frank Darling (bass); Kenny Clark (drums). Brunswick 02620.

trumpet who sounds uncannily like Harry James (but is probably Ed Lewis—would John Hammond please drop me a line?), are followed by more repeated licks, also not new, but, ye gods, how they rock!

First And Last Words

Edgar Hayes and his Orchestra.

"In The Mood" (***)

"Star Dust" (*).

(Brunswick 02620.)

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Tommy McQuater, ace trumpet with Ambrose, gave the girls a treat when he visited his home town, Maybole, recently.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG has got religion! Not content with teaming him up with the Mills Brothers and with a Hawaiian combination, the indomitable Jack Kapp, head of the American Decca Co., has thought of a new idea, with the object of attracting the attention of critics in every branch of music, whether they are interested in swing or other departments of the art.

The result is a series of recording of modern Negro Spirituals sung by Louis with the Lyn Murray Choir as a background. The first of the series were: *Shadrack, Jonah and the Whale, Nobody Knows the Trouble I See* and *Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven*.

The results are said to provide a most refreshing innovation.

Anyway, after the banality of the commercial song lyrics he has been trying to digest for the last few years, it should certainly make a pleasant

ARMSTRONG JOINS CHOIR

Feather Forecast and News

change to hear the one-time favourite vocalist telling how the whale spit Jonah out on to dry land and how the Children of Israel revolted, and other such episodes.

Carter Latest Victor Recordings

I have news of Benny Carter, in spite of the uncommunicativeness displayed since his departure from these shores.

It's doubly interesting news, since it involves a chance for us to hear Benny again soon. He has taken part in Lionel Hampton's latest recording session at Victor, and amongst the titles waxed were his own familiar *I'm In The Mood For Swing*, previously recorded with a larger combination in London.

In this title, also in *Shoeshiner's Drag*, an old Jelly Roll Morton composition, Benny heads a swell reed section which also includes the new Goodman alto star, Dave Matthews; and on tenors Hershel (Basie) Evans and Babe (ex-Goodman) Rusin.

With a name new to me, Jimmy Brack, on trumpet, and a rhythm section composed of Billy Kyle, John Kirby and Joe Jones, this is a session worth watching out for. I hope their discouraging sales on previous Lionel Hampton issues will not deter H.M.V. in this instance from putting them out over here.

Biggest laugh for years is the report in an American show business weekly that the American song heard most in Germany lately is *Bei Mir Bist Du Schön*, which has been heard frequently in broadcasts from Berlin.

Even Hitler should be aware that this is a hundred per cent. Jewish song by Jewish writers, and that the lyrics were originally in Yiddish!

Co-starring with B.M.B.D.S. among the German favourites is *Vieni Vieni*, which, of course, is in a language appropriate to the spirit of the Rome-Berlin axis.

Vincent Astor's Sensational Nove

A new blow for the colour bar is contained in the news that the ritzy St. Regis Hotel in New York has let down the barriers.

Plutocratic Vincent Astor, who owns this rendezvous of Manhattan's elite, has taken a step almost without precedent in his orchestral booking which becomes effective on September 28.

The former haven of sweet, dripping sentimental music will in future be the hangout where one can drop in to hear those former denizens of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom, Billy Hicks and his Sizzling Six.

Nice work, Mister Astor!

AUGUST 27, 1938

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SURREALISM IN SWING!

Feather News and Forecast

Cab Calloway, as seen by the famous Dutch artist B. Ten Hove, seems to be suffering from acute surrealism too!

vocal passages by Billy Banks and his female or falsetto-male echo; not because

of the manner, but for the matter, which consists of such typical blues refrains.

For its educational value, take note that the rather indistinctly enunciated lyrics should read as follows (the first line of each stanza being sung twice, of course):

BANKS: *Something was moanin' in the corner; I tried my best to see*

It was the mother bedbug pray-

in' to the Good Lord for some more to eat!

ECHO: *Bedbug big*

as a jackass will bite you and stand and grin;

Will drink up all the chinch poison and then come back and bite you agin!

BANKS: *I had a quart of moonshine layin' on my dresser drawers*

Two big bedbugs come and drink it and bit me 'cause there wasn't no more!

ECHO: *Gonna get myself a wishbone, these bedbugs here done got my goat*

Gonna wish that ev'ry bedbug goes off and cuts his throat.

What A Magazine Seriously Suggested

The funniest article I have ever read in a jazz magazine appeared in a French publication suggesting in all seriousness that these lyrics are an example of surrealism in swing music. "The material, a drink-induced hallucination or dream, is

handed in a perfect surrealist manner... the expression desired by the performers is so convincingly imparted that the listener is left in a cold sweat. The listener has gone through the emotions of the dreamer. He has felt himself grow small (the bedbug attained the stature of a jackass) and continues to shrink until nothing remains of him but a voice and a frenzied echo.

"He feels himself powerless against the onslaught of the bedbugs. (At this point, in typical dream fashion, the lack of censorship permits the wishbone to seem a very logical and effective means of exterminating the bedbug.)

Something America Hasn't Got

"How have these musicians been able to express themselves so well from the surrealist viewpoint? What has opened the door for them into this mental world of super-intense emotions?" (Etc. for another three hundred words.)

When you wake up from your cold sweat, report to me. Or ring Dr. Freud.

It's an almost incredible fact that America still lacks a musical weekly, the MELODY MAKER being the envy of the profession on the side of the Atlantic that has three times our population and umpteen times our music business.

The little news that our... between first-of-the-months generally occurs in *Variety*, which last week offered the useful information, in a report on Gene Krupa's stage show, that the band is made up of a lot of brass, "including four saxes."

And meantime there is a new fan monthly over there with the inevitable title of *Swing*, which follows in the tradition of film-fandom by offering page portraits of Bix, Bing, Krupa, and so on, which by now no doubt adorn many a jitterbug's wall.

Meanwhile U.S. Swing Fans Feed On This

The publication, I notice, was incorporated in the name of "Cats Meow Publishing Co. Inc." And, of course, there is one of those glossaries, in which young America is informed that "live" means "mellow music" and "corny drums" means "drums in which the player is putting the accent on the first and third beats."

Don't let's sneer at the so-called jitterbugs; they pay the money that keeps swing music alive.

Fats Waller Enters England Under Quota

Benny Goodman Travels
Incognito—Roy Fox Split-
Up Other English News

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON.—London only has one musical news topic this month—Fats Waller. It's the first visit to England of the keyboard wizard and fans swarmed to the Palladium to see him open.

His last trip to Europe in 1932, teamed with song-writer Spencer Williams, ended suddenly when Fats took a ticket for home after a short engagement in Paris, leaving Williams, who remained on this side ever since. Now the two are getting together again on some new song hits.

Fats' first show at the Palladium demonstrated the futility of the regulations governing the importation of American musicians. Because he qualified as a music-hall or variety act and came under the heading of general entertainment, he was able to obtain a permit to work here, but of course could not bring his band with him, as that would have made a music act out of it officially.

So the pit band at the Palladium tried with pitiful difficulty to struggle through some of the arrangements but generally managed to be half a bar behind or ahead of Fats. At the following show most of the accompaniments were cut out, and Fats, who had previously spent a week in Glasgow, killed the audience with a terrific rendering of *Loch Lomond*.

He is being lionized by the fans and musicians in town, and is expected to remain until the end of August, leaving shortly afterwards for Holland and Scandinavia.

There is a likelihood of his making a record date for HMV (Victor) here, with a small gang of British musicians. He has already been fixed up for some commercial radio transcriptions.

Our last visitor of note before Mr. Waller was Mr. Goodman, a young man without a clarinet and hidden behind dark glasses, who arrived in town strictly for a rest after three years of hard work. For his forty-eight hours in London he was in the hands of your METRONOME correspondent, taking in a few shows and doing his best to avoid talking shop or seeing any of the hundreds of people who wanted something out of him. After a few days in Paris and the Riviera Benny sailed for home, convinced that there's little peace for the famous.

The only other Transatlantic news item concerns Harry Roy, whose trip is an Eastbound one. Due back here from his tour of Argentina, Chile and Uruguay, he is preceded by reports that things didn't go too smoothly on the jaunt, owing to strange booking arrangements which

The Inside Story of One of the Most Famous Bands in Jazz History

THE RISE AND FALL of the CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

by ED KIRKEBY, Fats Waller's Manager

FATS WALLER'S arrival in London signalled the presence of another outstanding dance music personality; for travelling with him as personal manager is Ed Kirkeby, veteran band organizer, who himself has an intriguing individual tale to relate concerning the history of the California Ramblers, with which historical organization he was closely identified throughout its career.

The ensuing account by Mr. Kirkeby will shed light on many interesting points that have been in dispute for many years among jazz fans.

THIS is my first trip to London. You may consider that surprising for an old-timer who's been in the business for twenty-two years. Yes, I started in 1916, when records were really records and sales were sales.

I was assistant manager of the Columbia company at that time. Soon afterwards I went into business with Henry Burr, a ballad singer who was one of the top record sellers of those days.

Outside of our music publishing activities I started to book a few record artists. In those days there were very few organized bands playing for records—Art Hickman had only just come

East—and since there were no less than twenty-two recording laboratories in and around New York I had my hands full getting the musicians together for all the dates that were available to me.

One combination which I got together under the name of the Merry Melody Men played a very important part in record history. The names may not mean much to you to-day, but here they are: Bill O'Gorman, sax; Pete Brissett and Jack McCann, trumpets (McCann is a member of the trial board of the New York Union to-day); Char-

lie Randall, trombone; Roy Haines, bass trombone (we always had this instrument to replace the tuba on records); Ed Sutton, fiddle; Frank Banta, piano; Sal Primavalli, banjo; and the late Charlie Bird on drums. Those were the days of the old "tin horn" acoustic recording.

The Combination Gets Started

Well, as we kept recording under various names the demand gradually increased for a permanently-formed combination of the same

type. Whiteman had just got going with his *Whispering* and *Japanese Sandman*, and jazz was beginning to earn itself a little prestige.

Then came the fatal day when a group of boys came to see me about the purchase of a Van Eps recording banjo. We got to talking, and I found that these boys were mostly inexperienced kids who had arrived in town flat broke. But they had talent, and before long I had assembled a combination on the lines required, using them as a nucleus and also some of the Merry Melody Men. For this new bunch I



ED KIRKEBY

selected the name California Ramblers.

I acted as manager for the band, and the first violinist, Oscar

Adler, was leader when they went into vaudeville in 1920. The pianist and arranger was Ray Sargeant and the drummer Mac Mackintosh. Jimmy Duff played alto and Ray Kitchingham banjo.

Tenor players were as scarce as hens' teeth at that time, but eventually we found one, a guy named Solomon. Trombonists were few and far between, too, but eventually a young fellow named Rothwell filled the bill for me. What will probably surprise you most, though, is that even in that year, in 1920, we had a string bassist! He was a gypsy, playing entirely by ear and using the principles from which the bass style of to-day has developed. For the records with the new organization we had to put in a tuba.

We followed Paul Whiteman into the Palace Theatre in New York and went over big. Ziegfeld had heard about us and put us into his Follies with Will Rogers. From this time the name California Ramblers was made.

When Rollini Started On Xylophone

Later on the younger members of the group split with me and went into a band under Adler's direction, so I organized a new group in which Kitchingham and Duffy were the only survivors from the original Ramblers. Arthur Hand was violinist-leader this time; Freddy Cusick, tenor; Frank Cusick, first trumpet; Oly Olsen, who's now at the Roxy Theatre in New York, trombone; Irving Brodsky, piano and arranger; and three boys who later became internationally famous through recordings—Bill Moore, trumpet; Stan King, drums; and Adrian Rollini, xylophone. Arthur Hand made all public appearances while I, of course, continued directing the band on all rehearsal and recording sessions, and guided the business end.

Rollini definitely started on xylophone and took up bass sax later. This band opened at an exclusive Westchester resort, the Post Lodge, in 1921, and was signed up for Columbia records. The following year we took over a place of our own, called it the California Ramblers' Inn, and had all the musicians using it as their late-night hangout.

Enter Red Nichols And The Dorseys

The going was good and steady from then until 1925, when Red Nichols joined and the two Dorsey boys were brought in from Detroit to add themselves to our personnel.

Others who had come in with us were Bobby Davis, alto, who joined in 1923 and was later to go to Elizalde in London; Arnold Brillhart, first alto, who now earns five or six hundred dollars a week in radio programmes.

With all these boys and their modern ideas the band became too advanced for the Westchester crowd, and lost a lot of its popularity. Nichols decided to go out on his own in the band field and formed the Five Pennies. The Dorseys later went to Whiteman and Adrian to England.

During the boom period, though, we were making as many as ten recording dates a week, so you can imagine that it is quite impossible for me to give any accurate details of all personnel. My full name being really Wallace Theodore Kirkeby, I recorded as Ed Kirkeby, as Ted Wallace, as Ed Lloyd (which was my brother's name) and as the Goofus Five, University Six, Varsity Eight, Seven Hot Air Men, Five Birmingham Babies and many others.

I coined the word goofus for the Couesophone (that is the original name for the instrument). We had imported some from France and Adrian Rollini did not invent them, as is commonly believed, but merely adapted them to a new method of playing, and took off the horn end, which really meant nothing.

Adrian did not have the monopoly of the hot fountain pen, either; Jimmy certain it was he, not Adrian, who played it on such records as *Dromedary*.

In the 1926 season we played a long season at the Club Deauville in Miami, Florida, after which I temporarily gave up the Ramblers and split with Arthur

Hand around 1927, allowing the name to fall into desuetude except for recording purposes.

Later Days With The Ramblers

Meantime I took a job at the Hotel McAlpin and started the "McAlpiners." Some of these boys took part on the recording dates in this period, while Adrian was abroad with Elizalde his place on bass sax was taken by Spencer Clark. Tommy Dorsey was replaced by Abe Lincoln; the first saxman was Peter Pamiglio, now a member of the Raymond Scott Quintet.

In 1933 I went back into the managerial game exclusively, and



Adrian Rollini, one of the pillars of the Ramblers.

developed the Pickens Sisters. Recording had almost stopped since 1932, when the Edison cylindrical disc company, after two years spent in vain efforts to build up their new flat-record business, gave up and bought out my contract.

But in 1935, when I became recording manager for the Victor company, I brought back the California Ramblers name, and also the name Little Ramblers, which we had used for small contingents from the full band. The personnel for these sessions, released on the Bluebird label, generally comprised most of Joe Haymes' men, such as Toots Mondello, Paul Ricci, saxes; Cliff Weston (Wetterau) on trumpet; Bud Freeman, tenor; Charlie Bush, drums, and Joe Ukel, trombone.

Musician Who Became A Chef!

The Little Ramblers was a mixed colour group including Adrian Rollini and the coloured Kirby Walker, who played piano duets on some titles.

So you see, the Ramblers have had a long and varied career, and the longer I think about it the more names float through my mind. One I forgot to mention, for instance, was Jack Purvis, who was on all the Ted Wallace discs around 1931, and on the air playing first trumpet for me six times a week from the Peregze Restaurant, New York.

There was a crazy guy for you! Sometimes he would sit up in the office dictating long serious brochures about women. They were never published or intended to be. He left me and joined Fred Waring, then disappeared, and next time I heard of him he was a chef—in Bali!

Gone Now, But They May Return

After leaving Victor I was with the Consolidated Radio Artists for a year or two, leaving them this May to join Fats Waller, and little dreaming that it would lead to my first European tour.

I often think about the great old times we had when the Ramblers were at the height of their glory, and I still think maybe I'll revive them in earnest some day. So keep on the look-out, and perhaps once again you'll hear that old war-cry—California Ramblers, here I come!

A FLOOD OF FATS

"ROPHONE" REVIEWS the CURRENT HOT RECORDS AND FINDS THIRTEEN WALLERS—OLD AND NEW

- Fats Waller And His Rhythm
- "I Wish I Were Twins" (H.M.V., JF1)
 - "Minor Drag" (H.M.V., JF1)
 - "Serenade For A Wealthy Widow" (JF8)
 - "Sweetie Pie" (JF8)
 - "Then I'll Be Tired Of You" (JF12)
 - "Georgia May" (JF12)
 - "Don't Let It Bother You" (JF13)
 - "Have A Little Dream On Me" (JF13)
 - "How Can You Face Me?" (JF14)
 - "Let's Pretend There's A Moon" (JF14)
 - "Believe It Beloved" (JF15)
 - "If It Isn't Love" (JF15)
 - "I Ain't Got Nobody" (JF32)
 - "What's The Reason?" (JF32)
 - "Baby Brown" (JF45)
 - "Whose Honey Are You?" (JF45)
 - "Sweet And Slow" (JF47)
 - "Lulu's Back in Town" (JF47)
- Fats Waller (Piano Solos)
- "Valentine Stomp" (JF4)
 - "Gladys" (JF4)
 - "African Ripples" (JF41)
 - "Alligator Crawl" (JF41)
 - "Viper's Drag" (JF35)
 - "Clothes Line Ballet" (JF35)
- Fats Waller and Billy Banks' Chicago Rhythm Kings
- "Mean Old Bed Bug Blues" (Vocalion S.20)
 - "Yellow Dog Blues" (Vocalion S.20)

THERE are more good Fats in the sea than could ever be issued in the regular H.M.V. lists. While Fats is news I may as well call your notice to some that can be ordered for 3s. from any dealer, having been pressed in England for the Continental JF series.

A Period Which Was Distinctive

It has often been complained, even by yours truly, that Fats' records since the flood began in 1934 have been too much alike. But one main source of differentiation stands out. On a few of the records Bill Coleman played trumpet. This period stands out, for even at his worst (as he is in several of these titles) Coleman produced a more orderly and *toneful* noise than Autry.

Thus JF 15, with Coleman on both sides, is good stuff; and 45, though Coleman is only on the first side, is better still because both titles are non-vocal, leaving room for more solo work, in which Albert Casey's guitar stands out. The other non-vocal pairing, 32, is only slightly inferior.

Some Emotions And a Clarinetist

Nos. 8 and 14 have the added curiosity of two ofay musicians

Mezzrow and Floyd O'Brien, with eight humble and retiring bars of clarinet from Mezz in *How Can You*. The queer treatment of *Wealthy Widow* disarms criticism even from Mr. Foresythe.

For a really old one by the group known as Fats Waller and His Buddies, try *Minor Drag*, in which the absence of a rhythm section doesn't prevent Fats and the banjost (maybe Eddie Condon) from giving the proceedings a tremendous lift. *Twins* on the reverse has a superb piano chorus, but is ruined elsewhere by a clarinetist whose identity, fortunately for his safety, is unknown.

Lulu Is Rather Wild

Nothing out of the ordinary happens in 12 or 13, though Eugene Sedric's tenor and clarinet provide moments of interest. Autry, at this period, was very uninspired.

One of the best of the bunch is *Sweet And Slow*, a grand tune; Fats really sings it, as well as playing some solid stuff. *Lulu*, if rather wild, has its points, too.

The piano solos are patchy, tending generally towards the Billy Mayerl carefully-prepared repetitive novelty number style, a fact that emerges strikingly when you find that *African Ripples*, recorded in 1935, is in several passages note for note the same as *Gladys*, waxed six years earlier.

Meet The Blues In "Right Surroundings"

Alligator Crawl features the split-tenth bass effect taken up with such gusto by Joe Sullivan and a horde of other Waller followers. Of the solo couplings I would recommend JF 35, because the slow movement at the beginning and end of *Viper's Drag* is hauntingly infectious. (Postscript: *Alligator* and *Viper* have just been coupled in the ordinary English list on B.8784.) *Clothes Line Ballet* has three movements, the second being a melody similar to *Sonny Boy* and no less banal; but here again the performance has bits and pieces that are irresistible.

For samples of Fats playing the blues, in just the right surroundings, the Billy Banks coupling is well worth while, especially as Henry Allen, Jimmy Lord, Pee-Wee Russell, Condon and Bland, Zutty and Pop Foster all participate.

More, and More and More

Of course, there are scores of other Wallers for which even the Continental H.M.V. lists couldn't find room. Maybe some day. . . .

In the meantime, don't you think the above will do to get along with?

Bob Crosby's Bob Cats. "Stumbling." "Fidgety Feet."

(***Decca F.6704.)

Sorry to be so late in coming to the above and following records, but this sort of thing is so much a matter of personal preference that I hesitate to offer a definite yea or nay. It's eight of Crosby's boys in a deliberately semi-old-fashioned, devil-may-jam sort of mood. There are excellent solos by Eddie Miller on tenor, Matlock on clarinet, and the intensely interesting Mr. Zurke on piano in *Stumbling*, an ancient Zez Confrey tune.

Academically it's inconsequential stuff and maybe not even good, but it all seems to have so much guts (there

I go using that vulgar word again) that I think the majority of you will return a favourable verdict.

Casa Loma Orchestra.
"Malady in F Minor."
"My Bonnie Lies Over The Ocean."
(**Brunswick 02603.)

The Glen Gray group is stencilled pretty much on Goodman lines these days, like every white band (well, like most), and the effect, if not sensational, is tolerable. The *Malady* may be a little too aptly titled, but there are solos on clarinet and trombone (Murray McEachern, a Goodman exile) which make you forget the composition.

Hunt's "Asking For It" Now

Pee Wee Hunt asks you to bring back his bonnie to him—more Scottish sacrilege, you see. The arrangement sounds somewhat Mundyish at first, but gets very much into the stereotyped riffing manner later on.

PERSONNEL GUIDE to SEPT. 1st RELEASES

THREE SHILLING RECORDS.

Mills Brothers with Norman Brown (guitar). (N.Y., Summer, 1938.) *Caravan* (with Louis Armstrong, vocal and trumpet), *Flat Foot Floogie*. Brunswick 02622.

Hot Lips Page and his Orchestra (N.Y., Summer, 1938) *Down On The Levee*; *Old Man Ten*. Lips Page (trumpet, vocals); Bob Schaffner, Wardell Jones (trumpets); George Stevens (trombone); Ben Smith, L. Johnkins (altos); Ben Waters, Lonnie Simmons (tenors); Jimmy Reynolds (piano); Connie Wainwright (guitar); Yank Porter (drums); Welhman Braud (bass). Vocalion S.197.

September 10, 1938, N.Y. AMST. NEWS

Fats Waller Waxes With British Band

Swings Out On Organ Making Several New Numbers

LONDON, Sept. 7.—Swing circles here are aroused over the recent announcement that Fats Waller has made several recordings which will be released very shortly. Waller, now visiting in England, performed the waxing with the aid of an especially assembled collection of British jam specialists who were gathered together hastily for the occasion.

Outstanding is the reported fact that Fats, among the recordings, waxed two organ swings, one of them being his famous "Ain't Misbehavin'."

Other songs waxed during the session, include "Flat Foot Floogie," "Pent Up in a Penhouse," "Music, Maestro, Please" and "Tisket A-Tasket."

The British musicians who worked with him were David Wilkins, featured trumpet man with Ken Johnson's band; George Chisholm, Alfie Kahn, Ian Shepherd, Alan Ferguson, Len Harrison and Edmundo Ross.

The waxing was brought about by Leonard Feather of the Melody Maker magazine, former columnist for The Amsterdam News.

BRITISH JAM BAND MAKES REAL BLUES

Hot Records

Reviewed

by

"ROPHONE"

Una Mae Carlisle (Singing At The Piano) And Her Jam Band.

"Hangover Blues."

"Mean To Me."

(***Vocalion S.198.)

I woke up this mornin' with an awful achin' head;

My eyes wouldn't open, my feet were just like lead!

I've got the blues so bad, all I want to do is cry,

'Cause my man just left me and he never even said good-bye.

I'm gonna lay my head down on the railroad track,

And I'll wait right there 'till my man comes to take me back!

NO, guess again. It's not Bessie Smith, but an English record, and the nearest railroad track was the District line!

There is, in view of this, an unexpected authentic blues atmosphere about this effort, engendered partly by Una Mae's opening chorus on piano, partly by the lyrics, and largely by the splendid work of two British coloured boys, David Wilkins on trumpet and Bertie King on tenor and clarinet.

Mae's Singing The Weak Spot

In fact, Una Mae's singing, far from contributing to this atmosphere, is the record's only fault. Her voice sounds dead and frequently out of tune. It is the background of growl trumpet and clarinet that interests in these passages. (Notice Wilkins even gets away with a phrase from *Silver Threads Among The Gold* in the last four bars.)

The rhythm section comes through splendidly, particularly Len Harrison's swell bass and the guitar work by little Alan Ferguson.

Mean To Me is fitted up with a new set of words, including the alarming line, "Every time you go to bed you should fall down on your head." The high spot of this side is Una's piano chorus, pretty much in the Waller vein and very solid, helped out by the bass and drums.



CRUEL TO BE KIND

When Irving Berlin visited Boston he was met by socialite songstress Sally Clark, who was singing at the Ritz-Carlton Roof. After a session on the piano, she asked for his advice. He told her to give up trying to be a professional singer and settle down to domesticity. Sally took his advice, and announced simultaneously her engagement and retirement from the stage.

Artie Shaw And His New Music.

"Just You, Just Me."

"Let 'Er Go."

(***Vocalion S.181.)

In adapting standard numbers to swing style nowadays, arrangers frequently endeavour to infuse as much swing as possible into the material while departing as little as they can from the original melody. Thus is born the commercial swing policy of Tommy Dorsey *et al*, whose productions as a result frequently fall between two stools.

Cast in the same mould of semi-straight swing, Artie Shaw's treatment of *Just You, Just Me* provides an exception to this rule by leaving the melody fairly apparent without sacrificing originality or interest.

Something Exciting In Jazz Clarinetists

The routine is a bit complicated, with solo bridge passages by Artie, but after a couple of playings you know just where you are; and you're glad to be there.

Artie's pure yet piercing tone in the high register is still one of the most exciting things to me in jazz clarinet playing. I know it is incredible to some of you that I can get a kick out of this style and yet also revel in the work of Pee-Wee Russell and Marsala. But then, the clarinet of Shaw and

that clarinet of Russell are in effect as different as trumpet and cornet.

When the record company told him to make *Let 'Er Go*, Artie presumably was conscious of the tune's deficiencies when he decided to avoid said tune as far as possible in his arrangement. The result is a far better job than you'd expect.

Eddie Stone And His Orchestra.

"Honeysuckle Blues."

"Up Popped The Devil."

(**Vocalion S.182.)

Eddie Stone has been recording for a couple of years with pick-up groups, generally contingents from the Isham Jones band, with which he works as deputy leader; but this is his first release over here.

Honeysuckle is the better side. It is almost unbelievable that the Rose in the title should have been changed to Blues and the royalties on the composition turned over to Eddie Stone. But that's Fats Waller's business, not mine.

I Should Like to Know—

I'd like to know who that not unpleasing tenor player might be; and the identity of the vibraphonist, whose chorus had some ideas, would interest me. But if I never find out who the trumpet was I shall survive the blow.

Devil could have done with more solo and less ensemble work.

Australian Music Maker

the country. . . Coffee-coloured Una Mae Carlisle, who plays and sings in the "Fats" Waller groove, cut four sides for Vocalion under the watchful swing eye of Leonard Feather, who hand-picked a swell accompanying band headed by Ken "Snake Hips" Johnson's trumpet player, whose name escapes me for the moment.



Hot Records Reviewed

**MIXED BAG
OF PARLO-COL
SWING ISSUES**

by
"ROPHONE"

Harry James and his Orchestra.
"Lullaby In Rhythm."
"Out Of Nowhere."
(***Col. DB5040.)

Gene Krupa and his Orchestra.
"Prelude To A Stomp."
"Fare Thee Well, Annie Laurie."
(**Col. DB5038.)

Russ Morgan and his Orchestra.
"Casey Jones."
"I Love A Lassie."
(*Col. DB5039.)

Red Norvo and his Orchestra.
"Says My Heart."
"You Leave Me Breathless."
(**Parlo. R2552.)

Artie Shaw and his New Music.
"Nightmare."
"A Strange Loneliness."
(**Parlo. R2554.)

Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra.
"Don't Be That Way" (**)
"I Can't Face The Music" (***).
(Parlo. R2553.)

NATURALLY we've all been waiting eagerly to see what sort of a job the Columbia and Parlophone folks would make of handling the American Record Corporation catalogue recently acquired by them and previously released in this country on the Vocalion label. Above are the twelve sides chosen for the first month's issues under the new régime.

**Not Much To
Create Interest**

Well, I don't want to be too discouraging at this early stage, and I allow for possible future improvements, but so far the outlook isn't too promising. Of these twelve sides, five at least should never have been issued.

The Russ Morgans are too absurdly unrelated to swing and have no place in any series of this kind. The Artie Shaws are a year old and among his weakest, otherwise they'd have been issued on Vocalion ages ago. The Wilson *Don't Be That Way* has already been issued on Vocalion; Parlophone had innumerable other Wilsons to choose from.

When the output over here is so small compared with the quantity of good stuff appearing in the



Will Hudson's Seven Swingsters recording for Brunswick. Personnel, taken from Hudson's large band, includes: Joe Bauer (trumpet), Will Hudson (arranger-leader), Gus Bovana (clarinet), Busse Etre (guitar), Chas. Brosen (tenor), Doc Goldberg (bass). Mark Hyams (piano) is not shown in the photo.

American lists, errors of this kind call for swift correction. Moreover, the discs are issued without any of the personelled labels, informative special leaflets and similar services which were offered during the Vocalion era. And if we don't know the personnels the records lose something of their interest.

The swell Harry James coupling is certainly the best of the six. First side is a charmingly different tune by Edgar Sampson, backing an oldie well worth reviving.

Apart from James' swell trumpet, there are piano, alto and trombone passages by three boys from Goodman's band (Stacy, Dave Matthews and Vernon Brown), which all tell their own story.

Technical Titbit: The ingenious playing around between F, G flat and D flat 7th in the main phrase of *Lullaby*. And the way the soloists manage to improvise on this odd sequence.

Krupa's record has nice spots by Vido Musso; and Chappie Willet, who was lately arranger for Louis Armstrong, but is now on Krupa's staff, has written a competent piece in the modern manner (with accents on the fourth beat and all that) in his *Prelude*.

**Norvo Sides Pleasant
But Very Commercial**

The recording is a little mooshy, and the band lacks any outstanding personality as yet. Jerry Kruger, the best white girl imitator of Billie Holiday, is not at her best in the stupid Annie Laurie song by Claude Thornhill.

The two Norvo sides are pleasant but very commercial, with Mildred just

walking through her part. Shaw's *Nightmare*, his signature tune, is a heavy, dragging thing on the lines of Spike Hughes' *Elegy*, while the reverse is just a good commercial performance with a gal singer of no distinction, Dolores O'Neil.

**Nan Wynn
Is A Discovery**

Wilson's first side was reviewed here on July 9 on Vocalion S 188. The new backing is interesting because Nan Wynn is the best white singer Teddy has discovered. She sings this lovely tune with as much style and charm as did Mildred Bailey, which is saying a chorusful.

Eddie South.

"Eddie's Blues."
"Sweet Georgia Brown."
(***H.M.V. B8778.)

Hot Lips Page and his Orchestra.
"Old Man Ben."
"Down On The Levee."
(***Vocalion S197.)

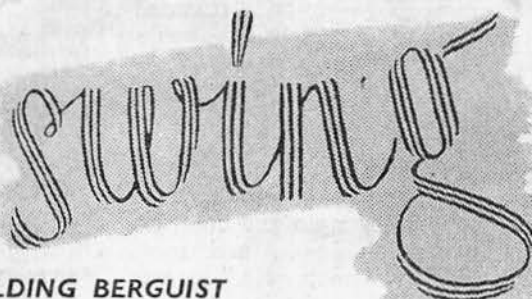
Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"Flat Foot Floogee."
"Ti-Pi-Tin."
(**H.M.V. B8777.)

Eddie South's violin style makes Stephane Grappelly's taste like last month's eggs, and his technique makes Stuff Smith sound like a street corner busker. Even though he's not quite at his greatest in this disc, you'll get an inkling of his brilliance. Buy this one.

Lips Page sings and trumpet-plays the blues on both sides of his debut. The tone is rough, but the feeling is there, and you'll get to like it.

Goodman's sides are comparatively valueless.

FAMOUS AMERICAN ACCORDIONIST GIVES US HIS VIEWS ON



By HILDING BERGUIST

BEFORE I take to task such mis-informed swingists as Mr. Feather, Mr. Boyce, and Mr. Hudson for their amazingly incorrect statements regarding "Swing on the Accordion," I should like to offer a little historical data on the origin of swing itself.

It emanates from one of the oldest of musical traditions—that of pure improvisation. Bach, Beethoven, and Chopin gave whole concerts of improvised music. The many impromptus we have to-day were conceived and produced upon the moment—off-hand, as it were, although, no doubt, in those days these masters had a different word for this "spontaneous playing."

To-day, the *idea* remains the same—but is applied to the various tempos and rhythms of modern dance music, producing true, genuine swing music—and thus revealing the tremendous vitality it possesses. This puts the emphasis on music itself.

To delve again into history, we notice definite quality of swing in several of Schaiakowsky's numbers; and if you don't think swing was created by Beethoven, investigate the "Scherzo" of his B flat Quartet.

Logging Feather

Mr. Feather alludes to the Duke Ellington recording in which appeared Cornell Smelser—the greatest swing genius of the accordion who ever lived—and says, "Any of the leading swing critics will confirm that this is agreed to be one of the worst Ellington records ever made." Mr. Feather, aren't you enough of a musician *yourself* to be able to pass judgment, or are you one of those who feel safer to rely upon the prejudiced words of a few so-called

critics who know nothing whatever about the infinite possibilities of swing on an accordion?

To use your own reference, you say, "Improvisations in swing depend not only upon melodic freedom, but on the unlimited varieties and subtleties of sounds and silences, dynamics, tone, expression, phrase accentuation, touch, artistic sensitiveness." Very good, because these are the elements which constitute intellectual, emotional, technical, and interpretative art—producing great music. And just such an accordionist is Cornell.

Any real musician realizes that Cornell was fifty years ahead of his time—and *still is!* He is the only original swing accordionist (outside of Lambert Bartak) I have ever heard (and I have heard almost every worthwhile accordionist, both in Europe and America). Cornell's conception and style is *infinite*, something *intangible*.

Therefore it seems so childish to me, Mr. Feather (you admitted having narrow-minded beliefs about "swinging on the accordion"), that you can persist in arguing so aimlessly on this subject when it is plain that your opinions are derived *only* from hearing a few "would-be" swing accordionists who know nothing whatever about its great art. You admitted this much when you said, "On the accordion, my impression of swing is simply one of a staccato monotone in the right hand and a heavy, plodding sequence of chords in the bass."

The *real* reason you say that "the accordion doesn't *sound* musically fitted to swing" is because there has never been *another* accordionist like Cornell—and evidently the few you have heard *to-day* couldn't produce swing from an accordion like Cornell could.

★ Last month, we threatened to close down the argument about swing. But, in the meantime, we received this article—and although (like every other publication) we do not necessarily agree with the views expressed by any contributor, we feel it ought to be published. Next month, however . . . but we had better wait and see!

However, as this may be, I think that you three gentlemen should be ashamed for doing the accordion such a flagrant injustice by attempting to classify it as a non-swing instrument. The accordion is the greatest of all instruments for swing, and given the right man in the right mood under control of a swing-conscious mind and soul, the accordion

PLEASE TURN OVER →

One of the young ladies in the new Musical Film Alexander's Ragtime Band



becomes *supremely* adaptable, as in Cornell's case.

This explains Mr. Feather's statement why "the accordion has never been generally accepted in a swing band"—simply because we haven't any more Cornells to go round. (Cornell has been ill for the last eight or so years and hasn't been able to play).

Belabouring Boyce

Mr. Boyce's cruel statement that "the accordion is incapable of swing because of its tone, it being rigid and cold, no genuine expression in it, and most unsubtle of instruments, etc." comes with something like a shock.

For a man who is supposed to be even a little musically inclined, and who could be accepted as an authority, it is, in itself, ridiculous, to say the least. One could express himself the same way about any other instrument too, Mr. Boyce. I would suggest to these two men to study the accordion for a while, and then afterwards they will find that it wasn't the accordion that was "rigid and cold" but most likely their *fingers!*

Perhaps I may even go so far as to prophesy that if they practise and study diligently enough, they may—in time—become real swing geniuses of the accordion—with all their previous knowledge of the peculiarities of swing to aid them greatly. But that I wouldn't wager on!

Heckling Hudson

As for Mr. Hudson, he must be one of these staid and extreme classicists who can appreciate no music but his own limited style, thereby condemning without verity and knowledge other types of music.

So it seems the only way to prevent Mr. Feather's, Mr. Boyce's, and Mr. Hudson's "anti-swing malady" from utterly destroying their otherwise perfectly intelligent, musical minds, is to suggest that they attempt to secure a few of the following records (although out of print) in which Cornell again appears with his immortal swing. These should cure their malady. If, on the other hand, after hearing these records, you still cannot "see" swing on the accordion, gentlemen, I suggest you withdraw from the music industry while you are still in fair standing.

Finally, I should like to use Mr. Feather's own suggestion—"Let's listen to swing music a little more and shout

BOOMERANG SWINGS ON FEATHER

about it a little less, and let us try to develop our musical sense, common sense, and tolerance."

That suggestion is the best boomerang you ever swung Mr. Feather!

And now—will you three gentlemen be listening to the following records: I hope for your sake that you can obtain them so that you may become converted.

Kitty from Kansas City—on Domino record No. 4575—played by the Imperial Dance Orchestra—Cornell being the accordionist.

Kitty from Kansas City—on Cameo record

No. 0320—played by the Hollywood Dance Orchestra—Cornell is the accordionist.

On the reverse side, *You and Me and the Baby*—is played by the Dubin's Dandies—Cornell is the accordionist.

She'll be comin' round the Mountain—on Conqueror record No. 7580—played by the Hollywood Dance Orchestra—Cornell is the accordionist.

She stole my Heart—on Cameo record No. 0223—played by the Dubin's Dandies—Cornell is the accordionist. And also I may recommend *Accordionola*—on Van Dyke record No. 81817—played as an accordion solo in swing style by Charlie Magnante!



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● SWING CONTROVERSY

STOP TALKING ABOUT SWING!

Says
LEONARD FEATHER.



Swing enthusiasts will recognise Una Mae Carlisle, famous rhythm pianist.

Addressing his remark in particular to our two previous contributors, who have, he says, confused the issue by forgetting that swing music and dance music are "separate matters."

If the articles in the last two issues are to be taken as a criterion, it would seem that swing music is being made a journalistic peg for an argument which would be much better abandoned. Swing is dying; swing is not dying; swing offers no possibilities for development; swing is purely for dancing. What does it all mean?

What it means is this. The reason for the whole controversy is that very situation of which Mr. David Boyce has attempted to prove the non-existence: the increase in popularity, scope (and, therefore, public attention), in the sphere of swing music. If this particular branch of music had not advanced so tremendously both in musical intrinsic value and in popular appeal nobody would have considered it worth while starting an argument that it is dead. Dead because it has just begun to live!

Let me take Mr. Boyce up on one or two points, since this dispute, even if it be centred around a subject alleged to be dead, certainly won't lie down. First there is his statement that "the swing idiom was going to absorb the entire classical school, giving a new lease of life to a centuries-old mode of expression."

Who said so?

What possible authority is there for such arrant nonsense? Has any sane jazz critic or enthusiast ever made such outlandish pretensions? Mr. Boyce is drawing these statements out of thin air, or out of the mouths of self-styled authorities who certainly never had any intimate contact with music as a whole.

Everyone who really loves swing music knows that it is an entity apart from other forms of music with no greedy claims on fellow art forms, and that it will develop side by side with these other forms. It is only a stupid, publicity-making, fantastic claim for the potentialities of swing music that will jeopardise its progress in quality and in prestige. The whole situation is thus a matter of publicity.

"Glamouricity"

Mr. Boyce seriously imagines that swing music stars are being glamourised "in a desperate attempt to prevent the stagnation of interest on the part of the public." A second's reflection should show him that this publicity has a directly opposite cause. It is the result of a demand for knowledge created by the interest in the music, not necessitated by the lack of interest. The horse comes before the cart, you know.

The need for a defence of this policy is obviated by a comment from Mr. Boyce himself. "Maybe it's true," he concedes grudgingly, "that the little intimate angles on the celebrity help the fan to form a closer contact with his idol." Precisely, and the same rule applies in any department of entertainment and does no harm but a great deal of good in sustaining interest.

"Swing" and "Dance"

The B.B.C., he adds, will tell us that dance music sessions are becoming less popular. A sly evasion. We are talking about swing music, not dance music, and Mr. Boyce knows full well that these are separate matters; furthermore, swing music sessions are becoming increasingly popular, to the astonishing point that there is a weekly relay of a band from America, and it is nearly always a swing band.

Mr. Mathis suffers from the same lack of precision as Mr. Boyce when he interchanges the words "swing" and

"jazz" indiscriminately in the same paragraph. Applied to hack dance music, his comment that it "offers no possibilities of development" holds water, but applied to swing music it only needs a consideration of the amazing advances in orchestral technique made by Ellington, Sampson, Henderson, and other such brilliant jazz writers to prove that swing music is advancing continuously along its own track, independently of the classical music which it was supposed to be ready to gobble up.

Not only for Dancing

As for the statement that swing's sole object is to provide an accompaniment for dancing, surely this is too laughable to be worth taking up. Mr. Mathis must be perfectly aware that swing music is not the first form of dance music to transcend the mere utilitarian services to which it owes its origin. And he should know, too, that nearly all the big events in swing music nowadays are held at concert halls, stadiums, exiguous clubs, and other resorts where there is no dancing and no desire to do anything but listen.

It is useless to try to deny the existence of swing music as a vital musical form to-day or to generalise with such comments as "I usually try to avoid drawing any distinction between serious and light music; I only recognise good and bad music." One might just as well say there is no such thing as chamber music, operatic music, and choral music, that they are all identical but for differences in quality. Or that it is advisable not to draw any distinction between lettuce, asparagus, tomatoes, and poached eggs on toast because we only recognise good food and bad food.

My suggestion is, let's listen to swing music a little more and shout about it a little less. The three cardinal qualities that Mr. Boyce and Mr. Mathis and myself all need to develop are musical sense, common sense, and tolerance. Especially the last.

Spr. 10

DUKE RECORDS 'LAMBETH WALK'

When Ray Noble was in Glasgow recently he called on Ella Logan's mother and met brother Bill, who is with Heny Hall. We wonder if Ray told Mrs. L. about the last time he saw Ella in Hollywood, as caught by candid camera below.



SO Duke Ellington has recorded the *Lambeth Walk*! The news chills me but hardly surprises me, because I see that a dozen *Lambeth Walk* dance teams have been organised to introduce the step in New York hotels, and the fact that Prince Serge Obolensky introduced the step in Manhattan seems to have bowled Tin Pan Alley over, with the result that the infection has spread throughout the other forty-seven States.

Smirking Gigolos And Bedizened Dowagers

All this is nothing, however, to the experience I had in the South of France last week. It was impossible to stay five minutes at any public place without hearing the *Lambeth* ditty, and when a French orchestra plays a tune once there is inevitably an immediate encore, or two or three, with the result that after hearing the tune at least five dozen times in five evenings, and seeing the steps danced by smirking gigolos with bedizened French dowagers, I lost control and made a mad dash for the adjoining rooms to drown my sorrows in roulette.

Incidentally, the Riviera has turned out to be a home-from-home for British bandleaders on holiday. Arriving just in time to hear of Ambrose's misfortunes at the Cannes tables, I found Maurice Winnick in the vicinity, to say nothing of Jack Harris, Joe Loss, Bert Firman, and sundry others, all in Cannes or the environs.

Mabel Scott was there, but working, at Chez Victor, where Ambrose played



a year ago. Shortly she goes into the Folies Bergere, the first coloured artist to crash this famous Paris show since Josephine Baker.

There were several other spots of news to pick up in Paris on the way home. Montmartre still has a few attractions in the way of jazz, chief of which is the Grand Jeu Club, where Valaida's working. The lady still plays a mess of trumpet and sings her very heart into *You Let Me Down*.

Some Interesting Continental Chatter

The Big Apple, with which Adelaide Hall no longer has any connection, has passed into the hands of Bricktop and can be heard on the air every Sunday at 10 p.m. from Poste Parisien. It was under Bricktop's auspices that the Hot Club Quintet worked for a considerable period. This lady, whose name simply means redhead, is still one of

the foremost personalities in Paris night life.

From elsewhere I heard a rumour that Danny Polo was to join Ray Ventura's Orchestra, or that at all events he will stay on the Continent indefinitely. . . . Hugues Panassié, who was supposed to be making his first trip to America, has put the jaunt off. . . . Una Mae Carlisle is at the American Hospital in Paris with a very painful ear complaint which may involve an operation; record fans please write and cheer her up. . . . The French Swing records continue to be issued far too fast for H.M.V. ever to keep pace. Latest release is a great trumpet trio disc by Bill Coleman, Shad Collins and Bill Dillard; also French hot men in the bands of Michel Warlop, Pierre Allier and Philippe Brun.

As I write I can hear a neighbour's radio which has just begun to belch forth the *Lambeth Walk*. Pardon me while I go out and commit homicide.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Sept. 9.

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

THE tour of holiday resorts in the late night programmes will take listeners to Rhyl on Monday night.

Mrs. Wilf Hamer, who will be heard from the Queen's Dance Hall, is one of Britain's few well-known feminine band leaders. She has led an orchestra on and off since she was fifteen, but has had the present one only since the death, just two years ago, of her husband, who was well known in dance-music circles.

Her own job consists of conducting, playing piano-solo parts, singing, and announcing. As she was an exhibition dancer as well as a pianist before her marriage, she still keeps up her dancing lessons with a far-sighted eye to television.

Under the name of Mary Daly she broadcast regularly from 1927 in songs at the piano.

An outstanding player in her band, to whom she will probably allot a solo in the broadcast, the trombonist Harry Fisher.



Mrs. Wilf Hamer

By the way, she craves your indulgence with respect to her piano solo in the programme, as one of her fingers is at present in plaster of Paris.

* * * * *

On the same night Cliff Gwilliam will be heard from the Pavilion Theatre in Rhyl.

There is a distinctly Welsh aura about everything connected with this band. Gwilliam was born at Cwmtillery, South Wales, of Welsh parents. He speaks fluent Welsh and his signature tune is 'Ar hyd Y Nos' ('All through the night'). His personal monogram is the Welsh Dragon superimposed on the chords of C and G, his own initials.

Thirty-four, round-faced, and spectacled, Gwilliam started learning the violin when he was eight and can now play almost every instrument in the orchestra.

He has conducted symphonies, ballets, musical comedies, Variety, and concert parties, and has been director of music to well-known health resorts in England and Wales.

The vocalists in his band are Nora Savage, Vince Vaughan, and Eddie Walsh and the instrumentation is divided equally among violins, saxophones, brass, and rhythm, four apiece.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG TO HAVE STARRING FILM ROLE

Dance Musicians' Red Hot News from the U.S.A. Rushed Over by Dick C. Lander

AT LAST IT LOOKS AS THOUGH LOUIS ARMSTRONG IS GOING TO BE GIVEN A BREAK BY HOLLYWOOD. EVER SINCE HIS PROMISING APPEARANCE IN "PENNIES FROM HEAVEN" THE ENSUING ROLES ACCORDED HIM HAVE PROVED A SERIES OF DISAPPOINTMENTS. NOW COMES NEWS OF A SURPRISE CONTRACT FROM WARNER BROTHERS.

Louis has already left for Hollywood, and the picture, entitled "Going Places," is expected to go into production almost immediately. Dick Powell is the star, but if present arrangements are adhered to Louis will be seen throughout the film in an acting and playing part which will virtually make him co-star of the production.

Warner Brothers have also signed Maxine Sullivan, who recently made her Hollywood debut in *Saint Louis Blues*. The part for which they have contracted her was originally offered to Ella Fitzgerald for a figure in the neighbourhood of \$5,000, but Ella had to turn it down on account of her long list of touring dates with Chick Webb.

DORSEY WELL AGAIN

Tommy Dorsey, now completely recovered from the throat trouble which kept him off the stand for some time, takes over at the Hotel New Yorker for three months from October 12. . . . Count Basie, a great success at the Famous Door is held over for a further two months. . . . Guy Lombardo switches to Decca when his Victor contract expires in December. . . . Vido

Musso, back home again in Los Angeles, has organised a Make Believe Ballroom Orchestra, which has replaced Joe Venuti at the Villa Venice Ballroom.

Disappointment to the swing world was the first of the four concerts at Randall's Island Stadium organised for the benefit of a fund for blind musicians. Fans who went expecting a festival of swing were let down badly when such bands as Nano Ridrigo, George Olsen, Richard Himber, Al Donahue, and Willie Farmer occupied most of the time.

Only 4,000 out of a possible 20,000 attendance was registered at the gate. Joe Marsala's Chicagoans provided the only excitement of the show.

The Savoy Sultans, scheduled for a Saturday B.B.C. relay shortly, have booked into New York's Kit Kat Club to entertain white audiences. On Octo-

ber 20 they will be replaced by Jimmie Lunceford for at least ten weeks.

Will Hudson's combination has had to disband owing to the indisposition of the leader, who, following a nervous breakdown, has retired to the country for some months. . . .

Moe Zudecoff, trombonist, formerly with Artie Shaw and Eddy Duchin, has joined Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra, as have two ex-Bob Crosby trumpeters, Yank Lawson and Charlie Spivak. . . .

Nat Jaffe, pianist with Marsala's band, has organised a recording group for Mills which includes Roy Eldridge on trumpet. . . . Scat Powell, a new singer to watch out for, has made a hit with his first recording at a Cootie Williams session, and will front a band of his own under Mills' management next month. . . .

Benny Carter has taken part in a Teddy Wilson recording session, and his tune *Blue Interlude* has been recorded by Benny Goodman.

The Commodore Music Shop, following up the wonderful publicity given by *Life* magazine recently to its special Chicago style recordings, has waxed another great session under the name of Bud Freeman and His Gang, featuring Dave Matthews, Dave Tough, Marty Marsala, Pee-Wee Russell, Bobby Hackett, Jess Stacy, Eddie Condon and Artie Shapiro.

BERNIE'S BET

By way of a compliment the gang named one of their tunes *Life Spears A Jitterbug*, just as Benny Goodman did with *Life Goes To A Party*, after the magazine had given him a big spread. . . . The Commodore also plans to open a new shop on Fifty Second Street, which will start with a big jam session. . . .

Other sessions planned by the enterprising Milt Gabler include one by Eddie Durham and some of Basie's boys, and the Windy City Seven featuring Joe Marsala and Benny Carter.

A replica of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom is to be built at the New York World's Fair, featuring exhibition dancing starting way back in the days of the cakewalk and bunny hug, ending with the latest dance fads over here, *Peelin' The Peach* and the *Lambeth Walk*. . . .

Erskine Hawkins, paying a novel penalty resulting from a recent bet he had with Ben Bernie on the result of a big fight, stood in front of the windows of Macy's, New York's biggest department store, and played his trumpet for a half hour, while two dozen policemen tried to disperse the thousands gathering round to hear him paying his forfeit!

RADIO TIMES ISSUE DATED SEPTEMBER 16, 1938

SIGNATURE TUNE By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

NOW that the dog-days of the dance-music season are over, the indolence of summer heat has given way to a new wave of activity, and the general tendency is for the big bands to take to the stage. Ambrose has commenced a long Variety tour with his full ensemble, and now the footlights welcome a newcomer in Eddie Carroll, whose radio popularity has led to a decision to present this combination to audiences throughout the country's music-halls.

Carroll sticks to his policy of specialising in semi-swing material instead of the commoner practice of concentrating on hack tunes. If the public responds appropriately there should be a distinct surge in fan-interest; so here, for reference, is the full personnel:—

Eddie Carroll and Bobby McGee, pianos. Bert Bullimore and Arthur Mouncey, trumpets. Freddy Welsh, Eric Tann, and Arthur Verrey, trombones. Tommy Bradbury, alto sax. Jay Farley, clarinet. Alan Yates and Benny Greenwood, tenor saxes. Ivor Davis, baritone sax and vocals. Sam Gelsley, guitar; Sid Hieger, drums, and Doug Lees, bass.

Gwen Jones, Carroll's juvenile girl singer, is the most recent addition to the company. Her sponsor believes she has an illustrious future.

Another band which has taken to touring is Ken Johnson's, which is to be heard on the air next Monday evening.

* * * *

Roy Fox, too, should have been touring by this time with his newly-formed orchestra, but misfortune overtook him at the eleventh hour in the shape of a serious illness, and on medical



BERYL DAVIS
vocalist with Oscar Rabin's Romany Band
(Wednesday)

advice he decided to cancel all plans indefinitely while he recuperates abroad.

Although Sid Millward has been broadcasting with his own band and will continue to do so, he was recently appointed as first saxophonist with Lew Stone following the departure from Stone's band of Joe Crossman.

Crossman is now with Ambrose in the chair formerly held by the American clarinet star, Danny Polo, who has decided to remain on the Continent.

Listeners with a fairly acute perception for that kind of thing might be interested to know why certain outside dance-band broadcasts sound sharper and clearer than others.

Oscar Rabin, whose Romany Band will be broadcasting again on Wednesday night, is fortunate in working at the Hammersmith Palais de Danse, for engineers have described it as a perfect broadcasting studio.

This was the first hall of its kind to go on the air, and was lately selected to set a similar precedent in television.

The American relays, in addition to providing plenty of variety, add a note of novelty with tomorrow night's introduction of the Savoy Sultans, a young coloured group which acts as relief band at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom. Though not yet well known even in Harlem, the combination has several interesting soloists, including an excellent alto saxophonist named Rudy Williams.

Next Saturday, September 24, Tommy Dorsey accepts the BBC's invitation to an encore.

RECORDS TOO DEAR!

Falling-off in sales will isolate British jazz fans unless record-companies take some action

CHEAPER RECORDS WOULD HELP ALL ROUND

By "ROPHONE"

FOR some time it has been at the back of my mind to expose in these pages a scandalous state of affairs which is of vital interest to the vast majority of MELODY MAKER readers, who constitute a large proportion of the entire swing record buying public in Great Britain.

Briefly, the situation is this: swing record sales are so appallingly low that, unless some immediate move is made to rectify this, English musicians and jazz students will be in a virtual state of isolation, since records represent their only constant point of contact with the world of American jazz. This would have a disastrous effect on the music, on public taste, and on the industry as a whole.

How did this extraordinary situation arise when, paradoxically, American record sales are steadily on the upgrade? And why, with less than three times the population, are the American disc sales ten times as big as ours?

SLUMP

The reason probably originated in the decision of the Decca and E.M.I. companies, who control the entire record output in Great Britain, to raise the price of 2s. 6d. records to 3s. as from September 1, 1937.

The alleged reason for this move was the companies' intention to spend the additional revenue on bigger and better artists and talent, and on thousands of pounds worth of advertising in order to make the public record-conscious. The advertising helped to lift things up for a little while, but since February there has been a worse slump than has ever been known since the depression.

As far as the question of talent is concerned, this does not enter into the matter of swing music, for the material is obtained from American catalogues, and is therefore costing the companies no more now that it did when they were charging 2s. 6d. for swing issues.

RECORD LUXURY

What are the main reasons for this sudden falling off in sales? Firstly, there is the fact that over ninety per cent. of the population earns less than £3 a week. Consequently, records, which are a luxury at the best of times, can hardly be afforded at all in the present state of affairs.

A survey made recently at a leading rhythm club, where I asked twenty members at random what was their attitude towards the increased record prices, gave the following revealing figures: ten said they had appreciably reduced the number of records purchased; three declared themselves unaffected by the change, and seven told me they had given up buying records altogether since prices went up!

Now the swing disc buying public does not, in general, belong to the richer classes. It belongs to that ninety per cent. who can't afford luxuries. Why, then, don't the record companies act accordingly?

Ostensibly their excuse is that a previous experiment, when all H.M.V. and Columbia swing discs were reduced to 1s. 6d.,

that the subsequent change back to 2s. 6d. brought only a very slight falling-off.

SHORT-SIGHTED

But this was some years ago, and to assume that the same situation would arise now is as short-sighted as if the French Government were to try to stabilise the franc at 120 to the £, when world conditions are obviously forcing it to a cheaper level. Circumstances alter cases.

At present, the only real American swing artists selling at 2s. are Bob Crosby, Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller. Occasionally, Wingy Mannone and others appear at 1s. 6d.

Having examined the facts, let us examine the advantages and disadvantages that would accrue from a reduction of all swing records to 2s.

ADVANTAGES

The advantages would be the offering of swing music to a far wider public, including that section which buys on the strength of titles rather than of artists' names. The difference in the wholesale price would necessitate a 50 per cent. sales rise for dealers, a rise that I am certain would be exceeded by far.

The disadvantage would be a drop in the prestige value of swing music in class and price by reducing it to the ranks of ordinary dance music (but, as I have explained, this would be more likely to turn out an advantage).

What have the record companies to say in answer to this challenge; and what have readers to say? If we can hear some frank views from both sides perhaps this matter can be thrashed out before a state of affairs is reached where it is too late to do anything about it. All those who feel strongly on the subject are invited to write in.

No. 1 RHYTHM CLUB'S WINTER PLANS

IMPORTANT changes and developments in the plans of the West End swing sessions and of the No. 1 Rhythm Club have been arranged for the advent of the autumn season.

Even during the summer months, attendances at the fortnightly swing sessions, organised by Bill Elliott and Leonard Feather, have maintained a remarkably high level, and, at each meeting, audiences have been treated to a veritable feast of swing music played by many nationally famous West End musicians.

Accordingly, it has been arranged to provide accommodation during the winter months which will make it possible to develop these meetings into the most important musical events of their kind in London. New premises have been taken in the Warwick Rooms, First Avenue Hotel, Holborn, facing the top of Chancery Lane.

The new hall seats over two hundred people and its amenities include a stage, grand piano, radiogram and an adjacent licensed buffet and bar which will fill the long-felt need for refreshments on the spot. The No. 1 Rhythm Club stalwarts will hold their meetings here also, on Mondays instead of Wednesdays as hitherto, and, on the intervening Mondays, Leonard Feather will present his swing sessions.

For the first meeting at the big new premises, the No. 1 Club and the swing sessioners will join forces in a big presentation, details of which will be given shortly. The date is fixed for Monday, October 3.

In the meantime, there is a final meeting of the swing sessions at 243, Regent Street, W., next Wednesday at 8 p.m. at which, in addition to the usual jam session, the special feature will be a recital of rare and unusual Negro race recordings imported from America.

* * *

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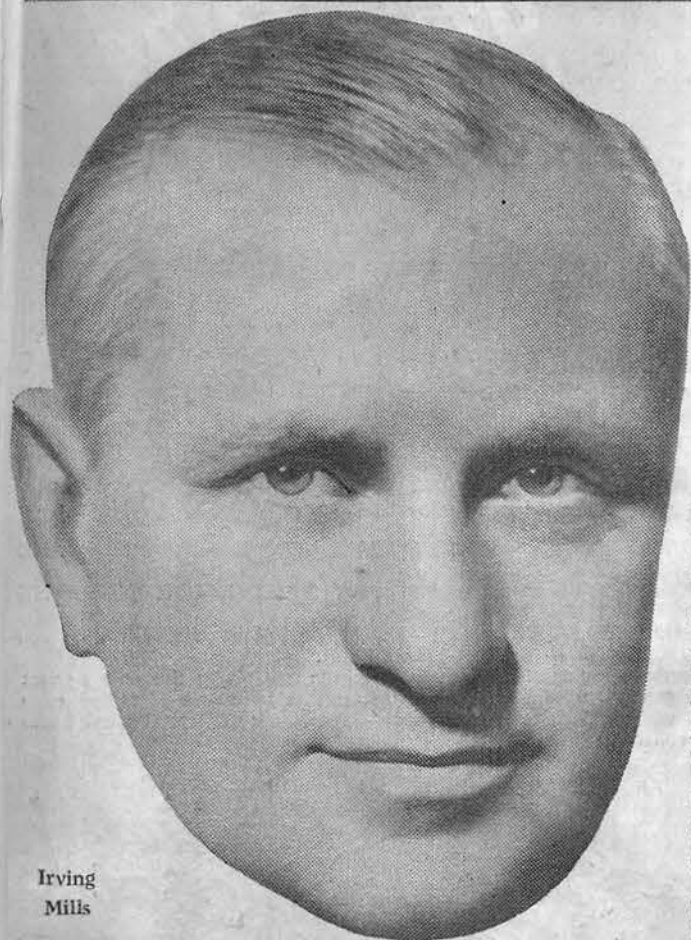
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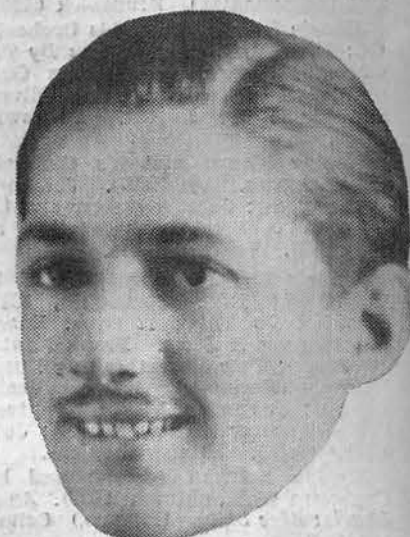
SEPTEMBER 17, 1938

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Irving Mills

AN OPEN LETTER TO IRVING MILLS



Leonard Feather

DEAR Mr. Mills,—Although I am writing this letter for publication where thousands of other interested

Before coming to the point, let me recapitulate the early part of the story with which I am concerned. Early in 1937, you an-

parties can read it, I want you to regard this as a personal appeal. I write as one who has enjoyed on many occasions the hospitality both of your office and your home, as a friend who appreciates all you have done for hot music.

nounced triumphantly that you were forming your own record companies, to produce discs for your Master and Variety labels. You signed up innumerable stars to form pick-up bands for sessions almost exclusively dedicated to the best jazz.

Not long after the first releases had created a sensation you came to England to arrange for the distribution over here of a catalogue that already had British fans agog. There was talk of forming your own company to press and distribute the records independently, or of tying up with either the E.M.I. or Decca group.

Alas! you returned home, the months slipped by, and still no deal was fixed up. Then, for reasons too complex to go into here, you abandoned your individual labels in America to merge with Brunswick and Vocalion, but reserved the right to sell your catalogue outside America.

Since then, your special recordings have still been pouring out on the American market, but abroad your product remains untouched. In New York, together we went through the chances of fixing a deal, but you insisted that your catalogue was worth a certain amount, and rather than accept less you would wait a year, five, even ten years, before giving way. You were relentless, adamant.

Ellington's Memory Must Not Fade

Now let's examine some other angles on this deadlock.

The fans' angles: Duke Ellington, the most important jazz figure in the world, has recorded more copiously in the last two years than ever before; his output has been of vital importance in the history of jazz. Yet the fans in Europe are completely left in the dark about these activities. They begin to suspect Duke must be a dying ember in the jazz fire. *How will this help you when you want to send Ellington to Europe again?*

By giving the general public a chance to let Duke's memory fade you are damaging irrevocably the commercial potentialities abroad of your greatest contracted artist.

The fans' angle again: Joe Marsala has as great a jam band as New York has produced lately. Over here it is unknown except for a couple of broadcasts. Your records of Marsala are unavailable. Bobby Hackett is one of the most important new personalities in jazz. You have him under contract for records: British fans are only dimly aware of his existence. One of the greatest jazz pianists to-day is Billy Kyle. The same situation again. And so on with Buster Bailey's gang

from the Onyx, Midge Williams, Frank Newton's magnificent series of waxings, and scores more.

When, in the next referendum, British fans are asked to pick their favourite American stars on each instrument, they will be in the position of a nun who is asked to name her favourite film heroes.

From the music publishing angles: Think how infinitely much more Raymond Scott's compositions would have meant in royalty revenue and music sales if Scott's own original quintet recordings had been available here! Think how much your publishing house and its English affiliate are losing in royalties each month because your own records of your own publications are held up. Think of the B.B.C. revenue alone and what it would net you!

Don't Withhold The Catalogue

More generally, think how each month you hold out against releasing your catalogue makes it more and more improbable that the vast majority of the records will ever see the light of day here; because, if and when you do sell the catalogue, the purchasers will have more than enough trouble keeping pace with your current output, let alone trying to bring forward what you have produced in the previous years. So the benefit from these hundreds of records will be irretrievably lost.

From the record companies' angle: record sales here are so limited that there is a low ceiling to any possible offer you will get for the European rights to the catalogue.

Do Something Big For Jazz

Why not, just this once, look at this problem from our angle—remember that if you relent you will be doing something that will leave its mark on the entire history of jazz, and jazz appreciation, in this country and all over the world?

If you do this, you will earn something more than the flood of royalties which otherwise would never accrue. You will earn the gratitude of every dance music enthusiast who has ever bought a record.

Think it over, won't you, Mr. Mills?
Very sincerely yours,
LEONARD FEATHER.

BILLY KYLE

Makes an Entrance

PRESS GUIDE

- ★★★★ Stop Press
- ★★★ Late Night Final
- ★★ Lunch Edition
- ★ Back Number

Spencer Trio.

"John Henry."

"Afternoon In Africa."

(***Brunswick 02632.)

LIKE the leading lady in a musical comedy, Billy Kyle has delayed until the last moment his entrance on our stage. For over a year New York swing fans have known him as one of the finest products of the Teddy Wilson school of style. His recordings for Irving Mills with his own pick-up band displayed his pinched, crisp, single-finger manner and dashing conception of improvisation.

Now at last a record appears in England which does him justice. *Afternoon in Africa*, despite its simply beastly title, is a swell record in other ways. The neat knitting of Bailey's clarinet riff with the piano in the last chorus is as intriguing as O'Neil Spencer's bass drum work behind it.

John Henry, a likeable semi-traditional tune, has a long dose

of O'Neil's vocal, Buster Bailey is inclined to be shaky, but even this side is attractive enough, and the disc as a whole is a novelty not to be missed.

Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.

"At The Jazz Band Ball."

"Grand Terrace Rhythm."

(***Decca F6754.)

This band remains the best florin-worth on the market.

I wasn't surprised to find a paucity of solo work in *Grand Terrace*, since this twelve-bar-blues Fletcher Henderson piece is written in D natural. So the reed section keeps strictly to the dots, though the trumpet ventures into a solo which comes off without *faux pas*.

Colour, Feeling, And What Precision!

The *Jazz Band* coupling is "Dixieland from way back," with Matlock, Miller, and others sharing the burden. The ensemble plays with colour, feeling, and what precision! All cleanliness, but not too much godliness. In fact, they swing like the devil.

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.

"I'm Just A Jitterbug."

"Azure."

(***Brunswick 02631.)

I wonder how many of those fans who delight in styling themselves jitterbugs realise that the term denotes they are *non compos mentis*?

Ella caters to these aisle-dancers in her latest speciality, but in spite of the precious lyrics and the corny bridge passage after her first chorus, the stuff is there.

Azure, Duke's rather miserable follow-up to *Mood Indigo*, is, oddly, better in Chick's version than in Duke's own, which is, of course, not released here.

Has Character Of Its Own

Larry Clinton and his Orchestra.

"Gavotte" ("Mignon").

"Dance Of The Hours" ("La Gioconda").

(H.M.V. B8776.)

Spare a blush for me; I don't find this as atrocious as I ought to. Rank bad taste, if you will, and clarinets pointed in the air for ruffling finale; but Bea Wain, whose singing occupies most of the first side, and Tony Zimmers, the tenor man, are not hard to take.

Maybe the answer is that anything would sound swell after Clinton's records of his own compositions; yet

Hot Records

Reviewed

by

'ROPHONE'

the record seems to have a little character of its own, and though I can well understand the condemnation of my fellow-critics, I find this coupling easier to take, for instance, than—

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.

"You Couldn't Be Cuter."

"Says My Heart."

(*H.M.V. B8775.)

What a couple of lousy attempts!

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.

"Something Tells Me."

Fats Waller, his Rhythm and Orchestra.

"The Skrontch."

(**H.M.V. BD5387.)

First side is quite innocuous. Backing interesting, because it's the first side released over here with the full Waller band (Don Donaldson's bunch). It's not a bad combination, but this is far from the ideal debut.

"Fats" Ignores Rhythm And Melody

Duke's *Skrontch* is an ingenious tune based on the accent-on-the-fourth-beat vogue, but Fats ignores the interesting rhythm and melody both in his piano and vocal work, and this is one time when he should have respected the original. There are some better titles due, with the big band, so wait. And wait till you hear Fats' English records!

Lil Armstrong and her Orchestra.

"Oriental Swing."

"You Shall Reap What You Sow."

(**Brunswick 02633.)

Tony Zimmers, that tenor man, is here again; and there's some trombone by Al Philburn that seems better than his previous releases. Froeba's piano, though piecemeal and never solid, is attractive. And there is a certain wistful minor-key *tristesse* about *Oriental Swing*, destroyed in the major movement at the end.

Needs A Tonic But——

Lil's singing is passable. The rhythm section needs a dose of tonic. Still, this is better than the previous coupling by the same personnel.

Reginald Foresythe and Arthur Young (Piano Duets).

"Tiger Rag" (*).

"St. Louis Blues" (**).

(H.M.V. BD576.)

For the aberration of two brilliant musical minds trying to be a bit too brilliant, commend me to this. If you go in for Persian tapestry, super-cinemas and Honegger, you may find something here.

* * *

REISSUES:—

Joe Venuti and his Blue Four.

"Beatin' The Dog."

"Kickin' The Cat."

(***Parlo. R2551.)

Little Chocolate Dandies.

"Six Or Seven Times."

Duke Ellington and his Orchestra.

"Doin' The New Lowdown."

(*Parlo. R2550.)

Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra.

"Clarinet Marmalade."

"Fidgety Feet."

(**Brunswick 02634.)

If you must buy reissues (and I should think most of your pockets have enough trouble keeping abreast of the current stuff) get the Venuti. Ten years have not spoiled it. It is charming.

The Ellington antique is homicide in the first degree. Even the nice backing cannot bring this pair up to three bobs-worth. The Henderson is a perfect example of its period, solos ranging from appealing to appalling.



The Ink Spots—singing elegantly and stylishly in "When the Sun Goes Down"

VOCAL MIXTURE

for Record Fans

HOT RECORDS REVIEWED

by "ROPHONE"

for the clarinet solo by Prince Robinson. As for the other side, which is non-vocal, Teddy takes it at Eyston tempo, which was not a bad idea since the chorus is fifty-six bars long and better dispensed with quickly. Archie Rosati, Harry James, Vido Musso and Teddy are more or less capable of turning out good solos at this velocity. More or less. Two quietly and alluringly sung numbers, revealing a hitherto unsuspected Mildred Bailey influence, make Ella's coupling one of her best lately. Piano and tenor, as usual, are the soloists.

Maxine is quite her old self in her chorus on *Don't Save Your Love*; which is not surprising, since this is her old self, recorded before her style had been warped by the heat of public acclaim.

Babe Rusin still plays fairly nice tenor and Jack Lacey's trombone is swell stuff in the Teagarden tradition. Thornhill himself still sounds like Teddy Wilson in an off-moment.

Mercer and his gang tell a long story which, even if you don't understand American football and can't "dig" some of the words, has an easily discernible sense of musical humour. If you don't believe in sense of humour, don't bother with Mercer.

The Ink Spots play some more twelve bar blues in *Sun Goes Down*, even more elegant than the recent *Oh Red!* The fade-out is delightful except for the very end, which is mechanically faded. The boys could have produced this effect without such superfluous aids to nature.

I Wish You the Best of Everything is, of course, another of those agonised and agonising martyr songs with lyrics of the lash-me-and-bash-me-I-love-it order. And one of the ink blobs discloses himself as a coloratura tenor à la Morton Downey. Well, as Danielle Darrieux said, "I can took it"; there is some nice riffing going on behind.

Milt Herth Quartet.
"Egyptian Ella."
"Shoot the Likker to Me, J. P."

these records, is not nearly conspicuous enough.

Even in his own record there isn't enough Lion to compensate for O'Neil Spencer's worst vocals to date. Brief passages by Pete Brown on alto are noteworthy, but the record as a whole is too much like previous ones by this bunch.

Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra.
"Sweet Sue" (***)

"Down by the Old Mill Stream" (**)
(Brunswick O2635.)

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra.
"Jubilee"

"Something Tells Me."
(**Decca F6765.)

Earl Hines and His Orchestra.
"Madhouse" (**)

"Swingin' Down" (*).
(Vocalion S168.)

Three very erratic coloured bands in three erratic records.

Down By The Old Mill Stream makes you want to take Lunceford by the throat and squeeze out an explanation why he doesn't allow this band to let its hair down. The first chorus has that crippled off-beat rhythm, the second is a sickly crooned vocal, and only the third and last chorus produces that magnificent swing and great arranging of which this combination is capable.

Vocalist Not Objectionable

Sweet Sue at least has this advantage, that the vocalist is Sy Oliver, who is not objectionable.

Technical Titbits: Behind this vocal, the odd effect of the E flat 9 chord in bar 17, and the even odder C 13 chord in bar 19, which has the lead trumpet taking an A against the vocalist's B flat in the melody.

Then in the following straight trombone chorus, the extraordinary vagaries of the key, which goes from D concert to F, then backwards and forwards to E flat and F several times.

And in the guitar's middle eight bars in the last chorus the key switches from E flat to G. All this business is quite unnecessary, and shows how to complicate an arrangement of a tune that is much better left simple. Still, it's better than most recent Luncefords.

Armstrong's band makes some horrible noises in *Jubilee*, while Louis takes some solo work with the same exquisite tone, finally climbing (a bit groggily on the way up) to an F above high C.

Louis Lacks Old Ballast

The other side has a Higginbotham chorus which lacks the old fire and élan. Louis's work is not quite enough ballast for the tune and the arrangement.

The first Hines side compares fairly well with Goodman's record of the same Mundy opus, and Earl has a swell solo. *Swingin' Down* has no Hines solo, no nothin'.

Teddy Wilson and His Orchestra.
"My Man" ("Mon Homme").
"You Can't Stop Me From Dreaming."
(**Vocalion S186.)

Ella Fitzgerald and Her Savoy Eight.
"What Do You Know About Love?"
"We Can't Go On This Way."
(**Brunswick O2638.)

Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra, with Maxine Sullivan.
"Don't Save Your Love."
Johnny Mercer and His Orchestra.
"Jamboree Jones."
(**Vocalion S175.)

Ink Spots.
"When the Sun Goes Down."
"I Wish You the Best of Everything."
(**Brunswick O2637.)

WITH the above eight sides you have almost a perfect vocal variety programme in the jazz idiom.

Apart from studying the styles of Billie Holiday, Ella Fitz and Maxine, you can hear something novel in the gyrations of Johnny Mercer, Teagarden's old sidekick, with his "Six Hits and a Miss," and the smartly contrasting harmony work of the Ink Spots.

Though there is plenty of meat in each helping, I'll take Billie Holiday any time: white, brown, or toasted with butter, she's my dish, and the way she doles out Mistinguett's *Mon Homme*, adhering just enough to the melody to combine her own personal charm with that of the song itself, is a treat for sore ears.

This would have four stars but

ACCORDING TO ROOMERS

- ★★★★ Bedroom
- ★★★ Sitting Room
- ★★ Anteroom
- ★ Attic

Brunswick O2639.)
Milt Herth (The Lion) and His Cubs.
"Honey-mooning on a Dime."
"I've Got to Think It Over."
(**Brunswick O2636.)

It may be pure coincidence, but reviewing one of Herth's first releases, using the expression purely as a general one of amazement, I wrote: "Shoot the likker to me, John, boy, but this is a peculiar record!" or words to that effect. And now, whether he's a "M.M." reader or not, out comes Mr. Herth with a record of *Shoot The Likker*.

Corn For Laughter

The first chorus is so outrageously corny that it'll at least hand you a laugh. Even people who have no idea of swing nuances manage to appreciate, when I play Herth to them, how extraordinarily corny his phrasing is.

For the rest, Teddy Bunn plays some nice guitar on both sides, Spencer drums well and sings fairly; the Egyptian effects are just too much; and Willie The Lion's piano work, which is my chief complaint against

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

MAURICE WINNICK, following what seems to be a general trend, recently introduced a new vocalist. If you haven't heard Ann Trevor singing with him yet, you can catch her in the late-night programme on Thursday.

Very few of Britain's best-known girl singers are English born. This young star is no exception. She comes from South Wales, where, under the influence of her musical family, she began singing at local charity concerts.

Coming to London nine years ago at the age of fourteen, she won a number of talent competitions as a duet act with her sister, as a result of which they toured the country's theatres and cinemas. Later came a series of reverses and the sister dropped out of the running while Ann herself was on the point of giving up the profession in despair.

Then last May she wrote to Maurice Winnick for an audition. He heard more than fifty other girls at auditions, but selected her to join his band permanently. She had never worked with a dance orchestra before, but much prefers the work to the monotonous routine of stage tours.

As you may have gathered from her singing the other evening of the American oddity 'A Tisket-A Tasket', she is a great admirer of Ella Fitzgerald, creator of that number, and her other favourite is Maxine Sullivan.

Winnick, by the way, has incorporated an unusual wind instrument in his band, replacing the more customary string bass. It is an upright 'recording' bass, akin to the old sousaphone but, he believes, deeper and mellower. Winnick's American counterpart, Guy Lombardo, is one

of the few transatlantic band-leaders to employ brass instead of string bass.

Don't omit to listen to Fats Waller, who is guest starring in the 'Melody Out of the Sky' show on Thursday (Regional, 8.0). In a recent short-wave transmission to America from St. George's Hall, made just before the two-week Scandinavian tour from which he returns this week-end, Fats enjoyed himself tremendously at the BBC theatre organ, and you will no doubt be given another chance to hear how his early days as both church and cinema organist moulded him into a magnificent and versatile performer on this most difficult of all instruments.



ANN TREVOR,
new vocalist with Maurice Winnick

Gramophone recital plans for the next quarter include a new Monday-night presentation from 11.30 to midnight under the title 'Jazz Celebrities'. The first, on October 3, will deal with Bing Crosby. Later programmes, all devised by the BBC's Charles Chilton, will be devoted to noted band leaders and vocalists in the sphere of swing music.

Bob Crosby's Orchestra, which according to present plans is the group you will be hearing on October 1, will be a different combination from that heard in the last Crosby relay.

The reason for this is that Tommy Dorsey (who will figure in tomorrow night's relay) has appropriated four star men from the Crosby band: 'Yank' Lawson and Charles Spivak, trumpets; Julian Matlock, clarinet; and Bob Haggart, the brilliant bassist and arranger.

RHYTHM, OCTOBER 1938



Above: Discritic Leonard Feather (left) assumes the role of song-plugger, and submits one of his numbers to Ken Johnson, but, judging by Betty Dale's expression, she seems a bit doubtful about it

SEPTEMBER 24, 1938

FEATHER FORECAST and NEWS



B.B.C. CHOIR SINGS SCAT!

in the realm of "straight" music have experimented with this idea before Anthony Lewis, the writer of this particular work. And no doubt, others will again.

The main point I want to emphasise, though, is that you don't have to be ashamed of the old Armstrong records or of Leo Watson or the Ink Spots. Their end is the same even if their means may be different; that is, they want to use their scat words to help their vocal phrasing.

Incidentally, scat singing dies hard. In the current record by Johnny Mercer and his swing choir of *Jamboree Jones* there is a passage in the middle where several bars are lifted note for note from Louis Armstrong's chorus in one of his earliest records, *Heebie Jeebies* (1926).

Why In "English"?

One point that still remains wrapped in mystery is why swing singing has always, apart from the scat jargon, been limited to the English language. Is jazz something so indigenously American, as we are sometimes led to believe, that only the alphabet and inflections of America's native tongue (with or without Negro accent) can be applied to it?

Can there never be a French Bessie Smith, or a Billie Holiday singing in German? Will we live to hear a Czechoslovak Ella Fitzgerald, or a Mildred Bailey beating it out in

Jean Ellington—no relation!—always broadcasts in her stocking feet because she accidentally lost her shoes when hurrying to her first broadcast, on which she made a big hit. So now she considers it brings her luck!

I HOPE that those of you who think of scat singing as the exclusive prerogative of jazz happened to catch a new work performed last week in the Tuesday Promenade concert.

Under Leslie Woodgate, the B.B.C. Choral Society performed

Roy Fox sänkte lönerna, orkestern gick!

Naturligtvis har månadens stora nyhet i London varit Fats Waller, som anlände hit den 7 augusti efter en vecka i Skottland. Alla väntade att denne elektrifierande personlighet skulle få en fin mottagning, men resultatet överträffade förväntningarna så långt, att det bestämdes att han skall kvarstanna i London till slutet av augusti.

Emellertid kommer han att resa till Skandinavien den 12 september, som tidigare var bestämt, och utan tvivel kommer Orkester Journalens läsare att också hälsa honom välkommen på ett överväldigande sätt.

Det vore orättvist att säga, att Fats är till bästa fördel på den här turnén. Utan tvivel saknar han närvaron av den stora orkester, som vanligtvis »backar upp» honom vid hans scenframträdanden, men beroende på svårigheter med arbetstillstånd fick han inte medföra den orkestern, inte ens den lilla kombination som ackompanjerar honom på inspelningarna.

Den ordinarie orkestern på London Palladium spelade uruselt utan att på något sätt förstå hur arrangemangen fraseras. Det mesta av vad de skulle göra måste strykas, varför de fick arbeta utan hjälp. Applåderna från de dyrbarare platserna voro aldrig överväldigande, men litet längre tillbaka i salongen fanns det alltid en tillräcklig anslutning av »fans», så att Fats alltid kunde vara säker på en hjärtlig applåd, som framtvängde ett par extranummer.

Medan jag skriver detta pågå underhandlingar om att Fats skall göra en inspelning i London. Om tillstånd erhålles från Victor-bolaget borde det kunna bli en spännande inspelning, ty man planerar att få Bill Coleman över från Belgien för att delta, och den ojämförlige George Chisholm kommer utan tvivel att delta med sin trombone.

Londons andra distinguerade gäst förra månaden var Benny Goodman, som kom hit för att vila men som hälsades på plattformen av en grupp musikförläggare och andra, som ville reklamera honom som ett underdjur. Under sitt korta uppehåll här höll han sig för sig själv så mycket som möjligt och hörde ingen brittisk jazz, som är värd att nämna.

För övrigt är allting lugnt i Lon-



Roy Fox har det besvärligt.

don. Ingen av de stora orkestrarna ha några nya planer, och få göra överhuvud taget knappast någonting. Ambrose, återkommen från en misslyckad turné i Holland, kan inte få ett reguljärt engagemang och tar nu hela orkestern på en variteturné, som börjar den 4 september. Sedan årets början har han inte gjort några inspelningar beroende på omöjligheten att komma fram till en tillfredsställande ekonomisk uppgörelse med Decca, och under de senaste tre månaderna har han heller inte haft några kommersiella radioutsändningar, så det ser inte alltför ljust ut i Ambrose' läger.

Roy Fox är en annan brittisk orkesterledare med bekymmer. När han meddelade att han tänkte avskeda alla musikerna i orkestern och reengagera dem, som voro villiga att acceptera en betydlig lönereducering, revolverade musikerna mot detta behandlingssätt och lämnade honom, varigenom han nu måste organisera en fullständigt ny orkester, för vilken provspelningarna just börjat.

Det gamla Roy Fox-bandet arbetar på television-studion under en ny ledare, Dennis van Thal, hos vilken grabbarna torde komma att stanna en tid framåt.

LEONARD G. FEATHER, välkänd engelsk kritiker och kompositör, sänder O. J. de senaste nyheterna från England.

Swingmusiken ligger mycket illa till här. (Förlåt den pessimistiska sinnesstämningen, men den beror på fakta och inte bara vädret). Skivförsäljningen är mycket låg, och vad beträffar ordentlig swingmusik av brittiska musiker så existerar den nästan inte alls för ögonblicket. Danny Polos skivor ha varit framgångsrika men inte lett till en ny inspelning. Ja, det har faktiskt bara varit en intressant inspelning på sistone, nämligen en med Una Mae Carlisle, »den kvinnliga Fats Waller», som spelar bra piano. Una gjorde sex sidor i London för Vocalion med ett jam-band som innehöll en trumpetare, ni borde lyssna på. Han är en västindisk neger, som nu spelar med Ken »Snakehips» Johnson's orkester, och hans namn är David Wilkins.

På de »jam-sessions» som avhållas på Regent Street var fjortonde dag har man de enda möjligheterna att regelbundet höra litet god jazz i London för närvarande. De grabbar, som delta i dessa sammankomster, inkludera de få engelsmän som veta någonting om swingmusik, exempelvis George Chisholm och flera goda tenorister: Bertie King (en pojke från Jamaika, som kan höras i Una Mae Carlises skivor), Buddy Featherstonhaugh och Alfie Kahn (som också spelar klarinett ganska lika Rudy Powells stil och är en av de brittiska musiker, som man väntar sig något av).

I radion kommer det att vara en eller två intressanta saker inom kort. B. B. C. reserverar halvtimmen från 11.30 till midnatt varje onsdag (med början i oktober) för föredrag med swingskivor av olika musiker, kritiker och entusiaster. Svenska lyssnare kan nog få höra en del intressanta saker på dessa program.

Lew Stone återvänder till Café de Paris med en orkester, som innehåller några få av de musiker, som spelade med i hans goda orkester för

(forts. å sid. 23)

ROY FOX . . . (forts. fr. sid. 9)

ett par år sedan; det sägs dock att engagemanget endast blir på begränsad tid, troligen beroende på de usla gager, som restaurörerna numera betala för West-End-engagemang. En välkänd orkesterledare här, Billy Bissett, har just accepterat ett engagemang med sin orkester för ett gage

så lågt, att man undrar, varför någon bryr sig om att vara musiker nu för tiden.

Kanske det nästa månad, när semesterresenärerna återvända och nattklubbarna och inspelningslokaler är i full swing igen, finns litet mera hoppfulla nyheter härifrån. Det behövs sannerligen!

wish Chronicle Oct. 7

DANCE BAND NEWS

Billy Gerhardt's band will be playing at the exhibition at Alexandra Palace from Wednesday to Saturday.

Roy Martin is now resident musical arranger for Bert Firman's Orchestra.

Willy Solomons, the well-known swing pianist, has joined Fred Ballerini's Band at the Polygon Hotel, Southampton.

Hymie Schneider, who records for Leonard Feather on Decca records, is fast becoming one of England's foremost swing drummers.

Louis Freeman's trio is at the Whitehall Restaurant, Glasgow.

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

WITH tomorrow (Saturday) night's relay of Bob Crosby's Orchestra, the summer quarter comes to a close. Dance-music enthusiasts will not easily forget these past three months, during which, for the first time in BBC history, a band from America has been presented each Saturday evening.

As one looks back on the series, it is interesting to note that of the thirteen orchestras featured eight come uncompromisingly into the swing-music category: Count Basie, Bunny Berigan, Gene Krupa, Benny Goodman, Joe Marsala, the Savoy Sultans, Red Norvo, and Bob Crosby.

Another, Eddie De Lange, was on the border line, while the remaining three, Hal Kemp, Vincent Lopez, and Sammy Kaye, were what may be politely referred to as 'sweet' bands.

It is also significant that the programmes that provided the most refreshing and original material and elicited the most favourable comment were all in the first group. In fact, of the whole series, I am not sure that the two programmes of Count Basie (one of which was the first of the whole series) will not in the consensus of opinion be held as the most representative of true, unadulterated jazz.

In the meantime, plans have been drawn up for the winter quarter. The transatlantic relay scheme has not been entirely dropped, for there will be a fortnightly swing-music programme in the mid-evening period, coming alternately from America and the Continent.

Kai Ewans and his orchestra, the popular Danish combination now resident in Copenhagen, will inaugurate this new series next Tuesday (Regional, 7.30).

* * * *

Next week also sees the beginning of the new Wednesday-night arrangement whereby the microphone will be handed over from 11.30 to midnight to well-known personalities connected

with jazz, who will arrange the 'Swing Time' record programmes.

The first of these, to be compared on October 5 by Edgar Jackson, will feature a selection of the new record issues for October.

* * * *

One or two of the current 'crazy' song hits call for a little explanation. The latest of these helps to prove the axiom that to make a huge success of your song, all you have to do is make sure that none of the words in the title can be found in any dictionary.

After 'Ti-Pi-Tin' came 'Flat Foot Floogie'; and now comes 'A-Tisket a-Tasket'. The first was a Mexican importation. The Floogie (with the Floy-Floy) was just a rhythmic phrase concocted by two Harlem musician-comedians, Slim and Slam. They are still quite bewildered by the adoption of their brain-child by the world at large. The most reliable reports about the meaning of this title confirms that a flat-foot floogie is an unprepossessing coloured man, and the floy-floy is a beautiful girl. The whole therefore denotes a girl accompanied by a man who is unworthy of her. Not that it matters.

As for 'A-Tisket a-Tasket', some of you may remember this nursery jingle from school days; it is especially popular with American children. The title serves merely to provide a useful rhyme for 'a brown and yellow basket.' Ella Fitzgerald, the coloured singer with Chick Webb's band, composed this number in collaboration with Webb's white orchestrator, Al Feldman.

Talking of songs, 'The Lambeth Walk' is the biggest British success in America since 'These Foolish Things'. Broadcast and recorded by Benny Goodman, Duke Ellington, the Mills Brothers, and all sorts of other unlikely people, it has become the rage with Manhattan's élite, who are rushing to dancing schools to learn the Cockney steps.

Melody Maker

OCTOBER 8, 1938

Vol. XIV. No 281

Feather Forecast and News



Leonard Feather is shown something amusing, to judge by the expression on the face of Leo Watson, who sang on L.F.'s American recordings

U.S. MUSIC CRITIC TALKS THROUGH HAT

magazine which likes sensational, provocative stuff.

Mr. Smith starts off in the accepted patronising vein: "There is no need to apologise for our popular music. It's our baby, born, bred and fed by us," and promptly goes on to confuse jazz, swing music and Tin Pan Alley into one glorious amorphous whole.

The Development Of Swing

"Swing has developed an Academy, a literature, a language all its own. You can get a native version in almost every country if you know the password. In France, it's *Mettez y de l'entrain*; in Italy, *piu presto*..." Need I go on? All you have to do, in fact, is to ask them to play faster and louder, and you get swing music."

Then comes the usual picture of so-called jitterbugs, who are represented as the type who appreciate swing music. "Yowling, whistling, thigh-slapping, camera-clicking addicts terrified the ushers with shouts of 'Beat it out! What jam!' Tapping feet, nodding heads, hunching shoulders, glassy stares, mouths dropped down, arms flapping like seals, all testified to the efficacy of swing. Teensters not only slap their hands, stamp their feet and chew their gum in rhythm, they get light-headed and giddy, shout 'Take off, boy,' 'Jam that tram,'..."

(Did you dream that last phrase, Mr. Smith?)

The article works up to a glorious climax when, after keeping you on tenterhooks with these descriptions of the swing cognoscenti, readers are given the lowdown on where to go "if you want to see them at their hottest." Amongst the bands you are advised to visit for one of these swing orgies are Hal Kemp, Skinny Ennis, Sammy Kaye, Kay Kyser, Larry Clinton, and—wait for it—Guy Lombardo!

To cap it all the opus concludes with a list of records for those who want to practise in private and see what swing does to them. Ellington? Not a mention. Basie? Not on your life. The records listed include Dick Robertson's vocal six-eight *Oh Ma-Ma*; Will Hudson; Larry Clinton; a Raymond Scott tune played by Hal Kemp; and Eddy Duchin!

Cause— And Effect

My blood boiled so fiercely when I read this incredible farrago of unadulterated nonsense that I determined to give myself the satisfaction of telling MELODY MAKER readers how lucky they are that at least they are more or less free from that sort of thing in this country.

Phew!

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

If you wonder why there has been such an outcry against swing music and all that it connotes in America; if you cannot understand the sense of a proposal to the New York legislature to legalise swing for good and all, you need look no further for the answer than some of the fantastically distorted misconceptions of the music that have found their way into print in the guise of analytical articles.

One of the most extraordinary of these, the more so because it comes from a distinguished critic of "straight" music and is published by

a magazine generally respected for its sanity, can be found in the October issue of *Esquire*.

Here a Mr. Carleton Smith, who usually devotes his time to a report of the month's standard music and recordings, falls prey to the temptation to dramatise swing music as a cheap burlesque comedy.

How It Is Done

It's very easy to do, and if you feel like compiling something of this sort yourself all you need is a few statements on the lines of those I am going to quote, and a nice gullible popular

JACK'S BACK!

Hylton and Payne to
Broadcast Regularly

DANCE MUSIC PLANS

Jack Hylton and his band are one of the outstanding attractions of the Variety Department's plans for the autumn dance-music season. He has been booked for three broadcasts, one a month, in which all the artists in his big new stage presentation will be heard.

Peggy Dell, popular Irish singer, is featured in an imposing list of vocalists, which also includes Gerda and Ulrick Newman, a new swing duet act discovered by Hylton in Denmark; Primrose Orrock, the sixteen-year-old Scottish 'glamour girl', discovered in Falkirk and featured with the now disbanded Roy Fox orchestra; June Malo; the Henderson Twins; and the saxophonist-comedian Freddy Schweitzer.

Jack Payne's Artists

Jack Payne will continue his 'Jack in the Music Box' programmes approximately every fortnight.

Featured artists with Payne include Peggy Cochrane; Robert Ashley; Teddy Foster, the trumpet-playing vocalist, and his wife, Betty Kent; Mary Lee, another Scottish juvenile singer, previously with Roy Fox; and Ronnie Genarder.

It is expected that many stage, screen, and radio personalities will be heard in 'guest-artist' appearances with Jack Payne.

Other Bands

Ben Frankel and a fourteen-piece orchestra, with Dorothy Carless and the Rhythm Brothers, will star in a series of presentations called 'Swing Song'.

Geraldo will be giving a new series of big shows in the style of the popular 'Romance in Rhythm' broadcasts. Carroll Gibbons is busy preparing new ideas for radio productions. 'You Shall Have Music' will continue fortnightly.

Eddie Carroll will also be heard with his orchestra in several special productions.



JACK HYLTON and his Band will be heard in three shows between now and Christmas

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED OCTOBER

Billy Bissett's New All-Star Orchestra

A new all-star orchestra, to be known as Billy Bissett and his Canadians, will constitute one of the most interesting novelties of the forthcoming dance-music season.

Just signed up for a ten-months' engagement at the Café de Paris, from which will come its first broadcast on October 13, this group is the most ambitious assembled by Bissett since he first arrived here with an all-Canadian combination, most of the members of which subsequently dispersed to other bands.

The original Canadian saxophone section has been reassembled, with Harry Varley and George Wright on altos, Doug Kemp and Paul Freedman on tenors. The trumpets are Herbie Brittain, Arthur Mouncey, and Les Lambert (the last-named was formerly with Roy Fox), and the trombonist is an ex-Henry Hall star, Tony Thorpe.

Wife as Vocalist

Johnny Burt, the pianist, came over here with Ray Noble's Canadian band last spring and remained to join Bissett. He has written an arrangement of 'Now it can be told', Irving Berlin's latest success, which will be sung in the broadcast on October 13 by Bissett's charming vocalist wife, Alice Mann.

Alice Mann was heard introducing this number for the first time on the air in the radio version of *Alexander's Ragtime Band*, in which Irving Berlin was guest-starred.

Completing the orchestra are George Panton, guitar; Ernie Stevens, bass; and another ex-Roy Fox man, Maurice Burman, at the drums.

It is planned to broadcast this band several times during the next few months.

Swing Music

Record Recitals

Leslie Perowne has lined up a number of well-known personalities to take part in the new series of swing-music record programmes to be presented each Wednesday from 11.30 to midnight.

Next week Alan Frank, a 'straight' musician, takes the microphone to expound his views on jazz. Subsequently the following are expected to take over programmes in the series:

Stan Patchett—journalist, sports reporter, prize-fight manager, and jazz fan, who has toured the world in search of interesting jobs and novel music.

Leonard Hibbs—student of classical and popular music, who once edited a magazine called *Swing Music* and now reviews records in several publications.

Journalist's Hobby

Iain Lang—news-editor of a noted Sunday paper, who makes a hobby of jazz.

Charles Chilton—assistant to Leslie Perowne, producer of many record programmes, amateur guitarist, and supervisor of this series of Wednesday-night recitals.

Leonard Feather—weekly contributor of 'Signature Tune' column to *RADIO TIMES*, song-writer, and leader of the recording group for *Ye Olde English Swynge Band*, which started the 'folk songs in swing style' vogue.

Life of Benny Goodman

There will also be occasional mid-evening jazz record recitals, one of which, towards the end of October, will be devoted to a musical biography of Benny Goodman, devised by Leonard Feather.

MES ISSUE DATED OCTOBER 7, 1938

JOE MARSALA



FAMOUS AMERICAN BANDS For BBC Relays

Fortnightly relays of dance music from abroad, originating alternately from America and the Continent, have already been planned for some weeks ahead.

Jimmie Lunceford and his orchestra, one of the outstanding coloured show-bands in the United States, have arranged to broadcast to England. The programme will be heard on October 21.

Lunceford, who graduated from Fiske University with a B.A. degree, has one of the most sophisticated and musically advanced of all Negro orchestras. His ingenious arrangements have earned him an international reputation through his gramophone records.

Plans for an American all-star 'jam session', for which Alistair Cooke will act as talent-scout and commentator, are already under way. During the forty minutes of informal improvisation by white and coloured musicians, it is hoped to include members of the orchestras of Benny Goodman and Gene Krupa.

Joe Marsala and Bobby Hackett, whose 'jam' orchestras contain some of the world's finest exponents of this type of music, will help to provide some of the participants. 'Fats' Waller, back in America from his European tour, may also take part.

RADIO
TIMES
AUTUMN
NEWS
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BRITISH BAND MAY VISIT

NEW YORK WORLD'S FAIR

Ken Johnson, whose West Indian Orchestra has been acquiring considerable popularity through its broadcasts (another of which is to take place tonight, October 7), may be the recipient of a singular honour in connection with the giant World's Fair to be held in New York next spring.

In a section of the exhibition devoted to West Indian commerce and products, Johnson's Orchestra is under consideration to represent the music of the West Indies.

The members of his band come from British Guiana, Barbados, and Trinidad, and are well versed in the native rhythms of these territories.



Otto Lington, well-known Scandinavian bandleader, organized a concert for Fats Waller, seen with him here, during the latter's Continental tour.

The COUNT BEGINS TO COUNT

Hot
Records
Reviewed
by
'Rophone'

and trumpet, form an appealing tone colour.

The record dates from the era when *Christopher Columbus* was just a riff. A riff which, in fact, occurs between choruses here.

Rhythm For Sale is equally gratifying. *Technical Titbit*: Throughout both sides Monette confines herself almost entirely to a range of a fifth—middle C to G, chiefly on the tonic, fourth, fifth and fattened third. The Harlem scale again.

BUYERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Invaluable
- ★★★ Valuable
- ★★ Adequate
- ★ Inadequate

the gross result is another couple of gross caricatures of the old Louis.

Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra.
"A Little Bit Later On."
"A Melody From The Sky."
(**Vocalion S.164.)

Roy Eldridge and his Orchestra.
"After You've Gone."
"Where The Lazy River Goes By."
(**Vocalion S.165.)

Both played by trumpeter-leaders with small bands, and both marred by vocals. Berigan has Chick Bullock, and Eldridge the lady named Gladys Palmer (who jazzed *Trees*).

But the rest of the Berigan has colour, swing galore and integrity. Joe Bushkin's piano touches lend an air to *Little Bit* and Berigan's plaintive, beatific horn seems more at home here than in an umpteen-piece orchestration. A rhythm section reputed to include Condon and Tough also helps. But for the vocalist, unquestionably worth three stars.

Comparing Some Of The Performers

Una Mae's record again sounds very unlike an English band.

The rhythm section comes in late on Una's opening piano choruses both times, but redeems itself with some solid work—notice Hymie Schneider's drums behind the first vocal in *Baby* and Len Harrison's bass behind Una's nice piano passages in *Anything*.

Wilkins' trumpet and Bertie King's tenor are swell, the latter's clarinet not so hot.

Bob Crosby's Bob Cats.

- "Who's Sorry Now?" (***)
- "March Of The Bob Cats" (**)

(Decca F.6790.)

It sounds silly, but Bob Crosby's full band, by what might be considered an inflation of the same idea, achieves its Dixieland object much more cleanly than the eight-piece contingent. The trombone is too deliberately old fashioned in *March* and Eddie Miller's clarinet triplets are rather early Dorsey vintage, while Zurke's brilliance is side-tracked into something somewhat old fashioned in his *Sorry* chorus.

Best parts are Eddie Miller's chorus and the final ensemble on this side.

If You Are Sentimentally Inclined—

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.
"On The Sentimental Side."
"It's Wonderful."

(*Decca F.6780.)

If you are inclined to be a little on the sentimental side, you will wonder how the man who made *West End Blues* and *Muggles* and *Confessin'* could lose even his sense of tempo and play this number just twice as fast as necessary.

There are the usual spots of welcome trumpet at the end of both sides, but

Guy Who Plays An Amazing Trumpet

Eldridge shows more technique than taste in his tornado-choruses at the end of *After You've Gone*. This is the same band that produced the excellent *Heckler's Hop* and *That Thing* last year.

The guy plays an amazing trumpet, but just as you are getting excited about some fantastic break he goes and ruins it by losing the drift and playing some irrelevant anti-climax.

Quintet of the Hot Club of France.

- "My Sweet" (*).
- "Daphne" (**).
- (Decca F6769.)
- "Flat Foot Floogee."
- "Lambeth Walk."
- (*Decca F6776.)

Authorship of *My Sweet* credited to Reinhardt and Grappelly. What has Hoagy Carmichael to say to that?

The latest version of *Nagasaki* is called *Daphne*. A pleasant piece withal. *My Sweet* resorts to interruptions, conversations and laughter by the musicians, and one of those four-heavy-slaps-each-bar bass solos. Truly the quintet has gone commercial!

The boys make some sort of an effort to revive one's interest in the floogee, but there have been too many floogees and too many quintet records. As for the *Promenade de Lambeth*, all I can say is *ne m'en parlez pas!*

Count Basie and his Orchestra.
"Doggin' Around."
"Blue And Sentimental."
(***Brunswick 02644.)

THE time has come to review this Basie position from a broader perspective. What with B.B.C. airings and a rapidly increasing interest in his records, the Count is beginning to become a force to be reckoned with seriously in jazz.

Looked at by and large, Basie represents the fundamental simplicity of one style of jazz, exploited to the fullest advantage. The Basie line in arranging is often "fixed up" on the bandstand, and the Basie riffing aims at nothing more than a direct, elemental physical appeal.

Equally Vital— But Different

That is not to its detriment; and neither is it to the detriment of other forms of jazz which reach the heart by way of the head. The music of Bob Crosby, or of Joe Marsala's jam band, or of Goodman or Norvo or Lunceford, each has an equally vital but different place in jazz; and more important than any of them, Basie included, is the music in a class by itself of Duke Ellington.

So don't run away with the idea that because Basie gets all the raves each month he is "better" than these others, or that "he has the greatest band that has ever been assembled anywhere," which is the preposterous statement issued by Comrade Hammond in a

contemporary. Claims like that do Basie more harm than good; they elevate him to a superhuman plane.

And now to business. This coupling has an added interest in the baritone sax work on *Doggin' Around* and the clarinet of Lester Young in the slow melody on the back, which, by the way, is a twin brother of *Can't We Talk It Over*.

Recent Standard Is Maintained

Hershel Evans, with his Hawkins' stuff in this title, and his getoff work when he dogs around, proves himself (a) one of the best tenor men since Hawkins and (b) even better than his more acclaimed fellow tenor man, Lester Young, who also takes a fine chorus.

Basie's delightful pianistic simplicity is again apparent in the fast side, and in the other tune he reveals a Teddy Wilson streak which is most attractive. There are some awkward heavy moments in the dragging last chorus here, but on the whole, even with this and the *Doggin'* drum breaks, the recent Basie standard is maintained.

Monette Moore and her Swing Shop Boys.

- "Two Old Maids In A Folding Bed."
- "Rhythm For Sale."

(***Vocalion S.200.)

Una Mae Carlisle and her Jam Band.

- "Anything For You."
- "I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby."

(***Vocalion S.199.)

I remember *Two Old Maids* as a song with an enormous variety of blue lyrics which was sung to me by Bob Howard and Una Mae Carlisle. Monette Moore, a plump Harlem lass with a plump Harlem voice, uses lyrics a trifle too obscure to seem dirty, but the main point is that the singing and the accompaniment, especially guitar

FATS' ENGLISH DISCS

BUYERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Superlative
 ★★★ Positive
 ★★ Supernumerary
 ★ Negative

Fats Waller And His Continental Rhythm.

"Music, Maestro, Please."

"A Tisket A Tasket."
 (**H.M.V. BD.5398.)

"Flat Foot Floogee."

"Pent Up In A Penthouse."
 (**H.M.V. BD.5399.)

HERE is the event the eyes and ears of the world have been awaiting Fats' English recordings.

Individually, man for man, the band is mostly very good; in the jam ensembles one is conscious of the overcrowding. Trumpet, trombone and tenor would have got by, but the extra tenor (doubling fiddle, of all things!) makes it a bit of a clambake.

There is very little to choose between the two couplings, except that if you like the piano-left-hand-celeste-right-hand stuff in slow tempo, complete with a woodland glen introduction and coda on the violin, you will enjoy *Music Maestro*; and it's certainly the best vocal of the four.

High Spots To Notice

Other spots to notice are:—Fats' good piano chorus and Alfie Kahn's tenor in *Tisket*; Fats calling out to the boys by name in *Floogee* ("Brother Chisholm . . . here's little Alf Kahn . . . and the shepherd of the flock" (referring to tenor man Ian Shepherd)); the almost complete absence of the original riff from *Floogee* (which makes it slightly less regrettable that Fats should have waxed the tune at this late date, when we are all sick and tired of it).

In *Penthouse* there are a few spots of good trumpet by David Wilkins and a brief moment of George Chisholm. Len Harrison's bass work behind the

Hot Records Reviewed - - - by "ROPHONE"

celeste chorus of *Maestro* is noteworthy. Frankly, these records would have been better if Fats had cut out all the jive and let such swell men as Chisholm, Wilkins and Kahn get off properly; but even as they are you'll find the results entertaining.

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.

"Big John's Special."

"Wrappin' It Up."

(****H.M.V. B.8798.)

I needn't go into details. I'll just say this is the sort of music Goodman should produce nearly all of the time. Both versions are almost as good as the original Fletcher Henderson recordings. The first side gives you some of Stacy's piano and the backing shows up Dave Matthews' fine Carteresque alto work.

This One Isn't Too Dear

There is also enough of Benny's clarinet, Freeman's tenor, Elman's and James's trumpet, to make you feel you've had your three-bobsworth. This is still some band.

Dicky Wells and his Orchestra.

"Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea."

"Bugle Call Rag."

(****H.M.V. B.8799.)

This is quite an extraordinary month on H.M.V. They've even acceded to my request for this 'ere Dicky Wells. You can hardly fail to panic over *Between The Devil*. Even the absence of a piano, and the stupid anti-climax of Django Reinhardt's guitar solo following a terrific brass build-up, can hardly spoil such magnificent riffing as goes on in the last two choruses.

The first half of the second chorus, played by Bill Coleman, is a gem. He makes the other trumpets on the disc, who are really not so dusty, sound almost grime-covered.

Bugle Call Rag is only a little less grand. Play both sides at maximum volume to get the real effect of the brass punch.

Lionel Hampton and his Orchestra.

"Piano Stomp."

"Drum Stomp."

(*H.M.V. B.8800.)

When I asked for a new Hampton release, I meant a new one, with Benny Carter and all, not this year-old error.

The only distinction for *Drum Stomp* is that it seems to me to be almost note-for-note *Crazy Rhythm*, the whole damn chorus. And *Piano Stomp* is an almost undisguised *Shine*.

Krupa Sounds Rather Weary

Lionel plays a lot of much too fast and facile one-finger piano stuff, which rapidly becomes tiresome, and a lot of noisy drum stuff, which ditto ditto.

Slim and Slam.

"Lady Be Good."

"8, 9 and 10."

(***Parlo. R.2567.)

The bowed bass plays the same phrases it used in *Floogee*. So does the vibraphone. So, if it comes to that, do Slim and Slam's vocal passages. The effervescence and naive charm are just attractive enough to earn three stars. I can't make head or tail of the words of 8, 9 and 10. Let me know if it's something dirty.

Gene Krupa and his Orchestra.

"Meet The Beat Of My Heart."

"What Goes On Here In My Heart."

(*Columbia FB.2027.)

This band sounds just the same as Goodman's did playing the same weary tunes in the Mundy period. Since Mundy's now Krupa's arranger the answer is simple. There are just the commercial vocals and short solos you would expect.

Think of the Gene that might have been!

REISSUES.

There are six sides of Sullivan on Columbia DB.5042, 5044, 5045, the last being that perfect *I'm Coming Virginia*, when Maxine really sang. The Lang-Kress guitar duets *Pickin'* and *Feelin' My Way* (ex-Brunswick) go to Parlo on R.2565. Trumbauer's *Take Your To-morrow* and *My Sweeter Than Sweet*, the former with a shameful darky-imitation dialect vocal and glimpses of Bix, bob up on Parlo. R.2564. Duke's *Solitude* (recoupled for the third time!) is now mated to *Sentimental Mood*, Columbia DB.5041.

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Melody Maker

OCTOBER 1, 1938

Vol. XIV. No 280

ELLINGTON ON THE AIR



Edward Kennedy
 "Duke"
 Ellington,
 as seen
 by the
 futuristic
 brush of
 "Ken," the
 famous
 American
 caricaturist

HERE'S a surprise for you. Duke Ellington and His Orchestra have another B.B.C. broadcast, next Thursday on Regional, from 9.30 to 10.0.

Most of the programme, possibly all, will be devoted to orchestrations played by the full band. On records the small contingents continue to provide plenty of variety. It was Johnny Hodges' group, for instance, that cashed in on the recent Krum Elbow sensation, when the Negro pastor, Father Divine, moved in as President Roosevelt's neighbour. Hodges waxed a *Krum Elbow Blues*, and although it started out as a musical satire, it ended up as a typical twelve-bar blues.

At the same session Duke recorded the Gershwin theme song written for the New York World's Fair, entitled *The Dawn Of A New Day*.

I have now received a copy of the Ellington interpretation of Noel Gay's *Lambeth Walk*, and can only marvel again at the way Duke can convert the most inappropriate material to his own uses to produce a result that is musically satisfying.

More News From Ellington Camp

There is more news from the Ellington camp. Ivie Anderson was not affected by the advent of the new vocal star, Jean Eldridge; in fact, I have seen a picture of Duke with an affectionate arm around each of his girl singers. And if Ivie takes part in the broadcast I hope they will include the recorded arrangement of Duke's tune, *Watermelon Man*, in which her chorus is short but sweet.

Maybe they will also do *A Blues*

Feather Forecast and News

Serenade, behind which there is an interesting story.

Ten years ago, two of Paul Whiteman's boys—Matt Malneck, the violinist, and Frank Signorelli, pianist—put together an attractive sixteen-bar chorus. A young singer in the band, named Bing Crosby, ran around the Tin Pan Alley zone with these two songsmiths demonstrating their brainchild to various publishers.

When Bing met Malneck recently on the latter's arrival in Hollywood to work in studio bands, he inquired casually what happened to "that number we used to knock ourselves out on."

Malneck suggested it was probably gathering dust on some publisher's shelf. Bing said he would like to record it, and since then *Blues Serenade* has made a belated but sensational start to its career, and has been waxed both by the Johnny Hodges contingent and the full Ellington orchestra.

Coming Jam Session Relay From U.S.A.

As you have read, the BBC is planning a jam session relay from New York; or rather, it is leaving it to Alistair Cooke to plan. Which is just about the best thing it could do; for this gaunt, energetic young man with the engaging radio personality, apart from his activities as stage and screen critic for NBC and general record-recital-deviser at the BBC, takes an intelligent interest in jazz.

Cooke, though English, spends most of his time in America, where he has just returned from London.

He has promised to try to get some of Goodman's and Krupa's boys into this jam session. He also wants to have Joe Marsala and Bobby Hackett, to say nothing of Fats Waller and Mezz Mezzrow, so you can see that even if the thing pans out differently it is bound to be on the right lines.

On The Air, And In The Clouds

An English agent made an enquiry the other day about Slim and Slam, with a view to bringing them over here for vaudeville appearances. The agent imagined they would be a reasonably cheap act because only a few months ago they were working in obscure night clubs for coffee and cakes.

Imagine the colour of the agent's face when the news came back that the boys now consider themselves worth a cool thousand dollars a week.

That's what one flat foot floogee does for you!

29.10.38

SWING MAGAZINE

"SWING," America's latest magazine. Big art portraits and articles on all the stars. Send P.O. 1s. to P. M., STAFFORD, 14, Bloomsbury Way, W.C.1.—or last three issues for 2s. 6d.

SCREWY MUSIC

Queer titles and queerer harmony have called down the wrath of the highbrow jazzists on my head, but the term "screwy music" is getting a bit monotonous

says RAYMOND SCOTT ★

ONE of the complaints that I've had to deal with in the enormous variety of opinions people have been expressing about my music is that I try too hard to be deliberately different and "screwy" in everything I write. I've been the victim of this accusation so frequently that I finally decided to write down a few personal details about my musical background and policy, so that those of you who have played or heard my compositions will be able to decide more accurately for yourselves.

In the first place, my early musical experience was in no way unorthodox, unless you consider there was anything subversive in my youthful mania for piano rolls. At my home in Brooklyn we had an automatic piano, and I used to take great delight in playing these rolls over very slowly and trying to copy them. They were my first fascination; a little later I began to take an interest in some of the more usual channels for hearing music, such as radio, phonographs, and the concert hall.

For four or five years I studied at the Institute of Musical Art in New York, during which time my interests were leaning slowly towards jazz. In the symphonic school I found Gershwin a constant fascination, yet I was equally intrigued by the different type of musical advancement represented by Duke Ellington.

My first professional job was offered me by the Columbia Broadcasting System, where I became pianist and, later, arranger with the house band. Then one day Phil Cohan, one of the C.B.S. directors, came to me with particulars of a programme in which we were to accompany Gogo de

Lys, the vocalist, in a special performance. He suggested that I take a small group out of the house band and use them for the background to Miss de Lys.

This gave me the idea of writing a composition for the five men who joined me on that programme. And so, the "Toytown Quintet," as it was first called, came into existence to give the first performance of *The Toy Trumpet* during Christmas week of 1936.

A few weeks later I was invited to bring this same group to take part in one of the Saturday night swing club programmes. On this show we introduced *Twilight In Turkey*, my second piece for the group. Soon afterwards there were demands for recordings, and Irving Mills put me under contract for his newly-formed

Master Record Corporation. There were demands for orchestrations, too, so I had my own publishing company to issue scores for full bands of these two numbers and the others which I wrote just afterwards, *Powerhouse* and *Minuet In Jazz*.

It is a great pity that, of this first set of four compositions, *Minuet in Jazz* was never played in England owing to its being an adaptation of Paderewski's *Minuet in G*, on which European copyright restrictions precluded any kind of transcription of the original version. Those of you who have heard my version of this piece will know that no disrespect for the original work, and no deliberate "screwiness," was intended or conveyed in my treatment, which merely converted the work into a rhythmic idiom but retained the original spirit of the composition.

However, I am not principally interested in transcriptions. The only other one I have written



Above:
The Raymond Scott
Swing Salon Ork.



Right:
Ray himself.

* In an interview

for the Quintet is *The Girl With the Light Blue Hair*, which I took from Gabriel-Marie's *La Cinquantaine*. I much prefer to stick to descriptive titles, and in almost every instance (*The Toy Trumpet* is an exception to this rule) I think of my title first and write the piece around it. Once in a while I find a definite musical idea which is obviously programme music, but for which I find an appropriate title later.

I understand that in a B.B.C. recital of my records in England a test pressing of my record called *The Toothache* was played. This is a case in point. The name has since been changed to *The Oil Gusher*, though I've been told by people who heard it first as *The Toothache* that they can't get this original title out of their minds and they can't imagine that any other name will fit it half as well!

One question which has been put to me more frequently than any other is "How much of the solo work in your compositions is improvised?" My answer to this is contained in my description of the general musical policy of these pieces, which can best be described as "Directed and controlled improvisation." That is to say, when there is a solo passage, I sketch out to the artist one or two ideas about the general run of the chorus, the mood and style in which he should think. Then the soloist fixes something up in accordance with my suggestions, and once he has hit on something fitting he retains it in almost identical form for every performance of the composition. English bands who have played the stock arrangements of my numbers will notice that the identical solos are included on the parts, and even some of the biggest bands in America have preferred to adhere to the original conception of the solos.

My main object in all these pieces is to attain distinctiveness, not screwiness, and a sense of continuity. Before I write a note on paper I have the whole picture of the composition clearly in my mind. I hope I can maintain my musical viewpoints and bring something a little different into everything I write, but not too different for the layman to understand and enjoy.

Inevitably there have been critics who object that all my work is too much alike. This seems to me a prejudiced viewpoint, for surely one work of mine has no more in common with another than, say, one Viennese waltz with another; that is to say, there are certain common characteristics which give the music its specialised significance, but beyond this, each work branches out into something new. The same rule applies to every form of music.

Admittedly my material could be still more widely varied if the public's demands were not so exclusively in

favour of dazzling, spectacular productions at bright tempos. The radio audiences seem to demand these features in all my work, and I will admit that it has limited me up to a certain point. But whenever I catch myself out using some particular idea that I have employed before—for instance, there was a recent case where I found myself inserting a



drum solo of a similar type to that used in *Twilight in Turkey*—I check myself and cut the passage out.

Talking about the drums reminds me that I should offer a word of appreciation here for all that Johnny Williams has meant to the success of the Quintet. I consider him the greatest artistic performer of his kind in the country. He's 29 years old and has had many years' experience in the business with Leo Reisman, Arnold Johnson, and the C.B.S. house orchestra.

Of the other boys in the band, I suppose most readers will remember the clarinet player, Pete Pimiglio, as a

member of one of Red Nichols' original recording bands from the Five Pennies era. Dave Wade, the trumpet soloist, has been with Fred Waring, Hal Kemp, and Paul Whiteman, and made a number of Frankie Trumbauer's records. Fred Whiting, the bass player who replaced Louis Shoubee in my combination, is a new kid from Boston. Dave Harris, the tenor sax, is comparatively new to the profession; he's 24 years old, and the C.B.S. house band gave him his first big job.

These boys have been featured more prominently in our film appearances than I have myself, as I have faith in the visual attractions of the drum kit and Johnny Williams' showmanship, and the gestures of the tenor and clarinet man while they turn out their solos. I've never yet been shot in a close-up in any of the half-dozen pictures we've made, and I hope to keep up this record indefinitely!

Perhaps you'll be able to see us in *Rebecca of Sunnybrook Farm* with Shirley Temple, in which we did *The Toy Trumpet*; and in *Happy Landing* we do one of my latest pieces, *War Dance For Wooden Indians*. And before long I'll be awaiting your verdict on some new pieces I've just produced, entitled *Square Dance For Egyptian Mummies* and *The Freckled Fox*.

I hope the verdict will be a favourable one, because whatever my musical policy may be, and however much I object that I'm not trying to be screwy and pretentious, I'm still prepared to be guided by the most important principle for success in any department of the world of art: The customer is always right!

WHY IS A TRUMPET?

(continued from page 51)

think that piano tuning is one of the biggest ramps in existence. Apart from the piano's tempered influence over music, the main drawback is its inability to sustain a tone. A few years ago I heard a demonstration of a Neo-Bechstein Piano, where this was accomplished by electrical means, and I thought at the time what a glorious instrument it was. The price, however, was prohibitive, and I have not come across one since.

Guitars, during the last few years, have progressed by leaps and bounds, due to the application of scientific principles by the makers. It is apparent

that the guitar's weakness of tone is fully realised by them.

The violin, viola, 'cello and bass, all suffer from the serious defect of being too weak.

The drummer to-day is exceptionally well catered for, pedal timpani and the introduction of the vibraphone being noteworthy achievements.

The modern organ is a masterpiece of acoustic engineering, but one man will never be able to play the same as an orchestra, which seems to be the ambition of most organists.

Next Month : IMPROVING INSTRUMENTS

Fats Waller Records Jam With English

Ambrose Starts Vaude Tour
... Roy Fox Seriously Ill ...
English News

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON.—The Fats Waller excitement is just beginning to subside, and by the time you read this he will be on his way home to open at the Yacht Club on October 7.

Fats leaves a fine souvenir of his trip in the shape of a recording session made with a pick-up gang of local musicians. Titles which have not dated may be released in U. S. by Victor, so here are the details: *Floogee*, *A Tisket, Music Maestro* and a new number written here by Spencer (I Ain't Got Nobody) Williams, called *Pent Up in a Penthouse*; finally two numbers on which Fats played organ with the same band, *Ain't Misbehavin'* and *Don't Try Your Jive on Me*.

The trombone of George Chisholm, tenor and clarinet of Alfie Kahn, were highlights of the date. Two West Indian colored boys, David Wilkins on trumpet and E. Ross on drums, were included, and completing the group were Ian Shepherd on tenor and fiddle; Alan Ferguson, guitar; Len Harrison, bass, and Hymie Schneider (drums in last side only).

Fats also waxed six organ solos of Negro spirituals and two numbers accompanying Adelaide Hall, with whom he broadcast in a program to America on September 10. At press time he is on a two-week tour of Scandinavia, returning to England for a local broadcast September 29 and sailing October 1.

Ambrose Tour

Ambrose's stage tour started with great success, featuring the newly-acquired vocalist Denny Dennis, formerly with Roy Fox. Danny Polo, American clarinet star, has again left the band, definitely this time, and is staying on the Continent, possibly to join Ray Ventura's French band or Willie Lewis's colored combo, which would make him the second white boy to play with this gang.



Fats Waller

Polo's place with Ambrose has been taken by Joe Crossman, which caused a gap in the Lew Stone reed section since filled up by the addition of Sid Millward. (Is that all clear?) Stone is playing a month at the Café de Paris, where Billy Bissett, Canadian leader, takes over on October 12 with a more expensive band than he has previously used, featuring men from the old Roy Fox gang including drummer Maurice Burman.

Double Trouble

There is sad news about Roy Fox. Just as he had picked the men for his new band and was about to start rehearsals, he was taken so seriously ill that the doctors packed him off to a sanatorium in Switzerland. To add to which his agent, Leslie Macdonnell, served a writ on him for debts to the tune of three thousand dollars only a few hours before he left the country.

Another invalid, Jack Hylton's star arranger Bill Ternent, is recuperating from a long illness and may be back on the job soon. Hylton, by the way, has big plans, having signed up again with HMV (Victor) for records. Also plans a series of one-hour broadcasts.

Harry Roy Dispute

Harry Roy, back from South America, has started a music hall and cinema tour, and has been involved in a dispute regarding his broadcasting plans. Had to cancel an air date at the last minute because his theatre bookers would not allow him to air while working for this chain. The squabble is being taken up by the Dance Band Directors' Association.

Peters Sisters followed Fats Waller into the Palladium and met with a riotously enthusiastic reception. They have recorded an English session accompanied by Sidney Millward and his broadcasting pick-up bunch.

Brian Lawrance, Australian leader popular over here for some years, returns to the West End with his six-piece orchestra and the "Three Ginx" vocal group at Lansdowne House.

Noble to America

Ray Noble's tour with the Canadian band of Trump Davidson being finished, manager Harty sailed for New York to get a new American combination together for Noble's forthcoming New York season.

Eddie Carroll's orchestra, one of the better British bands that attempts to play a little genuine swing music once in a while, has started on its first variety tour.

Ken "Snakehips" Johnson, leader of the only permanent British colored band, has lost his job at the Florida, swanky London night club, but started a vaudeville routine and has plans to tie up with the West Indian exhibit at the New York World's Fair. If the scheme materializes Johnson's will be the first British dance band to visit the States since Jack Hylton's.

Another noted West Indian musician, straight clarinetist Rudolph Dunbar, sails for New York early in October for a lecture tour under

(Turn to page 36, please)

England

(Continued from page 18)
the auspices of Harlem's *Amsterdam News*.

Best sixpenny sheet music sellers in mid-September were: *Lambeth Walk*; *When the Organ Played O Promise Me*; *Oh Ma-Ma*; *I Won't Tell a Soul*; *Heaven in the Pines*; *Little Lady Make-Believe*; *Sweetest Song in the World*; *Meet Me Down in Sunset Valley*; *Somebody's Thinking of You Tonight*; *Sweet as a Song*.

IRVING BERLIN on SWING

In an interview with Leonard G. Feather

ALLEXANDER'S RAGTIME BAND, the motion picture named after his most famous composition, which had its premiere in London recently, and of which listeners have heard a radio version, was the reason for Irving Berlin's visit to Europe. The film marks the greatest tribute of Hollywood to this king of Tin Pan Alley, whose seven or eight hundred songs have made him a millionaire.

It was during the early 'twenties that Berlin's international reputation, started by 'Alexander', became firmly cemented. The series of waltz hits—'All Alone', 'Remember', 'Always', 'What'll I Do'—made him secure for life.

When his talking-picture career became his chief interest and a vital source of income, his development of a more advanced, perhaps more sophisticated style, both in music and lyrics, became apparent, with consequences such as 'Cheek to Cheek', 'The Piccolino', 'Top Hat', 'Slumming on Park Avenue' and 'This Year's Kisses'.



Irving Berlin

And what, I asked inevitably, 'do you consider your best song?' 'Well, I'm going to surprise you. I know it's fashionable nowadays to strike an attitude and say "Well, the best thing I did was a little number which the publishers put on the shelf—I never made a penny out of it". I don't believe in that hokey. The best numbers are the ones that are most popular, and vice versa. My best song was "Alexander's Ragtime Band". At its height it sold two million copies in the States, and made a fortune for two publishers. That was from 1911, for the first couple of years. I only got a small royalty out of that, up to 1913; then the sales dropped to nothing. Then came the revival recently and it's a best-seller in America again, and this time I'm making plenty.'

'Don't Believe It!'

'Don't you think that a great number of songs like that become popular again because the swing bands take them up?'

'Swing music? Don't believe it! The swing arrangements of popular songs are a double injustice. Unjust to the composer because they don't respect the original melody; unjust to the arranger because he should be getting the credit—and the cash—for what has virtually become a new composition in his hands.'

'I believe there's been some confusion about my opinion on swing music. I've heard it and enjoyed it right from the days when they used to get together round an old piano in the saloons and start "noodling around" with the melody.'

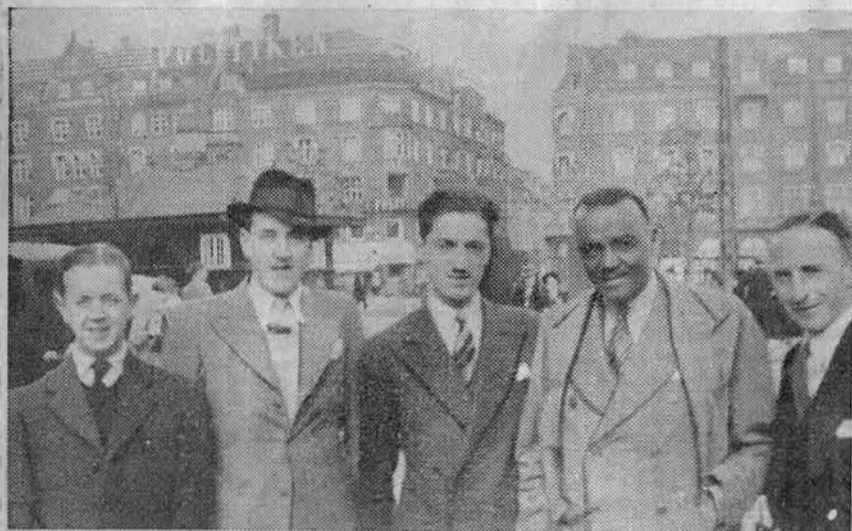
'Jazz, blues, swing, are as much an interpretative form of music as the original ragtime was. It's emotional music. Take a good swing band into a formal, stiff, society party and even they will react to it.'

'When I was living in Atlantic City this summer, which is equivalent to your Blackpool, I went down to listen to Benny Goodman's Orchestra and see the effects his music had on the crowd. Believe me, they reacted just as if they were listening to a speech by the President. Enthusiasm like that can't die quickly.'

Melody Maker

OCTOBER 22, 1938

Vol. XIV. No 283



Les Morris, Hank Morrison (see story herewith), Leonard Feather, Ivan Browning (of Browning and Starr) and Bobby Pagan (ex-Troxy organist now playing in a Copenhagen cinema).

TWO more interesting personalities who crossed my path in Copenhagen were a couple of boys who were on their way back to London after seven months at the Borg Hotel, in Reykjavik, capital of Iceland.

This is the job previously held by Arthur Rosebery, who I believe reported his Icelandic experiences in these pages. Les Morris (drums) and Hank Morrison (reeds), the two boys I met, had been working up there with Paul Dolman, former Jack Harris trumpet player, and a band which was otherwise all-Icelandic.

What a shiver the name of that country sends down your spine! Yet from their accounts it's a new and exciting world. Better than the most lucrative of gig connections was the payment in permanent sunshine—it's brilliantly light for twenty-one hours of the day during summer—pleasant people, skiing, and all the conveniences a musician learns not to expect.

Alas, Iceland has a musicians' union which has strengthened considerably in the past few months, and from now on it will be difficult for any foreigners to work there.

Coming back to Copenhagen, let me

Feather Forecast and News

JAZZ GETS AROUND!

introduce you to Mr. Kurt Kleinert, who runs the city's biggest swing record haven. Difficulties have arisen since the official ban on the importation of any foreign records, but there are many American swing issues on the Danish lists. Mr. Kleinert told me he sells a lot of English dance music, notably Ambrose, Fox and Gonella, but he can't sell Hylton or Henry Hall.

Also in the shop I found a very impressive-looking volume called "Hvad Jazz Er" (What Jazz Is), an analysis of jazz by a Mr. Kristensen, just published in Danish. So even in Denmark they can't resist the temptation to write books about jazz! Well, at least this one was liberally sprinkled with musical examples, which is more than can be claimed for its English and French antecedents.

Amusing Couplings

I've had a few replies to my challenge to find a more delightful accidental title coupling than Bob Crosby's *Milk Cow Blues* and *Squeeze Me*.

Of course, several people sent in Jack Teagarden's Columbia coupling, *Someone Stole Gabriel's Horn* and *I've Got It*, but that has been mentioned before in these pages; and somebody suggested Armstrong's *Hear Me Talk 'N' To Ya* with *No, Papa, No*, which is not bad.

Most of the other suggestions were pretty feeble, excepting Ellington's *My*

Gal Is Good For Nothing But Love and *I Was Made For Love*.

I'm still waiting for one to beat the Crosby coupling, so I'll leave the decision open for the present.

* * *
"The H.M.V. Fats Waller record (*Viper's Bag* and *Alligator's Crawl*) is the last word." (Record review in "News Chronicle.")

The wrong word.

* * *
The United Hot Clubs of America, incorporated as a non-profit organisation, have been reorganised, with offices at 30, East 20th Street, New York City. Charters are issued, to branches boasting a minimum membership of twenty-five, for twenty-five dollars, which entitles you to a free copy of any recordings made by the UHCA.

This looks like giving a world-wide filip to the rhythm club movement, which has often been said to be flagging in this country. Write to Gregory Freed, the secretary, who will presumably tell you all about it.

Errata

Forgive a moment of aberration on the part of the make-up man in regard to Svend Asmussen last week. Naturally the headline should have read: "Amazing Danish Hot Fiddler," not Dutch. I hope Svend Asmussen's national pride is not too deeply hurt.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

OCT. 28

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THIS week will be 'Young Folks At Home' week for the jazz specialists. Almost every evening there is a programme of some specialised interest to the rhythm connoisseur.

On Monday evening at 9.30 there will be a musical biography of Benny Goodman, in which I shall endeavour to trace, with gramophonic illustrations, the career of this jazz plutocrat from his humble start, when as a school-boy he used to sit in with the pioneer Wolverines' Orchestra, right up to his present peak from which he commands a salary that, in dollars, reaches a five-figure total weekly.

Goodman and his clarinet, with an orchestra probably stronger in personnel than ever before, are at present waking up the guests in the hitherto sedate precincts of New York's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel.

Tuesday brings another 'Jack's Back' show, for which Hylton himself has devised the script at several round-table conferences with Bryan Michie, Tommy Handley, and others who are taking part in this elaborate production. The twenty-one piece band now employed by Britain's veteran band-leader includes seven of his old-timers, the rest being comparatively new acquisitions who have worked with him only since his return from America.



Benny Goodman

Thursday brings Ken Johnson and his West Indian Orchestra back to the microphone at 7 o'clock with some new special swing orchestrations.

On Friday evening at 7.30 comes the second of the winter series of Continental relays which began with Kai Ewans's Copenhagen programme last month. This time the epicentre of the rhythmic disturbance will be Paris, and the orchestra is to be directed by Alix Combelle, a tenor saxophonist and clarinetist who ranks among France's very few contributors to the art of jazz improvisation.

Combelle having recently been signed to join the band of Ray Ventura ('France's Jack Hylton'), it is very likely that the pick-up band he is assembling for this broadcast will include members of that group. Since Ventura's personnel includes Philippe Brun, a fine trumpet soloist who was for some years with Hylton, and Danny Polo, the noted clarinetist who lately left Ambrose after nearly six years over here, it is probable that you will hear some exciting music.

* * *
Finally, to provide an appropriate climax to an exceptional week, on Saturday from 9 to 9.40 the keenly-awaited jam session from New York will be heard.

Alistair Cooke, who organised this venture, placed the lining-up of talent in the hands of Joe Marsala, and it is certain that a sensational collection of guest stars will be heard.

Names that are famous in jazz history are among the prospects: Tommy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Fats Waller, Bud Freeman, Dave Tough, Eddie Condon, Sidney Bechet, Bobby Hackett, and a score of others.



Hot Records Reviewed . . . by "ROPHONE"

SWING ON THE SOPRANO SAX

Old-timer Bechet Shows His Medals

Left: Ella Fitzgerald might have gone all Edwardian in her hairdressing but she's unmistakably 1938 in her singing. Below: Willie Solomon, who makes his recording debut with a piano solo in "Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes" by Ye Olde English Swynge Band

Sidney "Pops" Bechet with Noble Sissle's Swingsters.

"Sweet Patootie."

"Viper Mad."

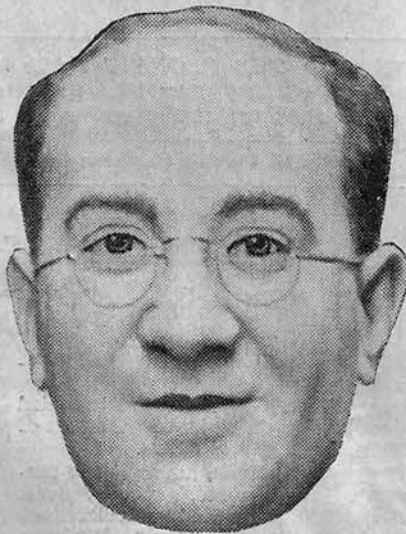
(**Brunswick 02652.)

YOU'VE probably read oodles of fanatical articles about the place occupied by Bechet in jazz history, and you must have wondered what all the fuss was about and why you couldn't hear him on a good record.

Now you can. You'll hear that he's an old-timer. His soprano in *Sweet Patootie* betrays his grey hairs, but if he's not modern he isn't corny either. Except in the first chorus of *Viper Mad*.

Patootie is the side. The title means the same as Fats Waller's *Paswonky*, as you'll guess when you hear the line about the woman with a sign on the door "sweet patootie for sale" (or haven't you that sort of a mind?). And, of course, *Viper Mad* is all about sticks of tea and getting high and suchlike elevating matters.

O'Neil Spencer sings the patootie



blues in his better form. Apart from Bechet you will be interested in another Sissle man, Clarence Burton, on trumpet.

Billie Holiday and her Orchestra.
"Getting Some Fun Out Of Life."
"Trav'lin' All Alone."

(**Vocalion S.172.)

That gal is here again. And if

she came into this column once every week it still wouldn't be too often.

Listen to her enunciation of the word *getting*. And the pathos, without sentimentality, which she infuses into each phrase.

Billie Isn't Like Maxine

Incongruously enough, the accompanying unit contains, of all people, Claude Thornhill on piano. But if you think he can cast a spell over Billie or write flute parts behind her or make a diva out of her, think again. Billie isn't as flexible as Maxine, thank God.

Buck Clayton and Lester Young do good work, without managing to cheer up the lugubrious Buster Bailey.

Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band.

"Early One Morning."

"Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes."

(Decca F.6810.)

I haven't attempted to mark this, because knowing my colleague, Leonard Feather, so well, I can hardly be expected to be entirely objective.

To reduce it to simple statements of fact, however, I can tell you that the leader endeavours to give the lie to the generally accepted theory that critics cannot practise what they preach. In *Drink To Me Only* he plays the celeste obligato to Andy McDevitt's straight clarinet opening chorus, while in *Early One Morning* he takes the first chorus on piano, adding in twelve bars of blues

for good measure by way of an introduction.

One thing I won't hesitate to state, because I am sure the other critics would unanimously agree with me, is that on his showing in these two sides David Wilkins has no peer in this country as a first-class swing trumpet soloist.

The rest of this coupling I leave to you.

These, by the way, are the first two titles in Decca's British swing series.

Casa Loma Orchestra.

"I Cried For You."

"Time On My Hands."

(*Brunswick 02649.)

Glen Gray, who still represents one of America's biggest swing music names in the average American mind, continues to turn out music meant for the masses.

Well Played, But Eminently Dull

Both sides are the type of thing second-rate English musicians hear with gaping admiration because they are eminently well played and musicianly. The fact that they are also eminently dull is, of course, irrelevant.

Kenny Sargent, who has one of those rangy sopranos so popular amongst the crooning fraternity (or sorority) takes up half the wax on *I Cried For You* in an appropriately lachrymose spirit.

This is a potentially good tune, and I should like to hear a swing band make something of it.



"ROPHONE" Reviews the Latest Hot Records

DUCHIN SPRINGS A COUPLE OF SURPRISES

A Change of Style and a Peculiar Lyric

NAVAL GUIDE

- ★★★★ Admiral
- ★★★ Commodore
- ★★ Midshipman
- ★ Tar

Eddy Duchin And His Orchestra
"Ol' Man Mose"
"Between The Devil And The Deep Blue Sea"
(*Parlophone F1239)

SO Parlophone has taken the plunge! I never expected to see the famous *Mose* on the English lists, though admittedly there is no official censorship on records over here and, after all, if it sold fifty thousand in America in two weeks it must have possibilities in other countries where the beauties of the English language are appreciated.

Curiosity Not To Be Missed

Apart from the vocalist's reiterated "buck-buck-bucket" line, for which she provides an unexpected rhyme, the record is surprising in that it marks a complete right-about turn in the Duchin policy. The band is by no means bad, and on the other side, in which Patricia Norman takes two of the three choruses, the orchestral background sounds strangely unlike what one associates with Duchin.

As an addition to the annals of naive jazz erotica, this is a curiosity not to be missed (better get it quickly in case it's withdrawn); as a contribution to the art of the gramophone it is really rather silly.

But that won't stop it from selling.

Rosetta Howard and the Harlem Hamfats
"If You're A Viper"
"Rosetta Blues"
(***Vocalion S.202)

This really seems to be vintage week for the Pornogramophone. If Duchin's shocking display isn't enough for you, turn to this bawdy vademecum of the reefer-smoker. Rosetta's *Viper* record is something I've been waiting for on the English lists; not because of the lyrics, which I don't even notice any more, but

because it gives you some fresh talent and some real rocking swing.

Rosetta is a stoutish Harlem girl with one of those deep voices and delightful tricks of diction. *Technical Tidbits*: Note how she curls the words "long" and "strong" round her tongue; and the band's neat pick-up after the two-bar break in the last chorus.

Fine Trumpet And Guitar

The musicians are just unknown Harlemites who probably can't read a note and will never be famous; but the trumpet gets everything he wants and the guitar work helps the rhythm enormously. I suppose you'll get more out of this record if you know what it's all about:—

Dreamed about a reefer five feet long

A mighty Mezz but not too strong
You'll be high but not for long, if you're a viper

I'm the queen of ev'rything,
Gotta be high before I can swing
Light a tea and let it be, if you're a viper

When your throat gets dry you know you're high
Everything is dandy

You truck on down to the candy store,
Bust your conk on peppermint candy

Then you know your body's sent
You don't care if you don't pay rent

Sky's high, so am I, if you're a viper!

Viper: reefer-smoker. *Mezz, Tea*: reefer. *High*: under the influence. *Bust your conk, etc.*: eat a lot of sweets, for which the reefers produce a craving. *Sent*: thrilled, excited. All very demoralising, isn't it? And this, too, was a terrific seller in America—forty thousand copies to the nickel-in-the-slot machines alone.

The other side is a blues, not pornographic but swell music. Get this record because it's unique, and it's down to earth swing music. But take my advice and stick to Gold Flake.

Featured in the "musical problems" set in Kay Kyser's programmes is pretty Virginia Simms, seen herewith.

Willie Smith (The Lion) And His Cubs

"Streamline Gal"
"Swing Brother, Swing"
(*Brunswick 02659)

This being a relic of 1935, when the cubs were a very experimental quartet, you must adjust your standards. The washboard and the rough cornet tone are rather disarming.

The Lion plays a very leonine chorus in the first side, which Washboard Willie comes near to ruining with his eternal offbeat. On the backing you also have a bootless vocal chorus followed by a repetitious piano chorus and a final miniature ensemble chorus that is really solid. Curate's egg.

Woody Herman And His Orchestra
"Carolina In The Morning"

"Trouble In Mind"
(*Vocalion S.201)

Spud Murphy And His Orchestra
"Transcontinental"

"My Little Girl"
(*Vocalion S.203)

The Dixieland vogue is spreading. Both these bands show symptoms of the Bob Crosby infection, though in Herman's case this is less apparent than on previous records by the same gang.

Troubled In Mind, though not a regular twelve-bar blues, is in that mood, with lyrics all about laying one's head on railroad tracks and that rather wistful line: *Trouble in mind and blue, but I won't be blue always; the sun's gonna shine in my back door some day.*

Old-fashioned But Charming Finale

Woody sings it well, though without Teagarden's conviction and appeal; besides, the low B flat he has to reach for in each verse bothers him, and he generally fails to get lower than B natural. He also plays some rather Bechet-like clarinet, strange to relate. The record finishes with an old-fashioned but rather charming blue ninth.

The reverse, recorded a year later, is a conventional arrangement with some less satisfactory clarinet, its chief interest being the vocal *Technical Tidbit*: The first and third eight



bars of the vocal are taken in halved time, while the second and fourth quarters revert to normal; this is neatly done.

Spud Murphy proves how easy it is to form a good band in the States these days. An ex-Goodman arranger, he has lined up a group including two ex-Goodmanites; Nat Kazebier on trumpet, and Bill Depew, who takes a very nice clarinet chorus in *My Little Girl*.

The last chorus here sounds like one of Dean Kincaid's arrangements for Bob Crosby.

Transcontinental is supposed to be Benny Goodman's composition, though I guess he wrote it about as much as he wrote Mozart's Clarinet Quintet. The work has passages that would be intolerable played by ordinary commercial bands, but the solo bits make the combined effect tolerable.

REISSUES

Bix's eleven-year-old *Royal Garden* and *Jazz Me*, with plenty of typical Bix and Rollini, reappear on Parlo. R2580. Rollini also burps his bass and drips his fountain pen on the Venuti Blue Four recoupling, *Four String Joe* and *A Mug Of Ale* (alias *Limehouse Blues*) on R2581. Goodman's *Remember* and *Blue Skies* are paired up to cash in on the Berlin cycle, on H.M.V. B8809. Yet another Vocalion Maxine Sullivan is transferred to Columbia. *Folks Who Live On The Hill* and *Darling Nellie Gray* on DB5046.

The World's Largest Net Sale
 PROFESSIONAL NEWSPAPER
 "THE MELODY MAKER"
 CERTIFIED NET SALE EXCEEDS
 25,000 Copies per week.

Melody Maker

OCTOBER 29, 1938

Vol. XIV. No 284



George Chisholm and Tommy McQuater, with Leonard Feather in the background

WHEN a man bites a dog, that's news. When George Chisholm plays a twelve-bar chorus, that's blues. And news. And this week I have good news galore.

To put it briefly: George Chisholm assembled a jam band for a recording session.

To elaborate: the session was a "solid sender" and should prove to be the best George has

made over here. The combination included two of George's colleagues, Tommy McQuater on cornet and Tiny Winters on bass, plus George's old pal Benny Winestone playing some swell clarinet and tenor; Eddie Macauley still playing some grand stuff at the ivories, and Dudley Barber, the drummer from the Danny Polo sessions.

The discs are to be included in

Decca's British Swing Series. Owing to the immediate understanding that establishes itself between the musicians on the right kind of jam session, it was possible to get six titles done during the morning.

Only one was a published tune, *Rosetta*, the others being all originals. Naturally one was the traditional blues, disguised as *Archer Street Drag*, and I defy you to find a blues disc short of Teagarden where so much wonderful trombone has been played.

Two other slow numbers were made, *You'll Always Be Mine*, and a sixteen-bar standard chord sequence which we called *No Smoking*, to partner with a fast number which was christened *To Stop The Train Pull Down The Chain*. The other number, based on a simple riff, was named *Let's Go*.

Decca Issue In Mid-November

Chisholm has made his mark in many swing records—Carter's, Polo's, Waller's—but this session, built around him, to be released under his own name, features him for the first time in proportion to his ability. Decca plans to issue the first two sides in mid-November.

If these records produce music as exciting as was heard at the session—which is surely the logical thing to expect—I believe George Chisholm will be firmly established among this country's swing fans as the most remarkable individual of his kind Britain has ever donated to the world of hot music.

Another One To Note

Another interesting British session, which will bring a practically unknown artist to general notice, took place at the Parlophone studios, where George Sheering, who was formerly with Claude Bampton's Blind Orchestra, made a couple of trial numbers, one

Feather Forecast and News

WHEN CHISHOLM TAKES A 12-BAR CHORUS —THAT'S BLUES!

being a boogie-woogie blues, at which he is a specialist, and the other a revival of *I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles*.

Sheering is one English pianist whose style betrays no inhibitions. He hammers it right out, with a fondness for the top of the keyboard. It would be silly to call him the English Art Tatum just because he happens to have the same physical affliction; the ingredients savour more of Meade Lux Lewis and Pinetop Smith.

* * *

Equally Good On Either Instrument

If you heard Valaida singing Spencer Williams' *Pent Up In A Penthouse* on the recent *Blackbirds* broadcast, you can hardly be expected to guess, though you may be interested to know, that at the rehearsal she surprised everyone by taking a chorus on fiddle!

In answer to my gape, she told me she learned violin as a child and it was her first study. Well, the trumpet needn't monopolise her time as long as she can play as much fiddle as she did at that rehearsal. I want to hear some more, and I've asked her to play it on her next record date.

* * *

Those of you who don't see the American magazine *Life* missed something interesting when a twelve-page section was devoted to the history and accomplishments of the Negro in the United States.

It was pleasing to see two of our fraternity, Duke Ellington and W. C. Handy, in the page devoted to "twenty of America's most distinguished Negroes." Others in the top twenty were symphony writer William Grant Still, contralto Marian Anderson, and Paul Robeson. The rest were soldiers, architects, politicians, dramatists, lawyers and so on.

First landed in Virginia in 1619 on filthy slave ships from which many were taken out dead, the Negroes in the U.S.A. now number 12,000,000, a tenth of the population. Eighty per cent. of them still live in the South.

LEONARD G. FEATHER

Jazz Biography is a New Idea

THE outstanding item of light entertainment to-night is a jazz biography of Benny Goodman. It is something new in microphone technique.

Leonard Feather will tell Goodman's life-story in words and music. Various stages in his musical development will be illustrated by records. There will be records of Goodman playing all sorts of music from Mozart downwards.

Feather is a personal friend of Goodman's.

The B.B.C. have made it possible for a relatively unknown cinema organist to become an international star after two years' regular broadcasting. That is why Reginald Foort's farewell broadcast to-night is important. The B.B.C. are giving more publicity to it than to Sir John Reith's farewell.

200 Kc. NATIONAL 1500 M.

5.0—Irish and Proud of It, a selection of songs by Percy French; Herbert Thorpe (tenor).
Luigi Vocelli and his Hungarian Orchestra.



Claud Hulbert, one of the Three Chaps, is in Monday Night at Seven (National).

9.40—B.B.C. ORCHESTRA (Section E), conducted by Joseph Lewis

- 7.0—News Bulletins in French, German and Italian
- 7.30—Bookshelf—Allan Ferguson and Eric Gillett.
- 7.50—Variety: Bob Arnold (the Farmer's Boy), Tarrant Bailey, jun. (banjo), Raymond Green (entertainer). (Midland programme.)
- 8.10—BACH—1, English Suites played by Rudolph Dolmetsch (harpsichord)
- 8.30—"Night Journey" (Northern programme.)
- 9.0—"THE PIG AND WHISTLE"—9, with George Ellis, Miriam Ferris, Charles Wreford, Fred Yule and Charles Penrose: Rae Jenkin's Buskers
- 9.30—JAZZ BIOGRAPHY—Benny Goodman, gramophone records.
- 10.0—News and Weather.
- 10.25—Joe Loss and his Band, from the Astoria Dance Salon
- 11.30—Gramophone—Excerpts from Bellini's Operas.
- 11.50-12.0—News and Weather.

TELEVISION

Vision: 45 Mc. (6.67m.)
Sound: 41.5 Mc. (7.23 m.)

- 9.0.—Intimate Cabaret, Ord Hamilton (in songs at the piano) and Cyril Fletcher (in Odd Odes).
- 9.10.—Cartoon Film, "Mickey's Mechanical Man."
- 9.15.—GUEST NIGHT—Travellers or Explorers, with A. G. Street as host.
- 9.45.—British Movietone
- 9.55.—Singing Circus

RAI
TEL

1013 Kc
6.0.—Jane A
(viola). 6.30.—
tra. 7.—News
on Wall Street,
gramme Trailer,
—Amateur Box
Ulster Constab
of Birmingham
gramme in cel
Birmingham 1

1050 Kc
7.50.—Tolcha
gramme. 8.30
Regional progr
Winifred Davey
James Lackingt
News.

804 Kc
6.0.—Everybod
Episode 4. 6.5
Talk. 7.30.—In
W. H. J. Jenku
Workmens Band

977 Kc.

LAST NIGHT

"MONDAY NIGHT AT SEVEN" is taking quite a while to shake down to last winter's standard. But Harry Pepper is never afraid to try out new ideas, and there is small doubt that the feature will soon be as good as ever. Pity the producer. It is hard enough to find someone different, let alone someone who can be funny as well.

Telegrams poured into St. George's Hall for Reginald Foort, who, after playing to us four times a week at least for a couple of years, now goes off to make more friends and a lot more money. His farewell was a sentimental and pleasant affair—but do not fear, we shall hear the genial "Reg." again.

I am glad Leonard Feather, who gave an interesting biography of Benny Goodman on records, has been "promoted" to the evening program.

GALE PEDRICK.

THE STAR, NOV. 1

DAILY SKETCH OCT. 31

I SEE Leonard G. Feather comes to the "mike" to-night at 9.30 on Regionals with another of those interesting gramophone record sessions of swing music. This time he deals with one of his oldest and best friends, Benny Goodman—the man who earns £2,000 a week.

Grid Peak

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED OCTOBER 28

NATIONAL

Regional wavelengths see page headings



LEONARD G. FEATHER,

who writes every week for the RADIO TIMES, will present a jazz biography of Benny Goodman on gramophone records tonight at 9.30.

9.30 JAZZ BIOGRAPHY

Benny Goodman

A programme of gramophone records presented by Leonard G. Feather

SWINGTHUSIASTS' NOTE!

Monday, November 7

JOE VENUTI and EDDIE LANG are subject of "Jazz Celebrities" (gramophone) 11.30 p.m. (Nat.)

Wednesday, November 9

"HARLEM NIGHTS" presented by Leonard Feather (gramophone) 11.30 p.m. (Nat.)

WOULD somebody please gently explain to me what is a jitterbug?

This word has been grating steadily on my nerves these past few weeks. So fashionable has it become that Feather forecasts it will be *démodé* and corny in a few months. But the trouble is, nobody really seems to know or care what it means!

It was as far back as 1933 that Don Redman started to sing

Got The Jitters, which was recorded by his own orchestra and by Ben Pollack's. The words indicated that the jitters is (are) a form of d.t.'s or complete mental aberration. The tune *Jitter Bug* in 1934, recorded by Calloway on HMV and by Clark Randall (the old Pollack band before Bob Crosby took it over) seemed to establish the term.

Now, however, linked into a single word, jitterbug is taken to indicate

Feather Forecast and News

WHAT IS A JITTERBUG?

Is it a Swing Fan With the D.T.'s?

any swing fan. If it refers to the lunatics who queue for hours in the rain to see Glen Gray and dance in the aisles

when Goodman plays, the cap fits them well, because I still think jitterbug means a lunatic.

What worries me, as I said, is the looseness with which the word is being applied. Ella Fitzgerald sings *I'm Just A Jitterbug*; Johnny Hodges records a beautiful blues and then they go and call it *Jitterbug's Lullaby*; somebody has written a song for a Mack Sennett picture and called it *I'm The Son Of A Jitterbug Mama*, and the Bud Freeman gang on Commodore, by way of thanking *Life* for the write-up it gave them in a recent issue, has recorded *Life Spears A Jitterbug*.

(Odd to recall that when Benny Goodman had a big write-up in the same paper, he and Harry James produced their opus *Life Goes To A Party!*)

And to cap all this, there is to be a big feature film about swing music entitled *The Jitterbug*.

Relation Of Jitterbugs To Swing

"Jitterbugs," somebody wrote, "are plain poison — but they must be humoured because they have brought prosperity to Swing."

Well, I've made one firm resolution. After receiving letters from readers who start off by writing "I am a jitterbug and would therefore like your help with some personnels. . . ." I have determined never to mention that word again here or anywhere.

I must admit I've had a pretty good final fling.

Some Amusing Doubles —And Suggestions

My announcement that the competition for odd record couplings was still open brought some very amusing entries.

Mr. Portlock from Essex had one or two bright ideas. He found an old

NOV. 4

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

IT seems to be a long time since this column last had anything to report concerning Sydney Lipton. This may well be attributed to the smooth success, and consequent uneventfulness, of his career. He continues to please the élite of Grosvenor House as he has been doing for the past seven years, and still provides the right entertainment for the millions of listeners who have never seen him, for his is a band that takes very infrequently to the stage.



Sydney Lipton

One of the reasons why I enjoy running my band', he told me the other day, 'is the sense of team spirit we have developed; there has been hardly a single change in the personnel during the last couple of years. That's useful in several ways. For instance, instead of leaving our orchestrations entirely to one man, we often get together and pool our ideas for special arrangements.'

In the Lipton version of that now somewhat fatigued tune, *A-Tisket, A-Tasket*, George Evans suggested one of their special extra verses, Lipton added another comedy effect, and Ted Heath suggested a 'wa-wa' idea for his trombone in the last chorus. Evans, who besides playing tenor sax and singing is a brilliant arranger, collated the various ideas and based his arrangement on them.

This is one of the few bands that avoid the use of a girl singer. Apart from the complications of adding a non-playing member to the ensemble, Lipton considers that the majority of our blonde vocalists sound too much alike, so unless he can find someone extraordinarily individual he will continue to leave the work to Evans and 'Chips' Chippendall, the other sax-playing singer.

However, the Canadian Dorothy Ault appeared with him recently as guest star—a temporary departure from his policy.

Sydney Lipton hopes to make another first-hand musical sight-seeing tour next summer in the States, and this time one or two boys from the band will go with him.

It is customary to suggest that the story of band leaders never having a moment's spare time is just publicity stuff. But I can quote an authentic instance of a recent day's work done by Geraldo, whose next 'Romance in Rhythm' is on the air on Tuesday.

Starting a broadcast rehearsal at St. George's Hall at 1.30, he reached the Hippodrome Theatre just in time for his matinee from 2.20 to 5.40, was rehearsing at the BBC again soon after 6.0, on the air from 7.0 to 7.45, at the Hippodrome again at 8.15, across to the Savoy Hotel at 10.10, back to the Hippodrome at 11.0, and then straight back again to the Savoy.

All I want to know is how he eats dinner with a baton in his hand.

It does credit to the organisation behind these big production programmes that they are often achieved with only one long rehearsal or two short ones, most of the work lying in the extensive preparations, writing and copying of parts.

Leonard Feather, visiting Denmark, meets

EMILE CHRISTIAN

Of the Original Dixieland Band

THE stuffy dance hall was packed with enthusiastic Danes who cared more about their beer and their smor-rerbrod than whether they understood what the antics and shouts on the stage were all about.

With the apparent spontaneity that will put any coloured band over with any audience, the musicians were jiving around in comic clothes, dressed up as a tramp band and playing kazoos and the like. Joining in the fun with as much gusto as any of them I noticed a grey-haired man, white at the temples, with a cheery pink face. He wore a tramp outfit with black and yellow striped sweater, and as he plucked the bass and swung it to and fro I suddenly remembered. It was Emile Christian, of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band.

Pioneering In 1921

Emile Christian, who seventeen years ago was playing with those pioneers of white jazz in London. And now he is the only white member of a Negro band that has toured all over Europe, visited Bombay for a long stay, and is still eternally on the move.

The orchestra is, of course, Leon Abbey's. Further details were soon to hand when I slipped round to the stage door and introduced myself to Christian. Inevitably I started off by asking his age, for when a man has been in this business anything over five or six years he is branded as a veteran.

"I'm forty-three," he answered, to my surprise; jazz history and his appearance indicated nearer fifty. "How long have I been with this band? Let's see, it must be about two and a half years.

Still Enjoying Himself

"Sure, I've had plenty of good times since I came to Europe, and I'm still enjoying life. Since then, apart from the Dixieland band, I've worked with the Broadway Sextet, the American



Sextet, Tommy Waltham's Ad Libs; and then for a time I was in Lud Gluskin's Orchestra in Paris, at the same time that Danny Polo was working for Lud."

I commented on his change from trombone to string bass. However, he assured me that he still played the instrument with which he was identified in Dixieland days; and as I heard a while later in the second half of Leon Abbey's show, he still plays it well, too.

"I've had thirty years in the business altogether," Christian went on to tell me. "Started with my brother, Frank Christian, and Tom Brown. I was in London in 1919—I remember we opened on the first of April!—and stayed until 1921. I went home to New York just for three weeks, and worked with Phil Napoleon's Band at Coney

Amongst them were the Deauville Casino, the Monte Carlo Sporting Club, chez Florence in Paris (he also followed Benny Carter into the Boeuf Sur Le Toit last spring), and he broke records at concerts and resident jobs in Berlin, the Hague, Finland and Stockholm, where the boys recently made a recording date.

Abbey himself occasionally plays fiddle. The other boys are Arthur la Vier (alto, vocal); Antonio Cosey (a very good tenor man, also arranger); Henry Mason (trumpet); Charlie Lewis (piano); Florentino Frontella (drums); Emile Christian, and lastly none other than guitarist Bobby McRae, whose brother, Ted, is the celebrated tenor man with Chick Webb's Orchestra.

It is told that when a visiting European chatted some time ago with Nick



Left:
Emile
Christian.

Right:
Leon
Abbey

Island; Frank Signorelli was with us on piano. Then I came right back over here."

Leon Abbey himself, a sleek figure who looks young and slim for a n old-timer, has also been in Europe since most of today's swing fans were in the kindergarten. Coming from New York to London in December, 1927, he pursued quite an illustrious career, touring round the smart spots of Europe.

la Rocca and Larry Shields in New York, he was asked what had become of their old Dixieland partner, Christian. The expression and colour on la Rocca's face when he was told, "Oh, he's doing fine—he's working with a coloured band," can hardly be imagined; for la Rocca is a typical Italian-American colour-conscious person.

Regardless of which, Christian is quite happy, thank you, and doing all right. I hope he'll still be swinging that bass when there are sixty candles on his cake.



CAN THE ORGAN BE "SWUNG"?

BUYERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Buy It
- ★★★ Hear It
- ★★ Bear With It
- ★ Skip It

Fats Waller and his Continental Rhythm.

"Ain't Misbehavin'."

"Don't Try Your Jive On Me."

(***H.M.V. BD5415.)

PROBLEM for the week: can the organ be swung?

The much-disputed point includes again with this Waller coupling, made by the same band as on his other English discs, but with Fats on organ instead of piano.

Personally, I don't know what to say. Fats' organ choruses in both these slow numbers are melodically very pleasant; they are in exactly the same style he uses on the piano; yet they seem to lack some innate quality which, one must infer, is less a part of Fats' peculiar style than of his peculiar touch, which, of course, can't be transferred to the console.

This much I will say: the last bit of *Jive*, particularly where David Wilkins comes in after George Chisholm's solo, has a very definite and powerful swing, something quite rich and strange; though whether this is because of the organ or in spite of it I'm hanged if I can say.

Incidentally what fine value Chisholm gets out of his eight short bars here! The advantage of this disc over the other English Wallers is that Fats doesn't interfere with the solos by incessantly shouting.

The band is hardly noticeable in *Ain't Misbehavin'* except for a few bars of Alfie Kahn's tenor behind the vocal. In *Jive* Alan Ferguson is quietly effective on guitar, while Len Harrison and Hymie Schneider help to compensate for the absence of Fats' customary pianistic left hand power. Wilkins plays a nice trumpet obbligato to the vocal.

Meanwhile there are two organ solos of spirituals, by Fats, not to hand at press time, which may throw further light on this knotty query of whether the organ is organically capable of swinging.

Crosby's Number Cut

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.

"Trumpet Player's Lament."

"Struttin' With Some Barbecue."

(***Decca F6814.)

After hearing *Trumpet Player's Lament* I am more upset than ever that this number was cut out of Bing Crosby's film *Doctor Rhythm* after Louis had spent days before the camera.

This is not a dance record; there are rallentandi and things while Louis complains that he has to play hot music, which is really not music; the mellow rhyming includes "so-so" and "virtuoso," "knows art" and "Mozart"; and the most delicious line is "I wish I could play like José Iturbi, instead of blowing notes into a derby."

Louis really has something to sing here, and something to play, too, even the final high-note exhibitionism being justified by the magnificent and beautiful attainment of this end.

Russell's band, alas, is still shoddy and bloody, this being even more

Good Armstrong discs being so rare nowadays, I have given this four stars; but if you have sentimental recollections of the original version of *Barbecue*, which he waxed in 1928, or if you expect a background worthy of its leader, be prepared to adjust your standards.

Count Basie and his Orchestra.

"Stop Beatin' Round The Mulberry Bush."

"London Bridge Is Falling Down."

(***Brunswick 02658.)

Eddie Carroll and his Orchestra.

"One O'Clock Jump."

"Lullaby In Rhythm."

(**Parlophone R2579.)

The reader who complained of my inconsistency in starring Basie's discs was right. I defy anyone to be completely consistent in music depending so inordinately on mood, atmosphere and circumstances.

Basie does an Olde English Swynge Band act with two nursery rhymes, the first of which may be more familiar to you as *Here We Come Gathering Nuts In May*. There is some unison

or swing-choir vocalising here, unexpected from this band, but fairly well done. I like the way Rushing says "mul-bair bush." It's a bit repetitious; but there you are, repetition is a drug, bearing down on you and wearing down your resistance.

The chief interest in *London Bridge* is that there are two distinct trombone solos, in the first of which you'll recognise Benny Morton and in the second Dicky Wells.

Basie, Lester Young on tenor, and Rushing make this side, like the backing, good enough to cause regret that the arranging isn't quite up to Basie's recent sensational standards. Despite which your three bob will not be wasted.

Lost Effect

After the Basie and Harry James and Goodman versions of *One O'Clock Jump* it is tough going for Eddie Carroll, but he comes out of it unscarred if not exactly triumphant. The last passages really feel the spirit and phrasing of the number. Doug Lees, the bassist, comes out of his solo passage with an actual advantage over Basie's bassist; his tone is clearer.

But in the piano chords behind this, notice how the whole effect is lost because the notes Basie played staccato are smeared into sustained notes.

Arthur Mouncey handles his trumpet solos more than capably. The tenor and alto are next best and the trombone weakest.

Lullaby is another piece of work

above the average for big British bands, but fails to sustain interest owing to the shortage of solo work. Gwen Jones handles the vocal competently.

Spencer Trio.

"Lorna Doone Sort Bread."

"Baby Won't You Please Come Home."

(***Brunswick 02657.)

Not up to their first effort, and it's Spencer's own fault for taking a vocal chorus on the second side and tiresome drum choruses on both sides. Buster Bailey's clarinet, too, is a bit too busy to leave room for much swing; but if I were solvent I'd buy any and every record whereon Billy Kyle plays piano.

Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight.

"If You Only Knew."

"You Can't Be Mine."

(***Brunswick 02661.)

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.

"Pack Up Your Sins."

"Everybody Step."

(**Brunswick 02660.)

Both almost equally pleasant listening; Ella's sides just have the edge, because the big band has arrangements obviously concocted by an outsider (Al Feldman), and the ensemble parts sound too much like Tommy Dorsey's or any average swing band in an average performance.

Pack Up has the first alto solo I remember since Sampson left the band. Hilton Jefferson is the bloke. He sounds a little Carteresque. Nice. And the trumpet solos in *Step* sounds too good for Taft Jordan; must be Bobby Stark.

Same Old Recipe—But Good

Ella sings a chorus nicely on both sides. In her own Savoy Eight disc she follows the familiar course: first chorus vocal, then piano or tenor takes over, and Ella comes back at the end. Both tunes sound pretty much alike, too, but if you aren't yet tired of the recipe you'll find it's served up as tastily as usual.

Leith Stevens and His.

"Memphis."

"La De Duddy."

(*Parlophone R2585.)

Symphony-conductor Stevens is a musical Jack-of-all-Trades, one of whose jobs is the leading of the C.B.S. house band on the weekly swing programme. It's a band hardly worthy of so eminent a pinnacle; neither very good nor very bad, just characterless.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

ALTHOUGH quantity is no measure of quality in dance music any more than in any other musical form, it is clear that the trend of recent years has been towards larger orchestras. Most of the biggest bands on the air, however, are either specially assembled studio combinations or augmented for broadcasting purposes.

The distinction of having the largest resident outside broadcasting band would appear to belong to Bert Firman, whose seventeen-piece personnel can be heard on Tuesday night from the London Casino, where he has now been installed for over a year.



BERT FIRMAN

After the break-up of the Roy Fox band some months ago, three of the ex-Fox saxophonists joined Firman and now form the vocal trio known as the Down Beats. They are Hughie Tripp, Rex Owen, and Harry Gold. All the arrangements for the Down Beats are Harry Gold's work.

Marjorie Stedeford, who made her debut in British broadcasting in a Henry Hall Guest Night on her arrival from Australia, has worked with Jack Jackson, Brian Lawrance, Jack Payne, Gerald, and countless recording bands. She joined Firman's band six months ago.

* * * *

If you read the novel recommended in this column, 'Young Man with a Horn', which was inspired by the life of the late Bix Beiderbecke, the next American relay will hold a particular interest for you. Bobby Hackett, whose little band will be heard next Friday, November 18, is described by critics as the 'new Bix'. His cornet playing bears an uncanny resemblance in style and tone to that of the dead genius whom he never even heard.

Hackett was discovered in a small Boston night club a year or so ago. On arrival in New York he worked with Joe Marsala's band as guitarist, later forming his own band at a resort known as Nick's, in Greenwich Village, New York's Bohemia.

Only twenty-three, Hackett is one of swing music's stars of the future.

* * * *

George Elrick, who after leaving Henry Hall formed a band of his own to tour in Variety, recently decided to branch out as a solo act. For recording and broadcasting, however, the combination will be reassembled, as you may hear tomorrow, Saturday, night (November 12).

* * * *

Billy Cotton and his entire ensemble, who are in the National programme on Thursday evening, will be playing the following night at the big Film Ball in the Royal Albert Hall. This will be their sixth year in succession at this ball.

* * * *

In 'Beneath The Wax', next Wednesday night's Swing Time feature, Stan Patchett will tell the story behind a record. Mead Lux Lewis, coloured Chicago pianist, was discovered, after a five-year search by a jazz critic, working in a garage. The critic took him to New York, where he proved a nine days' wonder, and now he is back washing cars again.

BENNY GOODMAN DOES SOME COALS-OF-FIRE HEAVING

HERE is a true story which is almost too good to be true.

For well over a year Hugues Panassié, in his magazine *Hot Jazz*, has waged a campaign of unprecedented ferocity against Benny Goodman, his musicianship, his bandleading—everything short of his ancestry.

Here are some examples from his reviews of Goodman records: "Benny Goodman still makes piles of records with his band,

which are of practically no interest to me."

"... the exposition of the theme by Benny Goodman is terribly cold."

"Benny Goodman introduces the theme on clarinet with total lack of sensitivity—no warmth, nothing vibrant in his playing, simply mortal boredom."

"... Goodman's simple little accompaniment to the vibraphone solo has a vile effect."

"... Benny Goodman is even more boring than usual—if it's at all possible."

Recently Panassié arrived in America. And one of the first things he did was to accept an offer to take part in a big broadcast, in which he was introduced by the star of the show—Benny Goodman!

In his interviews with New York newspapermen, Panassié is quoted as condemning the current craze for trying to interpret swing music in concert halls.

This is certainly a wise sentiment, and I am disturbed to learn that Count Basie and his Orchestra have been booked for a "mammoth" concert in the Carnegie Hall on December 23. The band will form a centre-piece for a general tribute to Negro music, past and present, under the title "From Spirituals To Swing."

Talent is being recruited from all over the States, and participants will include the Mitchell Christ Singers, all the way from North Carolina; the Holy Roller Singers, from Mississippi; Mead Lux Lewis and Albert Ammons, from Chicago; and Pete Jackson, from Kansas City.

The intentions of all this are doubtless honourable; in fact, the proceeds are going to a Christmas charity fund; but the road to hell, they say, is paved with good intentions. I still like my swing music in a small club or a dance hall.

Which reminds me that Chick Webb,

who used to be associated in my mind with memories of Harlem's Savoy Ballroom, has created yet another sensation by being booked into the Coconut Grove atop New York's Park Central Hotel. This is an extraordinary achievement; not only because Chick's will be the first coloured band to play there, but because of the salary, which will be two thousand dollars a week plus fifty per cent. of the cover charges.

The news is good for us short wave fans, since it means that the band will

be on the air four times a week regularly, twice on the Blue and twice on the Red NBC network, starting about eight weeks from now.

I notice "Mike" commented recently regarding my remarks about Duke Ellington's recent recordings that he

would have to take my opinions on trust.

I had hoped to convince quite a lot of people, including "Mike," in a complete broadcast of Duke's new records I had all set for November 30. But this has had to be cancelled owing to the restrictions on the airing of Mills' recordings.

In view of the unsympathetic reactions to Duke's last relay from New York this is all very unfortunate. But soon I'll bring up to date the list of records published some time ago in this column. That may help me a little in my increasingly lonesome crusade.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Feather Forecast and News

DO NOT TRUST THEM, GENTLE JAZZ FAN!



says
"ROPHONE"
referring to record
label personnels

**B o b b y
Hackett** rips
off a high
one in Nick's,
New York.

sufficient *raison d'être* even for this side, and even with Django Mechanical Man Reinhardt's undercurrents. And on the other side Carter's trumpet is by no means so bad, while Hawk's two choruses, though rather in the rhapsodic style which spells arsenic to the French critics, are delightful to these ears.

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.
"Oh, How I Hate To Get Up In
The Morning."

"What'll I Do?"
(**H.M.V. B8811.)

**Tommy Dorsey and his Clambake
Seven.**

"When The Midnight Choo Choo
Leaves For Alabam."

"Everybody's Doing It."
(**H.M.V. B8809.)

These were evidently made some time ago, since Bud Freeman plays on them all, and plays, by the way, very nicely. For the rest, the routines are pretty much as usual, and both the Clambake sides are ruined as far as I'm concerned by Edythe Wright's vocals. I've never known anyone sound quite as unenthusiastic as she.

It's amazing how corny Tommy can be in some of his solos; the idea that jazz is just a joke, or that playing a hot chorus means guying the guys who did so in 1923, has cut so deep into his mentality that neither you nor he can tell quite when he's supposed to be serious and which parts are deliberately old-fashioned.

Mills Brothers.

"The Song Is Ended" (***)
"Lambeth Walk" (**)
(Brunswick 02648.)

The boys' arrangement of *The Song* is novel; Norman Brown's guitar is properly recorded this time; and the quartet sounds much more in tune.

Technical Titbit: The boys make a mistake about the *Lambeth Walk* by using the word "any" as a lead-in and starting the first beat of Bar 1 on "time you're Lambeth way," which has the effect of making the number very similar to an old tune called, if I'm not mistaken, *On A Dew-Dew-Dewy Day*. The resemblance is, of course, coincidental, and there's nothing new under the sun and all that, but it's funny, don't you think?

Ella Logan.

"My Bonnie Lies Over The
Ocean."
"Blue Bells Of Scotland."
(**Parlo. R2583.)

Larry Adler and Hot Club Quintet.
"My Melancholy Baby."
"Body And Soul."
(*Columbia DB5047.)

Ella Logan made a great fuss about Maxine Sullivan stealing her stuff, and now here she is trying to cash in herself on Maxine's success; but the answer becomes plain with this record—the reason Maxine made a hit with the idea was that she had the swing, whereas Ella only has the Scotch. The only thing in Larry Adler's record is a nice half-chorus by Django in *Body and Soul*.

Teddy Wilson and his Orchestra.
"Easy To Love" (**).
"The Way You Look Tonight"
(***)
(Vocalion S.184.)

"A-Tisket, A-Tasket" (***)
"Now It Can Be Told" (**).
(Parlo. R2582.)

Billie Holiday and her Orchestra.
"Says My Heart."
"I'm Gonna Lock My Heart."
(**Parlo. R2584.)

I WISH I could claim to be as observant as colleagues Hibbs and Jackson, who managed to discern a baritone and an alto sax on S.184 where I could only hear a tenor. After listening to Johnny Hodges and Harry Carney for ten years I imagined I knew their styles well enough to spot them.

Let's be serious. The personnel on the label is obviously phoney, and, as you can check by consulting last week's personnel guide in the "M.M.," it's Vido Musso on clarinet, Ben Webster on tenor, Mouse Randolph on trumpet, and a rhythm section which includes Krupa and Calloway's excellent bassist, Milton Hinton.

Like Brooklands On Bank Holiday

Billie Holiday's vocals bring both sides up to scratch, but scratch is what's the matter with this disc. The surface sounds like Brooklands on Bank Holiday.

The more recent Wilson on Parlophone has pleasant Nan Wynn vocals, a fair rhythm section,

a disjointed Jonah Jones, and a characteristic alto chorus by Benny Carter. Teddy is a little lifeless, *A-Tisket* fortunately disregards the melody, but the disappointing tune on the other side handicaps the proceedings, though Carter can make music out of even this sort of thing, playing it semi-straight. There are little bits of arrangement, including four bars of *When A Woman Loves a Man* at the end (why?).

Billie Holiday's own sides are good within the limitations of the tunes (oh, sadly familiar phrase!), which means better than anyone else singing the same tunes; but *Lock My Heart* is pitched too low for her. The band is not the usual Basie gang.

Benny Was Ashamed Of This

**Coleman Hawkins and his All-Star
Jam Band.**

"Out Of Nowhere" (***)
"Sweet Georgia Brown" (**).
(H.M.V. B8812.)

Interesting that of all the many French "Swing" discs available, this one was selected to be released in England, for in France, where it was recorded, they didn't consider it fit for issue. Made at the same session as *Honeysuckle* and *I Got Rhythm*, a year and a half ago, these two sides were withheld from the French market.

Out Of Nowhere provides no key to this mystery for apart from the lack of routine it is a pleasing record. The answer, though, will be found with a vengeance in *Georgia*, where, after Hawkins has overplayed his time on the first solo, there is a gap for a few bars, after which Benny Carter's trumpet comes in sounding like an under-recorded tin whistle. And the last two jam choruses are a terrible tear-up of which Benny and the other boys were ashamed when they heard the record.

Personally I find Hawkins' solos a

Crisis Hits Musicians In London

Ambrose's Future Uncertain . . . BBC's American Jam Session . . . Decca Lines Up All-Star British Swing Disc Series

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

LONDON.—Since the last London column was written for these pages, England has been through a spell of the jitters induced by war scare which hit nobody harder than the show folks. Entertainment reports all over were dead. A general atmosphere of pessimism prevailed, and even those who didn't have radios to keep them at home listening to propaganda speeches were not feeling in the mood to go out anyway.

Openings Dented

Jack Payne's new stage act was launched at the height of the crisis, and although the Prime Minister's speech that night was picked up in the theatre itself, the house was too sparse to give much encouragement to the band's show. Ambrose was similarly hit opening at the Holborn Empire in London.

After the situation had eased a bit things began to creep slowly back to normal, though for the first weeks of October there was still a noticeable slump in most attendances.

Talking of Ambrose brings up the latest and again somewhat unsettling news from that camp. The band, at the time of writing, has only one more week of variety, in Dublin, after which nothing is fixed for the band except commercial radio and records, which aren't enough in this country to keep a band going.

Ambrose re-signed with Decca last month and has just made his first waxings after nearly a year's complete abstention from recording. Meantime the boys are wondering what to do if the band breaks up, and everyone is hoping that, in the absence of a resident job, something will be found to keep this very expensive band booked.

Decca's British Swing

In the recording world it has been an exciting month. Decca decided to go all the way out with its policy of encouraging British swing music, and has launched a series, the first three sessions for which have already been made.

Most exciting of these was made under the name of George Chisholm, Ambrose's marvellous trombone man

from Glasgow, who will send you as much as Teagarden if you have the good fortune to hear the discs; using Tommy McQuater (also from Ambrose) on cornet, and the swell Jewish-Scottish tenor and clarinet man, Benny Winestone, Chisholm completed the band with Eddie Macauley on piano, Tiny Winters (Ambrose) on bass and Dudley Barber on drums.

Titles were *Rosetta* and five originals; *To Stop The Train Pull Down The Chain*; *No Smoking*; *You'll Always Be Mine*; *Let's Go*; and *Archer Street Drag*, which was the blues named after the London street where musicians hang around for gigs.

Ken Johnson and his West Indian Dance Orchestra, the British colored group mentioned here last month, made a date consisting of *Exactly Like You*, *Snakehips Swing*, *My Buddy* and *The Shiek*. A session was also assembled under the direction of yours truly, calling itself Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band, comprising four old songs in the modern manner: *Early One Morning*, *Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes*, *Widdicombe Fair* and *Colonel Bogey*.

Fed Up on Jam

The British public, in fact, is just about ready to be saturated with jam music, for Alistair Cooke, with the help of Joe Marsala, has lined up a wonderful gang of boys in New York to air a special jam session to London on November 5 from 5 to 5:40 EST.

Bud Freeman, Dave Tough, Teddy Wilson, Bobby Hackett, Eddie Condon, Mezz Mezzrow, Carmen Mastren, George Wettling, Joe Bushkin, Sidney Bechet, Fats Waller, Benny Goodman, Pee Wee Russell and Tommy Dorsey are some of those who hope to take part.

The BBC has also set a precedent by allowing a dance orchestra to broadcast on a Sunday for the first time on October 16, for which date a small combo under Charlie Kunz was booked.

Television's First

Television's first visit to a public ballroom takes place on October 29, when a half-hour's dance music comes from the Hammersmith Palais de Danse, with the camera moving round the floor to give intimate shots of more than three thousand people in a dance display of the Big Apple, the Palais Glide, and the Lambeth Walk.

Jack Hylton presented a big show at the Palladium with a long list of vocalists and other acts including Peggy Dell, Freddy Schweitzer, and a new Danish couple, Gerda and Ulrick Newman, the latter also being guitarist in the current band.

Best Sheet Sellers

Best sheet music sellers in mid-October were *Little Lady Make-Believe*; *When The Mighty Organ Played*; *Lambeth Walk*; *Red Maple Leaves*; *Sweetest Song In The World*; *I Won't Tell A Soul*; *Heaven In The Pines*; *Oh Ma-Ma*; *A Tisket*; *Sunset Valley*.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

NEXT week two of the more infrequent but consistently popular broadcasters will be back on the air.

One is Nat Gonella, whose Georgians (augmented by brother 'Bruts' Gonella, playing second trumpet) have a half-hour next Friday from 7.0.



Nat Gonella

This is another of the bands that have never wavered in personnel. The Georgians still include Pat Smuts on tenor sax and clarinet; Harold Hood at the piano; Jimmy Messini, guitarist and singer; Bob Dryden, drums, and Charles Winters, bass.

The dark and comely young lady who sings with the band on the music-halls is Malaya-born Stella Moya, who may be remembered as a former featured artist in British films.

The Georgians spent their summer this year with Sandy Powell in the 'King Revel' show in Blackpool, and some time in December you may hear them all on the air together.

Shortly afterwards Nat Gonella will achieve an ambition for which he has had to refuse important offers at the height of the season. On December 22 he sails for New York, where he will spend six weeks.

* * * * *

The other familiar figure who returns to the air next week is 'Hurricane Harry' Roy, who arrived back three months ago from a very exhausting trip in South America.

Next Saturday, November 26, he will introduce Wendy Claire, the former Leeds shop assistant who ended Roy's search among three thousand applicants for the rôle of a typical English girl to sing with the band on its Buenos Aires excursion.

Also new in the band and in the Tiger-Ragamuffins contingent is the bass player Len Harrison, Arthur Calkin having left this post after eight years. Harrison, who has played with Benny Carter, Fats Waller and many small swing bands, should combine with the drummer Ray Ellington and the piano pair, Stanley Black and Norman White, to produce some fine rhythmic foundation for the band.

* * * * *

On Monday evening from Bristol, broadcast on the main Regional wavelength, comes a programme by Reginald Williams and his Futurists Dance Band. Formed two years ago to open at a ballroom in Bristol, this orchestra has often been featured in local broadcasts in both cabaret and dance-music work, but this will be its first opportunity of wider recognition.

Williams, who will be heard from the Grand Spa Ballroom in Clifton, has booked Al Bowly to sing on this and subsequent programmes. Bowly's feminine counterpart will be Georgette Vedey, whose father, Julian Vedey, has been seen in comedy rôles in several recent pictures.

* * * * *

Swing fans may be at work, but perhaps housewives will be interested when Eddie Macauley plays fifteen minutes of piano solos on Friday, November 25. Last year Macauley, in a musicians' ballot, was elected Britain's finest swing pianist.

THE RETURN OF MR.

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

THE Whale? And why Lyn Murray chorus on the label, Lynn Murray in the leaflet?

Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.
"Milk Cow Blues."
"Yancey Special."

(***Decca F6862.)

Fazola was not actually in the band when they made these, but he guest-starred in the two choruses which start *Milk Cow*, and it's all to the good. His is a pure, formulated and sensitive clarinet style.

Smashing Bob Zurke Chorus

Nappy Lamare follows with two of the usual blues refrains (*Good Morning Blues*, *How Do You Do?* and *I Woke Up This Morning*, etc.) which would have been better if he could sing in tune. But the Bob Zurke chorus which ensues is such grand, tasteful, genuine, inspired piece of Pinetop stuff that one soon forgets all that.

Yancey is more 12-bar blues, even better, though you may be overfamiliar with this arrangement, which has been taken up by so many English radio bands. The spirit of Mead Lux Lewis' original composition has been propped and transfixed on to manuscript paper with amazing dexterity. Zurke is the nuts from the first note. It's more like Mead Lux than Mead Lux himself.

(Label error: We all spell the vocalist Nappy Lamare.)

Django Reinhardt and Stephan Grappelly.

"Louise."
"Please Be Kind."
(**Decca F6828.)

Because I haven't been afraid to express myself, some of my French friends have an idea that I'm prejudiced against Messieurs Reinhardt and Grappelly.

Nothing could be farther from the facts. When I heard the Quintet's first records I ran post-haste to Mr. Levy and was responsible for his issuing them on Oriole; a vital move in the career of this act, for the discs created a great stir in this country.

If they had never made more than these first few recordings we might not have discovered that they had no further ideas to express, and they would have been assured of a niche in jazz history.

Grappelly-Reinhardt Salonesque Effort

Success made an exhibitionist out of Reinhardt, and emphasised Grappelly's lack of invention.

This new release, with Grappelly playing somewhat salonesque piano in a couple of duets, shows the pair in a more thoughtful mood. I don't like the rather arch idea of turning *Louise* into the minor in the second chorus, nor do I go for *Please Be Kind* as swing fodder, but I do appreciate the fact that Django for the most part takes his time, thereby allowing a sense of rhythm and even of swing to filter in (except when he plays in octaves).

When R. and G. play well I am glad to salute their efforts.

Ken Johnson and his West Indian Dance Orchestra.

"Exactly Like Snakehips Swings."
"Snakehips Swings."
(**Decca F6854.)

One thing I like about Ken Johnson's band is that, unlike almost any other English band, it attempts to interest the public in something more than corny "pops." In fact, Ken is going all out for a better class audience with better class material; so more power to him.

This makes it good to see that he is now making records. But I think he can improve on the standard of this first session. The recording has that dreadfully English resonance and room-tone, with no compact, clean-cut sections and no rhythm; as to the arrangements, the first builds up to an imitation of Don Redman's old swing choir vocal, not as well done as the original, while the other number, sent from New York by Ad de Haas, is not a good example of his work.

Best Passages Clarinet and Trumpet

The best passages in both numbers are the clarinet solos (by arranger Carl Barriteau on first and Bertie King on second side), and the trumpet solos, first by Leslie Hutchinson and then by David Wilkins, in *Snakehips Swing*.

Gene Krupa and his Orchestra.
"Rhythm Jam."
"Wire Brush Stomp."

(**Columbia DB5048.)

Vido Musso's forceful tenor and Chapple Willet's tolerable (if rather too fashionable) arranging (plenty of accents on the fourth beat and Christopher Columbus phrases) make *Rhythm Jam* one of Krupa's better records.

Too bad that its value is almost cancelled out by *Wire Brush Stomp*, which

apart from being an undisguised *I Got Rhythm* (Gene Krupa got it right), consists largely of a seismic disturbance from the region of the kitchen. Do people really spend money to listen to these nasty, nasty noises?

Fats Waller (Organ).
"Go Down, Moses."

"Deep River."

(*H.M.V. B8816.)

If anybody else's name but Fats' were on the label, no jazz critic would have mentioned this disc or given a tuppenny damn for it. Nothing to do with jazz, no further light on swinging the organ; just two spirituals played straight in quite an ordinary manner.

Bing Crosby and Johnny Mercer.

"Mr. Gallagher and Mr. Sheen."

"Small Fry."

(***Brunswick 02653.)

More of Johnny M's brilliant lyrics on the first title, telling a surprisingly authentic history of jazz touched with great humour, in which Bing, too, betrays his subtle musical sense of comedy values.

Small Fry, written two years after Cahn and Chaplin's *Shoeshine Boy*, offers an unhappy reminder that it's ages since Hoagy has written a really new tune; but this record *per se* is good fun.

The Real Bobby Hackett

Adrian Rollini Quintet.

"Small Fry."

"Ten Easy Lessons."

(**Col. FB2057.)

It's rarely that I recommend a record just for its few good passages, but Bobby Hackett's cornet has been heard in such inadequate brief spells on English releases that it is a relief to be able to say at least: "Here is the real Bobby Hackett."

Even in his two bars in the introduction of the first side, in the sixteen bars later on, and the three little solos on the other side, you can sense the beautiful Bixian tone and easy style that make him one of the great young men of 1938 jazz. If only his Commodore and Irving Mills records could be had over here!

For the rest, Adrian's vibraphone and the vocal harmonisers are a bore.

Joe Daniels and his Hot Shots.

"All The Nice Girls Love A Sailor."

"Cockles And Mussels."

(*Parlo. F1243.)

I've brought this up because it features David Wilkins, who, as I think said, is this country's No. 1 trumpet or my money. He has a spot here and there, and there are one or two other solo passages not without interest. Lots and lots of drumsticks.

Teddy Grace.
"Crazy Blues."
"Love Me Or Leave Me."
(***Brunswick 02667.)

WELL, bless me! Glad to meet you again, Mr. T. And glad to hear Teddy G. back again to the form of her first disc, *Rock It For Me*.

Crazy Blues recalls Bessie Smith, not only in some of Miss G.'s mannerisms, but in the accompaniment idea of trombone-and-rhythm only.

Teagarden is not at his best, and the ending is weak, but the disc has that thing called atmosphere, aided by the piano of Billy Kyle and the elegant ex-Norvo guitarist, Dave Barbour.

They also serve in the slower and almost equally agreeable *Love Me*, though Teddy is inclined to overstress some of her

accented low notes in that forceful contralto.

(Label error: The bassist is Delmar Kaplan, who was with Ray Noble.)

Louis Armstrong and Lyn Murray Chorus.

"Jonah And Whale."

"Shadrack."

(***Decca F6835.)

Jonah must be the first record whereon Armstrong has neither played nor sung. He simply talks, to the background of a choir, on spiritual lines.

Shadrack is pretty much the same except that Louis more or less sings a few bars. It's odd to hear him as a Bible reporter. Shoeshine boys, jazz jargon and Harlem displaced by the children of Israel, the gospel and Babylon.

In fact, it's an odd disc altogether, but not unattractive. And what a marvellous job he could have made of it ten years ago!

(Label error: Why not *Jonah* and

BUYERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Admirable
- ★★★ Agreeable
- ★★ Acceptable
- ★ Abominable

Nov. 1938. METRONOME.

DUKE ELLINGTON

Hip Chic; *A Blues Serenade*. *Buffet Flat*; *Mighty Like The Blues*. By Johnny Hodges: *My Prelude To A Kiss*; *The Jeep Is Jumpin* (B 8221, 31, Vo. 4386).—The Hodges band, utilizing only a portion

of Duke's regular group, cops glories here. *Kiss*, a pretty tune prettily played, features some absolutely gorgeous Hodges saxing. The *Jeep* hits a fine swing groove, dug especially deep by Bill Taylor's bass with more hornographic embellishments coming from Mr. Hodges. *Mighty* and *Serenade* are extremely pretty sides also: the tune itself, Barney Bigard's clarinet and Rex Stewart's trumpet aid the former, while the high spot of the other is Otto Hardwick's beautiful alto tone in his short passage. *Buffet* and *Hip* are fine swing, with Cootie's trumpet and Carney's baritone noteworthy on the former and Barney Bigard's all too short clarinet passage ditto on the latter.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

DURING a recent visit to Copenhagen I found a musical surprise which offered a reminder that Danish productiveness is by no means limited to bacon. Svend Asmussen, a young violinist, seems likely to make his mark (I was almost tempted to say his Denmark) in several branches of the arts.



Svend Asmussen

Jazz improvisation being such a specialised cult in Europe, it is rarely that one finds among its exponents an artist whose talent extends to as many other fields as Asmussen's. Not only is he an outstanding swing expert on the violin, but his work on piano, guitar, and string bass is also exceptional, and even bereft of his diverse musical talents he would still have no difficulty in earning a reputation, for he is a gifted sculptor.

In addition to all this he studied medicine and dentistry before taking up music as a profession. None of his talents has been neglected or discarded, but the violin is his chief interest at the moment, and the programme which is to be relayed from Copenhagen next Thursday (Regional, 9.0-9.30) will introduce him to English dance-music enthusiasts who probably imagined that the European reputation in connection with this instrument was firmly established in the hands of Stéphane Grappelly of the French Hot Club Quintet.

Twenty-two years old, Asmussen was married last month and hopes to come to London on his honeymoon immediately after the broadcast, in which case it is possible that he may arrange for personal appearances in this country.

* * * *

Two new additions have been made to Joe Loss's broadcasting personnel. Both were introduced earlier this month and will be heard again in the programme on Thursday.

One of them is Noël 'Chappie' d'Amato, noted for many years as the guitarist with Jack Hylton's orchestra and subsequently with Jack Jackson. He is now acting as compère and announcer on the Loss broadcasts, the guitar playing being still in the hands of Joe Young.

The other newcomer in the Loss broadcasts is Rudy Starita, who, apart from his vibraphone playing, is noted as one of the keenest 'candid camera' fiends in the jazz profession. He even has his own shop in the heart of London's film-land. Joe Loss, going in to buy some accessories there recently, ended by buying Starita's services for radio!

With the guitar, piano, and bass from the band, Starita is to be featured regularly in special quartet numbers modelled on Benny Goodman lines.

Another experiment that may shortly be undertaken in this orchestra involves a new kind of metronome, something without the ordinary monotonous tick-tock, but distinctive enough to identify the band at the opening of each number, so that listeners who identify Joe Loss with 'dancing time for dancers' may immediately hear the cue for dancing.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

A NEW vocal trio has recently been formed which seems likely to become a firm favourite with listeners.

Many of these acts are composed of musicians drawn from the band with which they are heard. However, 'Sue and her Boy Friends' come from an independent source, a fact that may enable them to float round usefully from band to band. They made their début some weeks ago with Billy Bissett, with whom they can be heard again at lunch-time today (Friday), and in the coming week Jay Wilbur will introduce them in his Saturday-evening broadcast.



Suzanne Botterell

The 'Sue' who brought this distinctive trio into being is Suzanne Botterell. At one time popular on the air with Lew Stone as a solo singer, she had been right out of the running until the entirely casual formation of the new act. Harry Phillips and Gaby Rogers are the other two members, and, like Suzanne Botterell herself, they divide their time between singing and song-writing.

There are several well-known tunes with music by 'Sue' and lyrics by Harry Phillips, among them 'I need you' and 'Goodbye to Summer'. Gaby Rogers has written several comedy numbers, including 'You can't swing a love song'.

* * * *

Another singer in the news is Carol Dexter, the nineteen-year-old Toronto girl who won a contest sponsored by Sophie Tucker. After being elected Miss Canada for 1935, she came over here to do stage work. Now she has been signed by Harry Roy, in whose band she will share the feminine vocal contributions with Wendy Claire.

Ten Years Ago in Jazz

... That was "All by yourself in the moonlight." Our next number will be "Felix the Cat"....

1928, the year before the depression began to hit dance music. There is a band in Scotland known as the 'Vo-do-dians'. Jack Hylton is scoring another of his successes at the Scala in Berlin.

A spectacled youth with Alfredo's New Princes Orchestra, busily engaged behind a tenor saxophone, is Les Allen. Playing in the Blue Revels at the Clapham Palais de Danse is Norman Yarlett, later to be known as White, of Harry Roy's piano duo Black and White.

... You have just heard "Crazy Rhythm". Now comes another new tune, "Sweet Sue"....

A musicians' ballot to decide the most popular dance bands on the air gives first place to Fred Elizalde's Savoy Music, with Billy Mason, Ben Frankel, Al Bowly, and Adrian Rollini with several other Americans. Second in the running, Ambrose's May Fair Orchestra, with a personnel including Max Bacon, Joe Crossman, Bert Read, Joe Jeanette—all found with Ambrose again when the band breaks up in October, 1938.

Next bands on the list: Reg Batten's Orpheans; Jack Payne; Ray Starita's Ambassador Club Band.

... That was a waltz, "Was it a dream?" We conclude with "Chloë", and, if time permits, "My Inspiration Is You". Goodnight, everybody, goodnight!

Duke Ellington—whose band is going hay-wire here!—is the first and greatest popular composer of distinction, in the opinion of many



Distinguished oboist Leon Goossens has had first-hand experience of Swing



Hot singer Diana Miller believes in Swing



Bandleader Maurice Winnick is Britain's apostle of sweet music

WHAT is this thing called swing? Is it a reversion to the barbarism from which jazz is said to have sprung, or is it really a new and more advanced form of popular musical art?

These, and other relevant questions, were discussed in a series of interviews I undertook with representatives of a wide variety of departments in the musical world.

First on the list was Webster Booth, famous broadcasting and recording tenor, whose wide experience has covered opera, ballads, musical comedy, oratorio, and all kinds of concert work.

"Swing music?" he echoed. "Well, to be honest, sometimes I have difficulty in knowing swing music from ordinary dance music! As far as I can understand the distinctions, ordinary jazz is churned out with a handle and hasn't any lasting value at all, whereas swing-music seems to me to be terribly clever.

"Yes, I've been in America and heard it at first hand. In Harlem. Very interesting it was, too. I got a mild enjoyment from it, rather than genuine pleasure; or rather, I didn't enjoy it from the strictly musical point of view. Its cleverness seems rather misapplied, because half of it lies in taking a commonplace tune, putting it into a rhythm, so to speak, and serving it up in a new disguise."

From this noted singer I passed to an equally distinguished instrumentalist, Leon Goossens, member of a brilliant, musical family, and himself an exponent of the oboe—which you may have

heard him play with the London Philharmonic Orchestra. He, too, has plenty of first-hand experience of swing-music.

"Jazz, as I see it," he told me, "is running along two distinct courses. One of them—represented by Duke Ellington's Orchestra, as I heard it at the Cotton Club in New York—stands for my idea of the crude rhythm of primitive origins, but with the application of a real musical education. The Negro represents the elemental part of it all.

"On the other side you have the Westernised version—or symphonic jazz style, as it's called—characterised in this country by people like Van Phillips. Both sides to me are equally interesting. I think the future of jazz depends on its remaining independent, rather than merging with classical music. One thing I do object to is the current craze for jazzing up famous classical pieces. There are millions of themes waiting to be created, so why be so lazy as to pinch a great master's tune and then contaminate it?"

"Swing-music," he concluded, "may be madness to some people, but there's certainly plenty of method!"

Mark Hambourg, the famous pianist, had very few views to vouchsafe on this provocative subject.

"As far as I am concerned," he replied, "there are only two kinds of music: good music and bad music. The probability is that good swing-music is good, and bad swing-music is bad; in other words, I don't recollect ever having heard any, or if I did I was unable to recognise it. But I haven't any preconceived notions against any form of music. To condemn swing-music because it is a form of jazz, or because it appeals to a less musically educated audience than other musical forms, would be narrow-minded."

Now let's "swing" right over to the opposite bank of the musical river, and find out what some of the jazz personalities themselves have to say about this persistent vogue.

Ambrose, leader of what is still acknowledged as Britain's foremost dance-orchestra, believes that "half the people who write and talk so much about swing-music don't know what they're talking about."

Swing-music is "just a new word for something that's been going on as long as there's been any jazz. It's a very rhythmic form of expression, and most of it comes in the playing—not the writing. Some of the swing-music you hear nowadays is very raucous, because this improvised element gets out of hand.

"As far as my band is concerned," he added, "I think you can see that I appreciate the value of swing-music, by the fact that I have some of the finest soloists in the country."



'Swing-music isn't fair to the composer,' says composer Irving Berlin



One of America's best-known swing stars—Maxine Sullivan



Mark Hambourg, the famous pianist, says there are only two kinds of music—good and bad

MUSIC OR MADNESS?

In strong contrast are the views of **Maurice Winnick**, Britain's apostle of "sweet music," or the more melodic and less venturesome style of jazz, which has its American precedent in the style of Guy Lombardo's Orchestra.

"Swing-music is just a catch-phrase, a fad of the minute," he believes. "Benny Goodman has capitalised it very successfully, and has a fine band; but you'll find that the vast majority of the really successful bands in America are still the ones that stick to melody."

From the songwriter's angle, **Irving Berlin** had some interesting ideas.

"Swing-music isn't fair to the composer," he said, "because it distorts the melody beyond recognition; and it's unfair to the arranger, too, because he has, in effect, created a new composition and yet he's not getting the credit for it."

"I can only recollect one instance where swing-music helped to revive a number of mine. The tune was called 'Marie.' It was written, in 1929, for the synchronised sound-accompaniment to an otherwise silent film called *The Awakening*. It sold 750,000 copies, which was very good for the period, and then died out. Then, a couple of years ago, Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra came out with a swing-arrangement of it which created a sensation, and soon had the tune in big demand again—but you know why? Because Dorsey retained the original melody, and only had the rhythmic variations in the background.

"That's the only way to ensure a real future for swing-music."

Lastly, to examine the question from the vocalist's viewpoint, I selected **Diana Miller**—one of the most original and charming vocal stylists on the British air-waves—to expound her views.

"Of course, swing-music means something entirely different to the singer," she told me. "The instrumentalist has nothing to tie him down, except the harmonies of the tune; but the singer has to stick, more or less rigidly, to the words and the tune as they were originally phrased and written."

"That makes it more difficult to be a successful swing-singer than a hot soloist on an instrument; but you'll find—by studying the best-known American swing-stars, such as Ella Fitzgerald and Maxine Sullivan—that they can get a marvellous amount of value out of the simplest changes in the melody and phrasing.

"I believe in that style of singing; and, naturally, in the same way I believe in swing-music as a whole. It has more life, more variety, than any other kind of popular music I know."

Well, there you have it from seven different angles. What do you think of swing-music?

Ella Fitzgerald, who swings it with the famous Chick Webb's band in America



****"Swing Time" — Wednesday, November 30 (11.30 to midnight, Nat.), from Broadcasting House, London. (Received on a G.E.C. Fidelity Super-Ten.)

This proved to be the most interesting swing broadcast of the week.

Presented by Leonard Feather, it was intended to be no more than a survey of the December records, but Leonard went one better, made it a "Singer's Parade," thereby killing a second bird with the one stone.

The records were well chosen and the idea well carried out. Young Leonard is never at a loss for some detail or information or anecdote concerning his artists, writes a good script, and strolls through it easily but convincingly.

First we had the girl singers, with Mildred Bailey singing *Small Fry* (Parlo. R2585), Connie Boswell in *Mr. Freddie Blues* (Bruns. 02662), Nan Wynn in *Monday Morning* (Parlo. R2596), Ella Fitzgerald in *Hallelujah* (12in. Bruns. 0138), and Edythe Wright as an example of how not to sing *A-tisket, A-tasket* (H.M.V. B8824).

An Idea For A Competition

Then came the mere males—The Ink Spots in *Pork Chops And Gravy* (Bruns. 02673), Slim and Slam in *Tutti-frutti* (Parlo. R2594), Leo Watson in the same title (Col. DB5050), and Jack Teagarden in the re-issue of *I Just Couldn't Take It, Baby* (Parlo. R2599).

Leo Watson came out an easy top with me, but even so I don't know which sex won.

Now how about a "Singers' Parade" of English vocalists? There's an idea for you, Leslie P. Then you can try a competition between English and American singers. Might not prove to be very complimentary to us, but would certainly be enlightening.

M.M. Dec. 10.

'RIDDLE RHYTHM'

Novelty For Fans

RHYTHM fans who are on the look-out for a novel entertainment in the way of radio programmes should take note of a new series which has just been fixed up by Radio Normandy.

"Riddle Rhythm" is the title of this weekly feature, the first one of which will go over the Normandy wavelength this Saturday (December 10) from 2.30 to 2.45. Other programmes will be heard regularly at this time every Saturday.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

The programme will consist largely of swing records, and others of interest to the jazz connoisseur, and the interesting angle for "M.M." readers is that after each record is played, questions will be asked, challenging listeners to identify such details as the orchestra, the vocalist, one of the soloists, the size of the band, the year or country in which the record was made, and other brain-tickling queries.

Since our readers are particularly well up in this sort of knowledge, and since a prize of six swing records is being awarded each week for correct solutions, it would be advisable to tune into this programme every Saturday after lunch and try your luck.

The idea for the series was suggested by Leonard Feather.

SWING

THE GUIDE TO MODERN MUSIC

LONDON SWING

It's Not
What You Think

AS THE biggest city in the world and central point of so many branches of the entertainment world, London might be expected to be a regular haven of swing. American musicians often talk of a trip across the Atlantic as their greatest ambition. You record fans, who only hear English music through the few outstandingly interesting discs released in the American lists, probably have a false perspective on just what London's dance music is really like.

To tell the truth, things are not nearly as rosy as you'd imagine. There are very few noteworthy bands for a variety of reasons: partly because of the scarcity of good resident jobs and good money, but chiefly because American musicians aren't allowed to enter this country. Their presence would help to stimulate John Public's enthusiasm and automatically bring the prices up for English musicians.



Ambrose

Instead of which our government and our union consider that every twelve musicians who make a brief tour of England are merely putting twelve British musicians out of work. It's been that way now for so many years that we've almost forgotten

how American dance music in the flesh really sounds. Records and short-wave radio are the only consolation.

The one and only "Fats" Waller recently made his first trip to this country. As a singer and entertainer he was able to get a permit to work here, but he couldn't bring his band across with him. At his opening at the London Palladium, the country's leading variety house, he was badly let down by the pit orchestra, which has no sense of swing and played about a measure behind him through one entire chorus. In the next show most of the accompaniments had to be cut right out, and although Fats was rather lonesome on that big stage, he put his stuff across better this way and registered a distinct hit with the hundreds of record fans who had gathered to welcome him.

Of the big band leaders currently working in London, a surprising number have strong transatlantic associations. Ambrose, who recently returned from a tour of Holland and is now on an extended English vaudeville tour, was for many years a violinist in New York picture theatres and symphony orchestras before returning to his native England in 1920.

Roy Fox was born in California and was for some time musical supervisor at the Fox Studios in Hollywood. He came to England in 1929 as the "Whispering Cornetist," but now only conducts. His entire band walked out on him a short time ago. The boys expect to stick together and form a band of their own and are said to have left him because of his intentions of making drastic salary reductions all round.

Carroll Gibbons, leader of the successful English band at the Savoy Hotel, is another of London's American band leaders who got in before the ban on foreigners became effective. Arriving here in 1924, he formed one of the first famous British radio groups, the Savoy Havana Band.

By Leonard G. Feather

England's Leading
Dance Music Authority

One of the reasons why London's dance music is restricted can be found in the limitations on night life. After midnight you can't legally buy a drink, but the law is circumvented by so-called "bottle parties" at which a whole bottle of liquor must be ordered in advance. The most popular and smartest of these is probably the Paradise, where Leslie Haskell and his orchestra were recently engaged.

Haskell, a keen young Englishman, was trained for medicine and accountancy, but threw both up in favor of music and started at Brighton, the popular seaside resort near London, with a small band in 1926. He has worked in Manchester, Scotland, and all over England. Ted Haskell, his brother, is drummer with the combination.

Mention was made above of the attractions of short-wave radio as a way of keeping in touch with American dance music progress. This has been particularly noticeable lately, since the British Broadcasting Corporation arranged a tie-up with CBS for a weekly transatlantic half-hour under the title "America Dances," featuring a prominent swing orchestra each week. Count Basie started the series off with a splendid program.

Hal Kemp was another popular band to broadcast over the tie-up.

His broadcast was well received, all the brilliant techniques of *Powerhouse* and the comedy propensities of Saxie Dowell surviving the three thousand miles of ocean remarkably well. Only criticism of the show was that Judy Starr was unwise in choosing *A-Ticket*, *A-Tasket*, because the original version by Ella Fitzgerald is very popular over here and nobody can copy her interpretation.

Hal Kemp is a familiar favorite with British audiences, not only through his recordings, but on account of his visit to this country in 1930, when Bunny Berigan was a member of his personnel. Hal appeared at the Coliseum in variety, played the Café de Paris and at all times made an outstanding hit with Londoners.

London has gone crazy about *Flat Foot Floogie*. Since the Slim and Slam recording was released all the English orchestras have been putting their renditions on the air with varying success. The general public doesn't often go for swing songs, and the best sellers in music are generally on a considerably cornier level than in America. For instance, among the biggest English compositions of the moment are *Meet Me Down In Sunset Valley*; *The Whispering Waltz*; *Merrily We Roll Along*, and others in very much the same vein.

As for "jam sessions," such things hardly exist in this country, because the boys who know what it's all about are working in different bands and very seldom have an opportunity to get together.

All in all, then, the headquarters of swing remain in America and the way things look now, London will never make a very big place for itself in the swing music picture.



Leslie Haskell

15
CENTS

November
1938

OFF-PITCH COLOURED BANDS

A Record Problem
discussed by
"ROPHONE" in
his Hot Record
Review

Al Cooper and His Savoy Sultans
"Jump Steady"
"Rhythm Doctor Man"
(*Vocalion S.204)
Johnny Dodds and His Chicago
Boys
"Melancholy"
"Stackalee Blues"
(*Vocalion S.207)

TWO of the chief banes of my life are, firstly, the people who dislike all Negro bands "because they play out of tune"; and, secondly, the Negro bands that play out of tune. Although I have frequently fought the generalisation, it must be granted that most of the cases of bad intonation and pitch on records are found amongst the coloured bands.

Why, Oh Why, Do They Do It?

Why is this? And why do men who sound individually brilliant fail in pitch-adjustment and team-work when it comes to playing together? Even Basie's early records were spoilt by this fault in the saxes.

Al Cooper and his Savoy Sultans, though boasting a swell alto (Rudy Williams) and a good trumpet, plus some neat little arrangements for the eight-piece group, ruin their chances by failing to attend to such a simple matter as sounding their A's. This is particularly noticeable throughout *Rhythm Doctor Man*, but even more so in the "unison" at the end of *Jump Steady*, which sounds unhappily more *unpeas* than unison.

The rest of *Jump Steady* does not exhibit the fault quite so blatantly, and even with *The Campbells Are Coming* as their theme, the boys make this side worth hearing.

In the Johnny Dodds disc it is the clarinet of the leader himself which,

particularly towards the end of *Melancholy*, shows its independence regarding pitch. This tune, almost identical with *I Ain't Got Nobody*, features good trumpet work by Charlie Shavers and nice Teddy Bunn guitar. The backing, alas, is largely vocal by the unavoidable O'Neil Spencer, who is also no stickler for pitch.

(Label error: This famous blues is, of course, *Stack O' Lee Blues*, based on the original *Frankie and Johnny*.)

Bob Howard and His Boys
"Toodle-oo"
"In My Miz"
(*Vocalion S.205)

Teddy Bunn plays some more excellent guitar in this, and Frankie Froeba is unusually good in spots; but the vocal, especially in *Toodle-oo*, is monotonous to the point of nausea.

(Note: In My Miz=In my misery=Unhappy.)

Count Basie and His Orchestra
"Mama Don't Want No Peas"
(**)
"Texas Shuffle" (**)
(Bruns. 02668)

Basie's standards of late have been so high that a record like *Texas Shuffle* seems a little greengage among so many big plums. To be sure, it has some intriguing solo work including clarinet by Lester Young, but in the last ensembles there are some very unpleasant tumbone noises in the not-distant-enough background, which sound amongst other things suspiciously out of tune.

James Rushing, in the opus about peas and rice and coconut oil, sings the same lyrics Cleo Brown used, with a couple of extra bits tagged on, of which one is blue enough to help the sales:—

*Mama lay down to sleep las' night,
she said she was feelin' cold,
She said that Papa must be gettin'
old.*

The instrumental passages are good Basie, if not unprecedented.

George Chisholm and His Jive
Five
"Archer Street Drag" (***)
"Let's Go" (**)
(Decca F.6867)

Most of the old familiar faces are here—Chisholm, McQuater, Eddie Macauley, Tiny Winters, and Dudley Barber on drums; plus a newcomer, Benny Winestone, whose rather nervous and emotional clarinet style in *Archer Street Drag* is pleasantly different from the average British idea.

This number is an eighteen-bar chorus. *Technical Titbit*: Notice the unusual and attractive chord progression, in descending sevenths starting on G 7th. And notice the clash it produces when George plays B natural against a G flat 7th in the third chorus (Bars 1 and 5). It may have been intended, but it takes a little time to assimilate.

The rest of his trombone work is



EDGAR
HAYES,
swing
pianist,
now touring
America
with his
own band.

swell, especially the first chorus, muted, and the entry of his last chorus in *Let's Go*. The collective improvisations at the end of both sides seem rather rough, and the tenor solo in *Let's Go* lets go a couple of squeaks.

Eddie Macauley still remains my favourite English pianist.

Andrews Sisters
"Tu-Li-Tulip Time"
"Joseph! Joseph!"
(*Bruns. 02654)

"When a Prince of a Fella
Meets a Cinderella"
"Sha-Sha"
(Bruns. 02665)

The vocal arrangements and orchestral accompaniments are by now very familiar; they haven't changed a thing. For me, to whom the lyrics are stupid and the routines monotonous because I hear every record issued, it's naturally no great thrill; but as popular entertainment they're still the best of their kind.

Thick Webb and His Orchestra
"Wacky Dust" (***)
"Spinnin' the Web" (**)
(Bruns. 02669)

I thought I knew my Harlem, yet *Wacky Dust* is an enigma to me. Little tiskets and baskets once in a while are acceptable, but I wish Ella would sing something in English now and then.

Most of the two non-vocal choruses are ensemble, with brief spells for trombone, trumpet and clarinet. Apart from the lyrical impact on my philological sensibilities, the noise of the notes is nice enough.

Tuning Forks Work Overtime

Though she doesn't sing in it, Ella is credited with Webb as composer of the simple theme of *Spinnin' the Web*. The trumpet solo (Bobby Stark again, I suppose) is a very buoyant passage compared with the undistinguished ensemble parts.

Sandy Williams' otherwise excellent trombone solo ends up badly off pitch. So help me, I shall have nightmares all this week of tuning forks being plunged into my brain!

Casa Loma Orchestra
"Mindin' My Business"
"Song of India"
(*Bruns. 02670)

Something happens to this band in *Mindin' My Business*. There is quite a little elevator—I mean lift, in the band's playing; and the solos are not bad, especially trombonist Murray (ex-Goodman) McEachern. But though parts of the arrangement indicate coloured authorship, parts also are too reminiscent and cliché-ridden.

If you would buy a pavement artist's impression of a Cézanne, the Casa Loma's *Song of India* is very nice.

IT HELPS TO BE DEAD!

Feather Forecast and News



NBC Symphony Orchestra Trumpeter Bernard Baker with the miniature trumpet specially made for his use in playing the difficult high

trumpet part in Bach's Second Brandenburg Concerto, which Arturo Toscanini conducted a few weeks ago in New York.

I'VE come to the conclusion that the best way to earn immortality as a swing musician is to be dead.

In the latest issue of an American magazine the cover and seven other pages are entirely devoted to Bix. Bix in high school, Bix at home, Bix in an

alcoholics' hospital, Bix the sublime musician, the greatest good fellow who ever lived. Interviews with every big musician who ever worked with Bix.

Let it not be inferred that all this attention is insincere; but isn't it plain that if Bix had lived on, and were alive today, perhaps

commercialised like Armstrong or else retired, all this aura of glory would never have grown up around his memory? And if Armstrong had died, or Benny Goodman or Benny Carter or Pee-Wee Russell, instead of Bix and Teschmaker and Lang and Bessie Smith, they too would have had just as much posthumous attention.

Bix was a great musician, undoubtedly, but his death has entailed an utterly disproportionate attention to his work. Even his own parents, interviewed three years ago, were amazed to learn that Bix had been a famous man. At home he had not been thought an outstanding musician, whereas his elder brother was considered the family prodigy.

Bix "Stumped"

One of the best stories told in this strange symposium concerns Bix's attempt to sit in with an amateur band which had copied on to paper one of his records. The solo which Bix had improvised for the recording stumped him completely when he tried to sight-read it.

A few weeks before his death, when Bix was playing a college dance with Benny Goodman, Benny turned to him to take a chorus; but, Bix being practically paralysed, he took up Bix's cornet and played the chorus for him!

I have always known that Goodman played trumpet and often tried to persuade him to do so for me in New York. I don't know whether absence of practice or modesty provoked his refusal.

Swing Protest

It seems there isn't any way of stopping this mania for swinging the classics. The head of a prominent American Bach society sent in a protest to

the Federal Communications Commission against the swinging of Bach, Beethoven and Brahms by radio orchestras.

The FCC replied that there is no official censorship on this type of performance, and as long as the public wants it, the composers will have to have spinning wheels installed so that they can turn continuously in their graves.

As for the BBC, the ruling seems to be very elastic. Early in 1937 I was forbidden to include *John Peel* in a swing programme, but since then the British bands have not only featured this, but have got away with *Song Of India* and all kinds of murder.

Confused Medley

Out of the confused medley of sounds in the jam session on Guy Fawkes' Night, you may have understood the few friendly words spoken by old man Handy. The veteran blues composer, who sounded as if he was having a great time that night, will be still happier this Monday, when a concert in celebration of his sixty-fifth birthday will be held at Carnegie Hall.

A hundred-piece choir will appear, plus Calloway, Waller, Wilson, Hampton and others; and to make it a really useful evening, the affair is being run by the Musicians' Committee to Aid Spanish Democracy and the Spanish Children's Milk Fund!

Unique Demonstration

Talking of politics, Socialism certainly has a good time in America. Last week Decca's New York studios were the scene of a big Union strike, and in the picket demonstration which marched up and down outside the offices, some of the strikers, deciding to attract attention to themselves at all costs started to do the Shag and the Big Apple all along the crowded pavement.

The police separated them and threatened arrest, but, anyway, they crashed the front pages with the story. Imagine a strike of that kind in London. Some fun!

Feather Forecast and News

STRANGE RESULTS IN U.S. SWING BALLOT

IF you have preconceived notions about the relative popularity of the famous bands in America, prepare to shed them now. I have just been recovering from the rude shock of reading the results of a recent "favourite band" poll.

The American magazine *Swing*, which organised this ballot, must circulate among a very different public from its contemporaries, for its results are strangely different. The ballot was divided into three divisions, swing, sweet and swing-sweet (to which the correct answer should be that there ain't no such thing).

In the swing department Tommy Dorsey romped home nearly a thousand votes ahead of Bob Crosby, and Benny Goodman was a mere third in the running. The rest of the big ten, in order, were

Jimmy Dorsey, Bunny Berigan, Gene Krupa, Red Norvo, Chick Webb (ah! a coloured band), Larry Clinton (wow!) and Cab Calloway (ouch!).

Not a mention of Basie, Ellington, Lunceford, Shaw or any of the great little bands such as Marsala and Hackett. It all sounds most peculiar, and I shall await with compound interest the results of other polls now being conducted. I've a feeling they will swing right away from the figures published in *Swing*.

Tough "Out"

Sensation! When Benny Goodman opened at the Waldorf-Astoria Hotel the other week, Dave Tough failed to show up, and, they say, didn't even contact Benny for several days, and even then didn't report for work. Result: Tough is out of the band after eight months, and Lionel Hampton is temporarily in the drummer's seat with

26.11.38

the band (he did the same thing just after Krupa's departure) as well as playing in the trio, while Harry James plays drums with the quartet.

Hampton's appearance with a famous white band in so ritzy a spot as the Waldorf is an even more sensational knock to race-bias than his previous *locum tenens* jobs.

Meantime Tough is rumoured returning to Tommy Dorsey, and Goodman, by the time you read this, will have a new white drummer.

Breaking Away?

It is again officially handed out from MCA that Teddy Wilson, Lionel Hampton and Harry James will each form a band of his own, breaking right away from Goodman, within the next six months. That story is getting a bit moth-eaten, and only hearing will be believing.

The funniest thing about Goodman's Waldorf engagement is that the management, expecting to attract a youngish patronage and scared that parents would resent their children going to a place where hard liquor is fashionable, installed a big milk bar in the hotel!

Though the venture is expected to lose money (milk bars aren't popular in N.Y.) it is expected to be justified as a sop to the elder generation.

A milk sop.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

SLIM AND SLAM PULL OFF A FOLLOW-UP

Hot Records Reviewed - - - by "ROPHONE"

Slim and Slam.
 "Tutti Frutti."
 "Looka There."
 (***) Parlophone R.2594.)

Gene Krupa and his Orchestra.
 "Tutti Frutti."
 "Jam On Toast."
 (***) Columbia DB.5050.)

AFTER *The Music Goes Round*, Mike Riley tried vainly to write a follow-up song to equal its fantastic success. This is generally the way with attempted successors to big hits, especially freak hits; but I think with *Tutti Frutti* Slim and Slam have found something almost as attractive as their *Flat Feet Floogee*. In fact, if it had been written first it would have caused as big a sensation as the *Floogee* did. In fact, it's almost the same as the *Floogee* anyway.

The Adaptability of O'Neil Spencer

Slim and Slam defy all the rules. Each of their records brings in whole phrases from other numbers—this time it is bits of *Floogee*, four bars of *Rug Cutter's Swing* and at least five bars of *Lady Be Good*. The bowed-bass-and-vocal-in-unison passages are almost the split image of those on their earlier discs. Yet I find the result fascinating, and had trouble not awarding a fourth mark.

I wish someone would find out who are the piano and traps men with the combination. Their work deserves name credit.

Tantalisingly Brief Spots

No less fascinating is Leo Watson, who, for the first time since those tantalisingly brief spots with Artie Shaw, comes in to sing *Tutti Frutti* with Krupa's Band, to which he is now permanently attached. His first chorus and the two breaks at the end of the record confirm my impression (as if confirmation were needed) that Leo in his "singing" combines delicious humour, a terrific sense of improvisation and phrasing, and complete originality.

How I wish Krupa's *Nagasaki*, also with Leo, had been on the back; for *Jam On Toast*, written by Gene's guitar-and-fiddle man, Ray Biondi, is no more than an adequate composition allowing room for a few adequate solos. Leo is your money's worth on this disc.

Jimmy Noone and his Orchestra.
 "Bump It (The Bumps)."
 "Four Or Five Times."
 (**** Vocalion S.209.)

(Aside to O'Neil Spencer: How many shares have you in the American Decca Co.? We buy a record by Johnny Dodds and his Chicago Boys, and find they are a pick-up group with drums and vocal by O'Neil Spencer. We buy a Milt Herth record and find



ART SHAW—whose ex-vocalist Leo Watson gets more chance with Krupa's Band.

drums and vocal by O'Neil Spencer. We buy Sidney Bechet with Noble Sissie's Swingsters, and there you are. . . . Even when Bob Howard is singing on his own records, we find you there. . . . the Spencer Trio has drums and vocal by O'Neil Spencer. . . . Willie Smith and his Cubs turn out to have drums and vocal by O'Neil Spencer. . . . pretty soon you'll be playing and singing on Chick Webb's records instead of Chick and Ella. Are you trying to break the all-time record for the most-recorded artist? And do you realise we are getting a little weary of seeing your name on every darned new issue?)

Anyway, O'Neil Spencer apart (and he only sings on one side here, just for sixteen bars), the Jimmy Noone record is not only the best blues of the month, but the first great Noone disc since his Parlophone *Blues Jumped A Rabbit*.

New Recordings And Some Reissues

This time the personnel is all-New York, Jimmy having travelled East specially to make the session; the boys with him are from the Onyx Club Band. Pete Brown's alto playing is so different, so sensuously rich in melodic and rhythmic creation, that I would rank him with Noone himself, who has a fluidity of style and beauty of tone surely unique among clarinetists. And there are two other brilliant soloists: Charlie Shavers, an eighteen-year-old whose trumpet playing is remarkably advanced, and Teddy Bunn, always one of my favourite single-string guitar men.

The blues side is just a retitled version of the old *Apex Blues* which Noone made for Brunswick and Vocalion back in the 1920's. The same old riffs still produce the same tension and excitement. *Four Or Five Times* is hardly less elegant.

Henry "Red" Allen and his Orchestra.

"I Was Born To Swing."
 "After Last Night With You."
 (**** Parlophone R.2597.)

In spite of Henry Allen's vocals, dreadful lyrics and a slightly sluggish rhythm section, these are worth while for two reasons: Billy Kyle's piano and Tab Smith's alto. Red's trumpet lacks something in tone and expres-

"Fare Thee Honey Fare Thee Well."
 (*** Brunswick O.2662.)

It seems to be years since I last heard Connie singing anything as simple as the twelve-bar blues. Well, even if she's no Billie Holiday she has a few ideas about how to sing the blues, and it's safe to call this the best Boswell for a long time.

The Pick-a-Rib Boys make a coarse tone-colour and the recording sprawls all over the studio. A quiet bunch of boys in a smaller studio would have helped.

Fare Thee is all right, too, except when Connie shouts at the end.

Ink Spots.

"Brown Gal."

"Pork Chops And Gravy."
 (** Brunswick O.2673.)

Pork Chops And Gravy is so full of food it will leave you hungry.

Brown Gal has a touch of Ted Lewis dramatisation which is out of place. Otherwise, another typical mellow piece of vocal pleasantry (but I'd rather take Slim and Slam).

Louis Prima and his Orchestra.

"Doing The Serpentine."

"Why Should I Pretend."
 (* Vocalion S.208.)

Louis Prima's trumpet playing seems to go from bad to worse. The coda of *Why Should I Pretend* is almost unbelievable—not so much the old cliché as the way he plays it. And there are wasted in this band a good clarinet, Meyer Weinberg, and Godfrey Hirsch on drums, xylo and vibraphone. How they must have enjoyed playing the mock-Oriental effects in *Serpentine*.

REISSUES.

I don't know whether it's coincidental or deliberate, but Brunswick, H.M.V. and Columbia have all come out with Ellington reissues in the December list. (For titles see complete guide.) One of the supplements announces "New records by . . . Duke Ellington," which seems to me utterly indefensible. The average man-in-the-shop may not realise that every Ellington record listed in this country must be at least two years old. In these cases the sides in question are eight years old! One is a so-called "Samoa Dance" which sounds more like a lukewarm rumba, and the other has a Sonny Greer vocal. On H.M.V. are two blues from the same period; Columbia's are more recent.

Note: The scratch at the end of Duke's *Misty Morning* on HMV is so bad as to make the record almost unplayable.

Also reissued are Teagarden's *Junk Man* and a vocal number, transferred to Parlophone; and (another coincidence?) two Red Nichols' records, on Parlophone and Brunswick, the latter being credited to the Five Pennies though it is really one of the Louisiana Rhythm Kings recordings.

DEC. 3.

ALL ABOUT EVERYTHING

The Latest Labour Saving Device for Tired and Harassed Swing Critics

FEATHER FORECAST AND NEWS



Charles Delaunay

ing twenty-three bands...."
 "... What are the new issues by Duke Ellington? Who accompanied Bessie Smith in 1925? Is there anywhere I can get a copy of Red Nichols' *Smiles*? Have the following been issued in England?"

Every day my mail includes far too many letters of this sort from people who have no idea how much time and trouble the research work involves and how I shrink from replying even to those who enclose envelopes; but the clouds may lift, the flood may abate, now that Charles Delaunay's new *Hot Discography* (1938) has appeared.

Truly this is the most remarkable jazz book ever published. The first edition two years ago was extraordinary enough, but as to the

brand-new one, it is fantastic how this young Frenchman, simply through correspondence with Americans and occasional chats with musicians visiting Paris, has compiled a four-hundred page book (printed, by the way, in English), which lists the personnel of every important record session since ragtime. The mere thought of the work involved sends me rushing for aspirins.

To quote examples of his industry: there are seventy-seven makes of records mentioned. The list of Ellington discs reaches about 340 titles, with hardly a detail missing from any personnel. The new edition completely cancels out the old one; on the first page one sees an addition to the Original Dixieland discography (*Reisenweber Rag*) and the date (1924) added to *Toddlin' Blues* and *Barnyard Blues*.

And so, right through, there are additions, corrections and latest issues, right up to titles as recent as *Lullaby In Rhythm*.

"Bennie" Carter, there is little to criticise.

In any case, criticism is almost sacrilege in talking of such a monumental job of work. Charles Delaunay will be remembered as the man who saved me and other jazz writers countless sleepless nights answering readers' questionnaires, *Hot Discography* 1938 is absolutely indispensable to anyone who really makes a study of collecting hot records.

The book can be obtained from the English agent, W. Elliott, 3, Wentworth Hill, Wembley Park, Middlesex, for 4s. 3d., post free.

What's Wrong With British Diplomacy?

John Hammond, in a recent description of Chicago's night life, describes it as "sterile as British diplomacy."

John Hammond's brother-in-law is a British M.P.

Personnels Are Tricky Things

The only thing that baffles Charles, and which he needn't have attempted, was the listing of records which appeared in America under several different labels and band names. Records made for Perfect invariably came out also on Melotone, Banner, Oriole and

I see the Archbishop of Dubuque, which is somewhere in Iowa, says "A degenerate and demoralising musical system is given a disgusting christening as swing, and is turned loose to gnaw away the moral fibre of young people." And adds that the young people are "treading the primrose path to hell."

How true. The first time I heard an Armstrong record, I immediately drank a glass of beer. When I listened to Teagarden singing *Basin Street* I and committed bigamy. Nelson's savage jungle rhythms by addiction to opium. Soon nothing much left for me but fortunately someone played *Sunday* and I committed

"CAN you tell me who was the clarinet player with Benny Goodman's Orchestra in 1933...?" "... I am sorry to intrude on your time, but I wonder whether you could supply personnels of the follow-

Dec. 10th.

PERSONNEL SHAKE-UPS IN STAR U.S. BANDS

SENSATION! Bud Freeman leaves Benny Goodman! Bombshell! Billie Holiday leaves Artie Shaw!

The news is as unfortunate as it's sudden, but I can't say either item is astounding on a review of the circumstances. In fact, I have feared both these events for some months.

There has never been what you could call a great bond of friendship between Goodman and Freeman; it was well known that he joined the band just after Tough had done so, because of his anxiety to work with his old pal Dave. When Tough left the band recently it might well have been expected that Bud would follow him out.

Why Has Billie Left?

The Holiday-Shaw tie-up was precarious from the start. I know nothing but the bare news of Billie's departure; however, it is said that there was discrimination in favour of the white girl who was also with the band, handling the straight numbers. One thing is certain: Artie is too fervent an admirer of Billie's work to have dismissed her on the grounds of her performance.

Her plans are undetermined at present, as also are those of Freeman, who would like to have his own band, but fears his name wouldn't mean anything commercially.

Lionel Hampton is still drumming for the Goodman band, and Tough, when he recovers from a current illness, will replace Maurice Purtill in Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra. Just to make things more complicated, Artie

FEATHER NEWS AND FORECAST

Shaw has also lost his drummer, the talented Cliff Leeman, and to complete the vicious circle he is taking in a new man on trumpet, Bernie Privins, who comes from Tommy Dorsey's gang. *Tout casse, tout passe, tout lasse*; pretty soon the bands will be swapping band-leaders.

There is also news at last of Benny Carter's new band, which has just taken its first bow in a Washington theatre. The line-up includes Eddie Williams, alto and clarinet (formerly with Lucky Millinder); Ernie Powell, tenor; Fats "Tyree" Glen on trombone and vibes (from the Eddie Mallory Band which accompanied Ethel Waters but has now broken up); possibly Kyle on piano; and two more ex-Millinder men, guitarist Danny Barker and bassist Johnny Williams. Here's wishing Benny more luck than he had with his last American band in 1933.

I've spotted an error worth noting in the *Discography*: the famous Mound City record of *Hello, Lola* and *One Hour* is dated (no doubt by the typesetter) as 1922, which is seven years too early (p. 173).

A resourceful reader has been combing the volume for more strange title couplings and produced a few worth quoting. Fletcher Henderson's *Come On, Baby* was released on the back of *Easy Money*; the Casa Loma coupled *Love Is The Thing*, *Under A Blanket*

Oj Blue; and by the same band (p. 145) you have *I Woke Up Too Soon* and *You Took Advantage Of Me*.

This correspondence, as they say, is now closed!

I suppose I ought to take up "Mike's" suggestion last week that "even Leonard Feather will agree" that Ellington, Armstrong and Hawkins all did their finest work before they crossed the Atlantic. Well, I won't agree; the fact that Duke and Louis spent a month or two, or more, over here was no more detrimental to them than is, say, the fact that they occasionally play in Canada. It seems just silly to me to suggest that something in the European air is fatal to the great figures of jazz.

Not A Tragic Mystery Of Jazz

As to Hawkins, he has made a few bad records in Europe (the only real horrors were the badly recorded ones on Parlophone with the Swiss band), but he has made a far larger number of records which prove that his playing has not suffered from his recent environment. To condemn four years of music on account of four hours of hangover seems hardly fair; I prefer to judge Hawk by his other work, such as *Somebody Loves Me* or *My Buddy* with Carter; *Honeysuckle Rose* and *Crazy Rhythm* on H.M.V., and the Vocalion solos of *Well, All Right, Then!* and *When Buddha Smiles*. Do these sound like "less and less the inspired artist"? Do these unveil "another of the tragic mysteries of jazz?"

"Mike," in all amity, I suggest you have musical indigestion. Don't you realise that an artist of Hawkins' genius is a gem and a setting in himself? LEONARD G. FEATHER.

"The Corn Bug Will Get You If You Don't Look Out"

—Theme Song for Tommy Dorsey?

BUYERS' GUIDE

- ★★★★ Extraordinary
- ★★★ Entertaining
- ★★ Endurable
- ★ Execrable

Tommy Dorsey and His Clambake Seven

- "The Sheik of Araby"
- "Chinatown, My Chinatown" (**H.M.V. B.8825)
- "A-Tisket A-Tasket" (Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra)
- "Music, Maestro, Please" (*H.M.V. B.8824)

SEVERAL fellow-critics and musicians have been emphasising lately how Tommy Dorsey's playing is tending towards the corny. I have never overstressed this point because I was never quite sure whether he was being deliberately funny. By now, I'm afraid, it is clear that this corn bug has got him.

Some Good And Some Bad Spots

Tommy's idea of playing in a semi-jammed ensemble is like this: two quavers and three crotchets in each bar; the quavers are on the tonic, and the crotchets on the leading note, submediant and dominant. That

lick occurs so many times in the first two sides that I now have very little hair left.

The wreck of these records is partly salvaged by Johnny Mintz's swell clarinet work. As to the tenor playing I should say that while Bud Freeman may not always have been good, by God he was different, whereas Skeets Herfurt may not be different, but by God he's not bad!

Spirit And Atmosphere, But—

The rhythm section is badly recorded and very drummy. The Oriental effects which start *Chinatown* would be pardonable in a better record (as they were in Duke's *Limehouse*). There are numerous arranged passages, though they have the spirit and atmosphere of jamming. That much I will say, but I can't call this a good record.

Even less is to be said for the two painful efforts on B.8824, the first side by the Clambake Seven and the backing by the full band. Edythe Wright sounds less right than ever. In *Tisket*, after singing a travesty of Ella Fitzgerald's original version, she calls on the boys to do their stuff, in a very skittish manner, afterwards bring-

asks
"ROPHONE"
in his Review
of Hot Records

ing in Mr. Herfurt for a little verbal comedy. Strictly for the ickies.

- Mildred Bailey and Her Orchestra "Small Fry"
- "Born To Swing" (**Parlo. R.2595)
- Nan Wynn and Her Orchestra "Lullaby In Rhythm"
- "Monday Morning" (**Parlo. R.2596)

Four sides in the better white swing vocal vein. Nan Wynn loses a point because both her titles have out-of-tempo verses. Jazz loses nothing by being kept in strict tempo, so why muck abah?

It Just Has To Rhyme

Mildred comes to life in *Born To Swing* (no relation of the other tune of that name in the Henry Allen review last week), and the band has a chorus to itself. The other side is perhaps a trifle coy, but easy enough on the ears.

(Note on *Born To Swing*: Is it quite legitimate to rhyme "queen" and "dean" with "swing"? And, by the way, what is the final phrase, of which, though she sings it twice, the only words I can catch are "double-cross"?)

- Benny Goodman and His Orchestra "Margie"
- "Russian Lullaby" (**H.M.V. B.8827)

I had to hear these quite a few

times before getting to like them. The arrangements, though certainly coloured, are no great shakes. Both sides, too, are inordinately short (2.13 and 2.25 respectively); it usually takes the full three minutes to give form and character to a record.

Rest of The Bunch

But that phrase "clean as a whistle" is out of date. It should be changed to "clean as Benny Goodman." I'm not talking about his personal habits, I mean his clarinet tone and style. His chorus in *Margie* is especially swell. It's followed by Harry James doing all right and leading up to a not too flashy ending on high C.

Not a masterpiece, either side, but goodish Goodman.

- Coleman Hawkins Trio "Dear Old Southland"
- "When Buddha Smiles" (**Vocalion S.210)

The last Hawkins-Freddy Johnson duet was just a duet. Now they have a drummer with them. He is a hindrance rather than a help, despite which Hawk gushes out cataracts of luscious stuff.

Technical Titbits: The first half of the second chorus of *Buddha* which he plays in half-time against the fast background—not a new idea, but beautifully done. The brilliant originality of two phrases in the last chorus in bars 1-4 and 17-20.

Freddy Johnson plays some colourless stuff on a toneless piano, but it's well worth waiting for what follows.

- Bob Crosby's Bob Cats "Slow Mood"
- "Palesteena" (**Decca F.6874)

Eddie Miller wrote something more than a getoff number in *Slow Mood*. It is a tune and, of course, he treats



Chick Webb supplies that certain "lift" (Drummers: note his peculiar left hand grip)

it with respect in his first chorus and reprise. This is the least raucous, and consequently the best Bobcat release to date.

The song *Palesteena*, of which I have an original copy of the Dixieland Band's 1921 version (no offers accepted!) should have been revived before now. Its curious Eastern melody is well atoned for by the likeable switching from minor to major. Crosby's boys do a good job on it, and if you don't want to listen to Lamare's vocal you can always study Zurke's piano behind it.

I don't like to argue, but if the clarinetist here isn't Fazola (instead of Matlock as labelled) I will eat the record. But I'll demand another copy.

- Fats Waller and His Rhythm "On The Bumpy Road to Love"
- "The Meanest Thing You Ever Did Was Kiss Me" (*H.M.V. B.8818)

Out of the groove back into the rut. These were made before Fats' European trip, and are typical of the sessions when he has strange new tunes placed in front of him and grapples through them in purblind fashion.

The second side betrays so blatantly the musicians' ignorance of the tunc and chords that I imagine even John Public will become suspicious if he hears it.

While there are so many good Waller discs around I can't recommend this one.

"DON'T COMPARE ME WITH DUKE"

says Count Basie, frankly admitting he's got a long way to go yet before his band equals Ellington's

by

LEONARD
FEATHER

COUNT BASIE has been the subject and object of many a critical dissertation since his band leapt into the limelight; but until now little or nothing has been said about his musical background, ambitions and opinions. A real analysis of the man behind the band, it seems, had to be left to Basie himself, and he has not been shy of telling the whole revealing truth.

Let's hand the microphone over to the Count:—

"I'm not satisfied with my band yet. We haven't made a record yet that gives me a real kick. It's difficult to get a right balance and a real swing, and until we do, I shan't keep any of my own records. I have a collection of over a thousand records at my home in Harlem, but not a solitary one of my own. Most of the best ones, that I play most often, are by Duke Ellington and Jimmie Lunceford and Benny Goodman."

Smashing A Popular Fetish

A startling statement! Basie smashes at the outset the popular fetish that swing musicians like to listen to their own music. And his views are as sincere as they are emphatic. Basie cannot be persuaded to boast about his band or to compare them with the three bands he names as his favourites. He admits he is working hard to put his combination into a class that would justify a comparison, but at present he feels that Duke Ellington, in particular, is in a class by himself, so far above the others that it is almost a shame to mention anyone else in the same breath.

How The Count Has Scored

Ellington and Lunceford have not had the advantages of publicity and ballyhoo that have been



"... his mouth often hangs open in an expression of complete vacuity" (Count Basie with Baron Timme Rosenkrantz, Danish swing critic).

afforded to the Count since he brought Broadway crowds to his niche at the Famous Door; but nothing can turn his head or alter his conviction that his boys have a long way to go yet.

Says Stylists Are Copyists

His views on vocalists are no less trenchant. To him the majority of so-called swing stylists are nothing more than copyists, and their models in the majority of cases are either Ella Fitzgerald or Billie Holiday.

Billie left Basie's band under a cloud of rumour, the report of the manager being that, swell singer though she was, it was impossible to rely on her from one performance to the next; but to the unbiased Basie this does not erase the fundamental fact that Billie is a marvellous artist who remains unappreciated by the world at large.

But he has great faith in his discovery who replaced Billie, the personable Helen Humes, who previously sang with a little-known Harlem band led by Vernon Andrade. Neither Holiday nor Humes has ever recorded with the Basie band, the wax vocal assignments being limited generally to James Rushing.

Atmosphere Which Makes Difference

His current engagement at the Famous Door, declared the Count, is doing the band good. "We're learning to play softer and yet swing out just as much without blowing the roof off. It's a swell job, and a swell opportunity to get used to a different atmosphere."

Evidently the adaptation has proved a successful one, for the owners of the

Door have signed Basie to stay until January, 1939, and are enlarging the room still further.

Strange that Basie, of all people, should have been the man to bring this Kansas City aggregation to universal notice. To talk with him and watch him working is to be struck by an attitude of *laissez-faire*. His manner lacks the determination and personality that generally go to make a great band-leader. While he plays, his mouth often hangs open in an expression of complete vacuity. In dealing with his men he is no master of discipline, though perhaps because most of them have been with him so long this is hardly necessary.

Basie is not the thoughtful, ambitious brilliant organiser typified by Duke Ellington, nor the quiet, cultured, sober methodist like Edgar Sampson. His musical ideas spring out of his fingers if and when he feels that way, but doesn't spend his spare time worrying about it. Not while there's a good movie to see or some charming company to meet, or a new club where they have an up-and-coming jam band.

Value Of Early Training

Maybe he had enough of musical discipline in his early days to provide for a reaction later in life. It was in New Jersey, not Kansas City, that he had his early training under his mother, whose patience with him at the family keyboard armed him for his first professional experiences; and for some years he was the pupil of such exacting teachers as Jimmy Johnson, Willie (The Lion) Smith and Fats Waller.

It was Waller who gave him some ideas of chord construction and harmony, after which Johnson and the Lion helped him to put these theoretical principles into practice. Fats was sufficiently interested in the Count's development to undertake the job of



WILLIAM "Count" BASIE, 30-year-old New Jersey swing pianist band leader

teaching him the organ, and at the Lincoln Theatre in Harlem, where Fats used to play, Basie would spend hours beside him, crawling around to watch his pedal work and then taking a hand himself at the manuals.

Experience As Church Organist

After playing with Sonny Thompson's six-piece band on a tour of the music halls, Basie joined a show under one Gonzale White in 1926, and went with this gang to Kansas City, where he earned the respect of the local churchgoers for his work at the organ of the Baptist Church. In between times he learned some music that was more serviceable to jazz—the old-time blues characterised by Pinetop Smith and Jelly Roll Morton.

During 1927 and '28 Basie toured with Walter Page's Original Blue Devils. Page, a half-brother of "Hot Lips" Page, now plays bass in the Count's own band. Shortly afterwards came his association with Benny Moten, and from that point on the story becomes a commonplace one which you have read elsewhere.

Music Which Reflects The Man

To call the Count a 100 per cent, Kansas City musician, as if there were something so different about this city's jazz that it belongs in an entirely separated compartment, is just affected twaddle. Basie's musical education, or the greater part of it, was determined before he had ever seen Kansas City, and the music on which his policy hinges is the blues, the old twelve-bar blues which is at home in every State in the Union.

Perhaps you have noticed that on Basie's B.B.C. relay a few months ago the last four items in the programme were all blues; *Swingin' The Blues*, *Saint Louis Blues*, *Sent For You Yesterday* and *One O'Clock Jump*. Basie can run in circles round this simplest of themes with a minimum danger of monotony, and I feel that this elemental basis of his music is a reflection of Basie the man.

Nothing But Basie's Own

His music is not Kansas City music or Chicago or New Orleans music, but just Basie's music. And I think that is the greatest compliment we can pay any real jazz man.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

A CONSIDERABLE proportion of the 'Band Waggon' correspondence is devoted to inquiries regarding the personnel of the orchestra directed by Phil Cardew on these Wednesday-evening excursions. This week, then, I propose to let the cat out of the waggon.

Cardew uses a brilliant all-star band, in which are some of the country's leading soloists on several instruments. The four saxophonists are usually Harry Hayes (first alto), Benny Wine-stone (tenor, sometimes solo), George Evans (tenor, sometimes solo, also vocalist and arranger), and Andy McDevitt (clarinet solo and alto sax).

This is probably as talented and well-balanced a reed section as could be assembled anywhere in the country.

The brass also consists of personalities well known to dance-music students, with Tommy McQuater, featured for a long time with Ambrose's Orchestra, taking the hot trumpet solo passages. The other trumpet is Billy Smith, formerly with Henry Hall at the BBC, and the trombonist is another ex-Ambrose man, Eric Breeze.

In the rhythm section are Billy Munn, piano (making five Scotsmen), Alan Ferguson on guitar (six!), Dick Ball on bass, and a drummer whose identity had better not be revealed because the same man is not always used. George Hurley, on violin, completes the combination.

Phil Cardew tells me he has been experimenting with a new 'set-up' for the band, which, while making it more difficult for spectators in St. George's Hall to watch the band closely, sounds much better to the vast audiences listening at home.

The Three In Harmony, a feminine vocal trio originally mentioned here shortly after their arrival in Northern Ireland, will be featured for the first time in Brian Lawrance's broadcast on Monday evening. Jack Joy, of the Three Ginx, has written some special arrangements for which the two trios will join forces, and Lawrance plans to have everyone singing 'Phil the Fluter's Ball' and, to celebrate his introduction of the girls into his programme, a general Irish atmosphere.

'Yes, I have been to Ireland myself', he assured me, 'just for a few weeks—years ago. But this Monday I hope to feel as though I'm back there again!'

Amongst other distinctions Lawrance must claim to be the most misspelt band-leader on the air. Ninety-nine times out of a hundred people write his surname as Lawrence.

Three record recitals of interest should be noted for next week. On Monday night the 11.30 'Jazz Celebrities' programme is devoted to some new and old records by the Bob Crosby Orchestra. On Wednesday in 'Swing Time', Iain Lang, who still seems to be the only daily-paper journalist making an elaborate study of jazz, will present a programme illustrating the history of the Stomp, a term much used in America to denote a fast swing tune of a special kind. And on Friday afternoon Alan Keith presents 'The Young Idea', featuring youthful talent on gramophone records.

DEC. 16

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

PLANS are now being completed for the dance-music programmes, both live and recorded, which will be heard in the first quarter of 1939.

Although not all the following details are confirmed as I write it is probable that most of these production programmes will be included in the schedule:—

Jack Payne and Jack Hylton will each have three big production programmes on the lines of their previous successes. Ben Frankel is expected to present a series entitled 'Swing Song'.

Reg Pursglove's signature tune, 'Love is on the air tonight', will provide the title for three special shows in which his band will be the centre-piece. Carroll Gibbons will probably line up three more of his popular floor shows.

One of the best news items is the decision to continue 'Band Waggon' regularly in its present form throughout the coming quarter.

Lastly, there will be a short series by a new combination under the directorship of Bill Williamson.

This versatile composer and arranger started as a pianist with Jack Hylton, later joining Mrs. Hylton's personnel (it was he who wrote the 'Mrs. Jack Stomp'). He is at present one of Carroll Gibbons's arrangers and has had a new success as a composer with the descriptive piece 'Rush-Hour'. His broadcasts, featuring a fifteen-piece orchestra, will be called 'How Do You Like Your Music?', after the Vivian Ellis song of that name.

The policy of presenting American and Continental dance-band relays during alternate fortnights will be continued, as will the Wednesday-night 'Swing Time' gramophone recitals, presented by a different authority each week.

'Music At Midnight', introducing a somewhat softer trend in dance music, will take the place of the Monday-night 'Jazz Celebrities' series. The recently introduced Saturday-night feature entitled 'Encore' will be retained.

It is estimated that there will be between six hundred and seven hundred dance-band performances from the National and London Regional transmitters during 1939.

Jazz, it would seem, is still an unconscionable time a-dying.

The recent Press scare concerning Ambrose's absence from the air calls for a little explanation. In a chat with Mr. Philip Brown I learned the true facts, which are: first, that all the late-night broadcasts come from hotels and restaurants, with the exception of two programmes a month; secondly, that in October both these studio programme times were allotted to Ambrose; thirdly, that there has been no quarrel between Ambrose and the BBC; fourthly, that his band has been 'pencilled in' for at least two dates early in the New Year.

The point which everyone also seems to have overlooked is that since the end of October Ambrose's full band has completely dispersed owing to the lack of a resident job or music-hall work. Max Bacon, Evelyn Dall and the other featured artists were sent round the halls without the band. By the time you read this it is possible that this fine orchestra may have reassembled; or, if the musicians have found other jobs by now, Ambrose may organise a new combination altogether.

Dec. 23

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SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

IT is difficult for the younger generation to imagine what Christmas at home in the pre-BBC days must have been like. The average British household takes radio for granted as a genial background—and often as a foreground—of the celebrations. In the holiday season dance music plays such an important part that the list of names for the next few days forms a welcome assurance of good listening.

Once again Joe Loss will be on hand on Boxing Day with one of his seasonal programmes, which will include a medley of the year's hits. Requests for the Lambeth Walk and Palais Glide will be answered, and if you have any other particular request number it may still not be too late to drop him a line.

There is a new vocalist, by the way, singing with this combination—a sixteen-year-old Londoner whose real name is Marjorie Kingsley, though Joe Loss may have changed it to something shorter by the time this is read.

One of the busiest band leaders over the holidays will be Victor Sylvester. During the coming week he has band engagements in both London and in the provinces; gramophone sessions, dancing-lessons to give with his wife, and a dancing-school to supervise. Then on Tuesday he has two broadcasts, one with his band from 4.20 to 5.0, and another in which he gives the BBC dancing-lesson ('For You, Madam', 8.0).

This means rehearsals on Boxing Day, so that Sunday will be his only day of relaxation, spent at the home of his father, who is the Vicar of Wembley.

Another leader now working on a topical programme is Hugo Rignold, who has conceived the ambitious notion of compiling a pot-pourri of hits for every year of the century, with an appropriate script to lend colour to the production. The final item will take the form of a prophecy—an endeavour to point out a big hit for 1939. This programme will be heard on New Year's Eve.

One of the luckiest band leaders this Christmas is Maurice Winnick, who, only two days after concluding a thirteen-month engagement at the Piccadilly Hotel, made arrangements to take his orchestra on its first Continental trip, opening over the holidays at the Casino in Cannes and staying there for four months. I know of many leaders who would exchange all the hustle and excitement of their London lives this week for a little Riviera sunshine.

To round off the week there are three interesting programmes for connoisseurs—first, some British jazz celebrities in the Monday-night record recital; then a review of the year's jazz on records, which will be given by Leonard Hibbs in Wednesday night's 'Swing Time'; and lastly, the concluding item in the year's foreign dance-band relays, to be given from Paris by Ray Ventura on Friday evening.

Danny Polo, the American ex-Ambrose clarinettist, is still with the band and Ventura is planning to feature him in one or two special items with an improvising contingent from the full band.

Altogether, an appropriately festive week's listening.

The World is Your Ballroom

A Survey of Foreign Bands to be heard during the Christmas Holidays

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

THE attractions of foreign listening, and of the short-wave bands in particular, have provided a bait for dance music enthusiasts which, in the last two or three years, has con-



Ray Ventura.

verted many thousands to the constant use of radio as a medium for hearing jazz from all over the world. With the approach of the holiday season there will be considerable activity, not only on the part of the music-seekers, but also on that of the music-makers.

A glance through the short-wave programmes reveals that seldom before has such a remarkable variety of America's best talent been available "on the air;" and, since late nights go hand in hand with the seasonal festivities, there will not be so many of the usual objections that the best bands come through at unreasonable hours of the night.

Saturday Night "Swing Session"

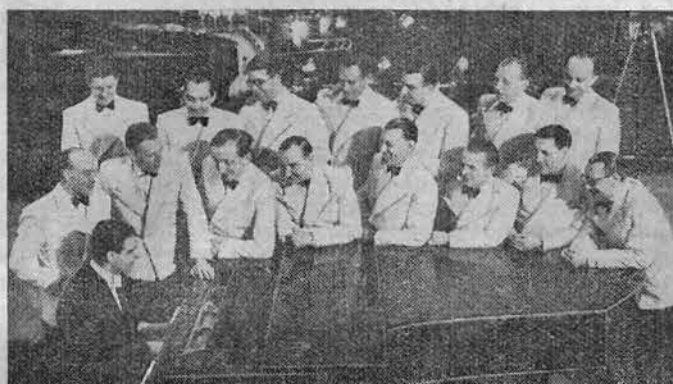
Still one of the most popular features of its kind, the Saturday Night Swing Session can still be heard regularly at midnight from W2XF and W3XAU. Although numerous introductions of guest stars, chats with the musicians, and other interruptions invalidate the programme for would-be dancers, there should be many surprises worth waiting for on purely musical grounds, for the sessions are now being held in New York, where an unusually fine crop of swing talent happens to be available at present.

Among the individual bands now broadcast regularly from New York there is Benny Goodman, whose Camel Show comes "on the air" from W3XAU at 2.30 a.m. G.M.T. on Wednesdays (which means 9.30 p.m. on Tuesday night in Philadelphia), transferring to W2XE at 2.45 a.m. Goodman can also be heard from both these stations at 5 a.m. on Thursdays. Each of the Camel programmes is transcribed and rebroadcast from W2XE on Wednesdays at 10.30 p.m.

Gene Krupa, the star drummer who left Goodman's band during the year, can now be heard with his own combination, generally early on Monday mornings. It is also interesting to note that Ben Pollack's Orchestra, one of the pioneer swing bands, in which Benny Goodman played when he was seventeen years old, along with many others who have since become famous stars in their own right, recently started broadcasting on Fridays at 12.30 a.m. Listeners who catch this programme can switch the dial round immediately afterwards to Rudy Vallée's Varieties from W2XAF at 1 a.m.

One of the finest bands now to be heard from New York — it has rapidly been acquiring nation-wide popularity since going on the NBC network regularly—is Artie Shaw's combination, which is playing in one of the city's smartest hotels. Shaw himself is a clarinettist no less brilliant than Goodman, and the band sounds particularly exciting "on the air" (Mondays, W2XAF, 4.5 a.m.).

Other American bands which can be heard during the holidays include Tommy Dorsey (Saturday, W3XAU, 4 a.m.), Cab Calloway (W2XE, Tuesday and Friday, 4.30 a.m.), Red



I.N.R. studio band, conducted by Stan Brenders.

Norvo, featuring Mildred Bailey (frequently from W3XAU), and, for those who are seeking daytime dance music on the short waves, there is the novel Milt Herth Trio, which consists of a portable Hammond organ, piano, and



Kai Ewans and his Orchestra, Copenhagen.



Benny Goodman.

drums; this can be heard from W2XAD on the 13-metre band daily at 1 p.m.

On the Continent

Listeners who are limited to the medium and long wavebands can still find plenty of excellent dance music from some of the Continental stations. One of the best stations to watch is Radio-Paris, which has an hour and a half of dance music every Sunday night from 11 p.m. Poste Parisien has recently been featuring Ray Ventura and his Collegians on Mondays at 9.5 p.m. They are appearing in that station's programme on Christmas Eve. This is still France's most interesting band, its personnel including two fine soloists who made their names in England: Philippe Brun, the ex-Hilton trumpet-player, and Danny Polo, the American clarinettist, who, after more

than five years with Ambrose, joined Ventura's band three months ago. Kalundborg and Copenhagen will be presenting a number of good Danish orchestras, including that of Kai Ewans, who was heard recently in a BBC relay and will broadcast from the Danish transmitters at 10.15 p.m. next Wednesday. This is one of the very few bands on the Continent for which several of the instrumentalists write special orchestrations in the best American swing vein.

From Sottens and Geneva there is a Wednesday night record recital at 9.10, which generally provides outstanding listening. Holland contributes its share with various bands on Hilversum 1 and 2, the best of which are, perhaps, the Ramblers and AVRO dance bands.

For a more typically Continental atmosphere in the way of dance music there is something interesting almost every night from Rome and Turin Groups. Brussels also has its bright moments, with the INR Jazz Band, among others.

The BBC is doing its share, too—but that is another story!

REGISTERED AT THE G.P.O. AS A NEWSPAPER

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING CLUB

President:
CAPT. LEONARD F. PLUGGE, M.P.

Telephone: Langham 2000 (14 lines)
Telegrams: Interbroad, London

I.B.C. PROGRAMME SHEET

Dec. 11th to Dec. 17th, 1938

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY, LTD.,
37 PORTLAND PLACE, LONDON, W.1.

FOR SUBSCRIPTION RATES SEE PAGE SIX
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RADIO NORMANDY

212.6 m., 1411 Kc/s.

December the Ele

TIMES OF TRANSMISSIONS

All Times stated are Greenwich Mean Time

SUNDAY:	WEEKDAYS:
7.0 a.m.—11.45 a.m.	7.0 a.m.—11.30 a.m.
1.30 p.m.—7.30 p.m.	*2.0 p.m.—6.0 p.m.
10.0 p.m.—1.0 a.m.	†12 (midnight)—†1.0 a.m.
*Thursdays: 2.30—6.0 p.m.	†Friday, Saturday, till 2.0 a.m.

Studio Manager	George R. Busby
Announcer	David J. Davies
at Announcers	Ian Newman, Godfrey Bowen, Norman Evans
Engineer	Clifford Sandall

Some STARS from RADIO NORMANDY

★ **GRACIE FIELDS** WEDNESDAY 3.15 p.m.

★ **JESSIE MATTHEWS** SUNDAY 1.30 p.m.

★ **GEORGE FORMBY** SUNDAY 10.45 a.m.
WEDNESDAY 3.45 p.m.

★ **REGINALD FOORT** SUNDAY 3.30 p.m.

★ **FRANK LAWTON** SUNDAY 4.0 p.m.

★ **CHARLIE KUNZ** TUESDAY 8.0 a.m.

★ **CARROLL GIBBONS** SATURDAY 10.0 a.m.

★ **NORAH SWINBURNE**
TUESDAY 10.15 a.m.
FRIDAY 5.30 p.m.

★ **LEONARD G. FEATHER**
SATURDAY 2.30 p.m.

Printed in England and published by the I.B.C. PUBLISHING CO., LTD., 37, Portland Place, London, W.1.

2y 2.30 p.m. RIDDLE RHYTHM
with LEONARD G. FEATHER
Listen and Win one of the Prizes of Six
Records Selected and Presented by Leonard
Feather Every Week
(U.P.C. Production)

PRESS CUTTING

INTERNATIONAL BROADCASTING COMPANY
LIMITED

37
PORTLAND PLACE
LONDON, W.1



Telegrams
"INTERBROAD
LONDON"

LANGHAM 2000 (14 lines)

Extract from

Happy Listening

Date December, 1938.

SATURDAY AFTERNOON BROADCAST FROM RADIO NORMANDY BRINGS NEARLY 1,000 REPLIES

THE point which International Broadcasting Company has often stressed—that Saturday afternoon time on Radio Normandy is one of the best "buys" on the air—has again been proved by the results of the broadcast last Saturday, December 10, at 2.30 p.m., of the first of Leonard G. Feather's "RIDDLE RHYTHM" quarter-hour series.

Nearly a thousand entries have been received for the competition announced in this programme. Ninety-five per cent. of the entrants attached, as requested, labels or packets from products advertised on Radio Normandy.



LEONARD
G. FEATHER

B.B.C. broadcasts, contributions to "Radio Times" and "Melody Maker" have won Leonard G. Feather a tremendous following. His Radio Normandy "RIDDLE RHYTHM" series will undoubtedly build up his reputation still further.

"RIDDLE RHYTHM" is conducted as a competition for listeners. They are asked to guess the names of artists, bands, composers, etc.

The unusual gramophone records, which are introduced and commented on by Leonard G. Feather, are in many cases the sole copies in Europe and come from his own library which he has built up over a period of years.

Prizes for the competition are six gramophone records, annotated and presented by Leonard G. Feather. The winners will be invited to the International Broadcasting Company's studios at Portland Place for presentation of prizes before the microphone.

"RIDDLE RHYTHM" is offered for sponsorship. The listeners' response has been proved outstanding, the time of broadcast—on Saturday afternoon—perfect for this programme, and reasonable as regards cost. Despite its widespread appeal, "RIDDLE RHYTHM" is inexpensive to produce. There can be no happier way of introducing the merits of your product to a receptive public than by tying up with the ever-welcome Leonard G. Feather.

At a point of hearing one of these programmes, either from Radio Normandy or at the studios of the International Broadcasting Company Ltd., 37, Portland Place, London, we are a ring—Langham 2000—we



RADIO

NORMANDY

212.6 METRES

**73 HOURS A WEEK
OF HAPPY LISTENING**

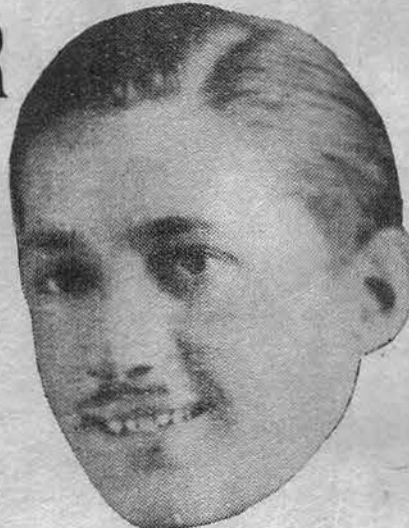
WEEK COMMENCING, SUNDAY, DECEMBER 11th

LEONARD G. FEATHER

presents

"RIDDLE RHYTHM"

A programme of unusual gramophone records. Listen and win one of the prizes of six records, selected and presented by Leonard G. Feather



EVERY SATURDAY AT 2.30 P.M.

CAVALCADE
Dec. 8.

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MELODY MAKER
FRONT PAGE →

DEC. 10

'RIDDLE RHYTHM'

Novelty For Fans

RHYTHM fans who are on the look-out for a novel entertainment in the way of radio programmes should take note of a new series which has just been fixed up by Radio Normandy.

'Riddle Rhythm' is the title of this weekly feature, the first one of which will go over the Normandy wavelength this Saturday (December 10) from 2.30 to 2.45. Other programmes will be heard regularly at this time every Saturday.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW?

The programme will consist largely of swing records, and others of interest to the jazz connoisseur, and the interesting angle for "M.M." readers is that after each record is played, questions will be asked, challenging listeners to identify such details as the orchestra, the vocalist, one of the soloists, the size of the band, the year or country in which the record was made, and other brain-tickling queries.

Since our readers are particularly well up in this sort of knowledge, and since a prize of six swing records is being awarded each week for correct solutions, it would be advisable to tune into this programme every Saturday after lunch and try your luck.

The idea for the series was suggested by Leonard Feather.

DEC. 17

APPLAUSE FOR OUR RHYTHM STUDENTS

THE following letter to the Editor of the MELODY MAKER from the Programme Director of International Broadcasting Co., Ltd., tends to throw considerable limelight on the ever-expanding interest in swing music which is being evinced in this country:—

"I thought you might be glad to have news of the new competition programme which you mentioned on your own front page last week. On Saturday last at 2.30 p.m. we broadcast from Radio Normandy the first of this series—'Riddle Rhythm,' conducted by Leonard Feather, swing critic of the MELODY MAKER.

THOUSAND ANSWERS

"To enter the competition it was necessary to answer ten pretty difficult questions. Any radio man would have said that the number of replies to a competition as complicated as this would be small. But from this first broadcast of 'Riddle Rhythm' I have already received close on a thousand replies, and they're still coming in.

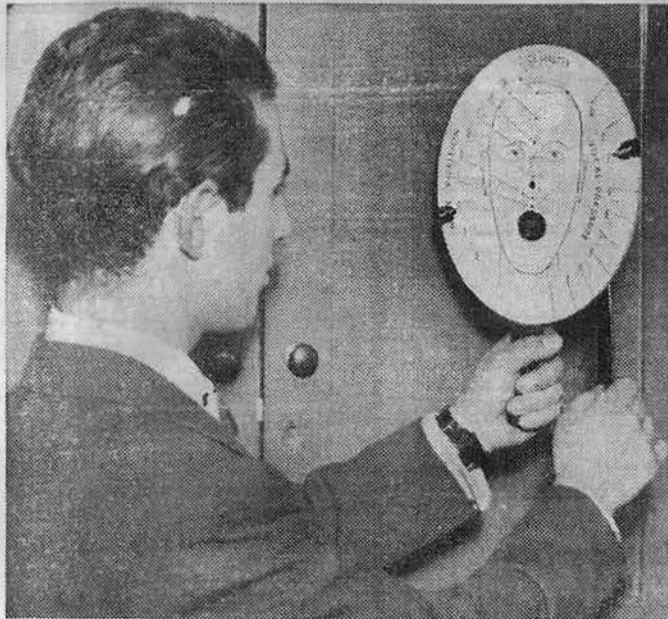
"In the programme department of a broadcasting company we must interest ourselves in every kind of entertainment—our own tastes don't count. There has always been a lurking doubt in our minds as to the size of the swing-fan audience.

"However, I can safely say that no other type of music could have brought such a response from its supporters as a result of one initial broadcast.

"This fine response is a compliment to the way in which Mr. Feather handled the programme, and an illustration of the keenness of dance music fans and the way in which they know their subject. The correctness of the answers to the 'Riddle Rhythm' questions was extraordinary."

Weekday Highspots—RADIO NORMANDY

- ★ TUESDAY 8.0 a.m. **CHARLIE KUNZ**
- ★ WEDNESDAY 3.0 p.m. **HARRY JACOBSON**
AT THE PIANO
- ★ WEDNESDAY 3.45 p.m. **GEORGE FORMBY**
- ★ THURSDAY 8.0 a.m. **QUENTIN MACLEAN**
- ★ FRIDAY 8.45 a.m. **ALBERT WHELAN**
SATURDAY 9.0 a.m.
- ★ FRIDAY 11.0 a.m. **DONALD PEERS**
CAVALIER OF SONG
- ★ SATURDAY 10.0 a.m. **CARROLL GIBBONS**
AND HIS BOYS
- ★ SATURDAY 2.30 p.m. **LEONARD G. FEATHER**
PRESENTS "RIDDLE RHYTHM."



Milt Herth Trio.
 "Rockin' In Rhythm."
 "Lambeth Walk."
 (**Brunswick 02672.)

MY text for this week is Peace On Herth And Goodwill Towards Men. For in spite of all my principles I can't help enjoying this record.

The Hammond organ has a peculiar capacity for staccato, an effect which can be much abused by corny players. Herth, though his melodic ideas are childish, is not rhythmically corny and seldom abuses the staccato. The main trouble in his performances here is that the sustained notes, which should serve as a faint bass undercurrent to the melody, come out much too loud and tend to distract one's attention.

"Doing" The Lambeth Walk

Willie the Lion has been replaced by Frank Froeba, a less personal but sometimes brilliant pianist. The middle part of his *Lambeth Walk* chorus is very effective.

O'Neil (That Man Is Here Again) Spencer provides the rhythmic foothold for the other two with his capable drumming and takes up a chorus of the Walk with his less capable singing.

Call it swing or what you will, there is many an attractive moment here and in *Rockin' In Rhythm* too. In fact, the last four bars of the latter side, with the little burping afterthought note, seem to me to give a new interpretation of the term "solid sender."

Quintet Of Hot Club Of France.
 "Appel Direct."
 "Three Little Words"

on to passing notes a semitone lower; thus a bar of C 7th has eight quavers like this: F sharp, G; B, C; D sharp, E; G sharp, A. And so on, using the same effect in a number of keys. And this is how so-called "screwy" music is made.

Hints to Django, Ella and Chick

At least one can say that there is something slightly different about this, even if the attempt to get out of the rut is rather synthetic. And I wish Django would stop using that corny cliché coda. It came into his *Floogee* three times, no less, and crops up again on both the above titles.

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.
 "Hallelujah."
 "I Want To Be Happy."
 (*Brunswick 12-in. 0138.)

Somehow this doesn't seem to me the best way to coax four shillings out of people's pockets. The idea of making twelve-inch jazz records is to give oneself room to breathe, and not just to throw into a heap all the ideas one has used separately on ten-inchers.

Both these sides are competently arranged, but never for one moment have they any real excitement or sense of climax such as one might expect to be the cardinal attraction of a four-minute production. And both sides are

STYLE OF ELECTRIC Hot Records Reviewed.

Robert Kenton and his new invention, The Voice Master, designed to teach singing by mechanical means.

let down by a flute-and-clarinet chorus. The Little Chicks no longer strike me as funny.

Ella Fitzgerald is not at her most inspired in either of her single choruses.

The point is, there are many records of Webb greatly superior to this which can be obtained for three shillings. So let's just forget it.

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.

"Maepheron Is Rehearsin'."

"I Let A Tear Fall Into The River."

(*Brunswick 02680.)

Isn't it about time Harlem and Fifty Second Street left Scotland alone?

All this clever stuff about swinging the Scottish ballads has been now committed to songs which all have as their theme the idea that Scotland is going Harlem. The Campbells are Swingin', we are told, and Fare Thee Well Annie Laurie, and now this wretched piece of nonsense about Macpherson with which Ella Fitzgerald, who was destined for much better things, is left to grapple.

The introduction uses the identical two bars invented by Claude Thornhill for the coda of Maxine Sullivan's *Loch Lomond*. Ella puts all her personality into the dotty ditty, but merely makes one feel self-conscious for her sake. And the orchestration fairly reeks of phrases one has heard played with more freshness and attack in other records. And just after the vocal there are nearly eight bars almost identical with the last chorus of Edgar Hayes' excellent record *Edgar Steps Out* (Brunswick 02448).

As for the other side, the title is almost too sentimentally absurd to justify any further inspection. If this were intended as a parody of Duke's tune *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart* it could hardly be more comic. One can only sympathise with the par-



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FATS IN A FRACAS

Feather Forecast and News

WELL, it didn't take Fats long to get back in the news after his arrival home. News has just reached me of an extraordinary incident in which he has been involved,

is that if you were Fats' size and were standing on a snow-covered pavement grappling with a man who had a smoking gun in his hand, you could consider yourself pretty brave.

Incidents like this happen every night in New York, but we don't hear about them because they don't happen

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

No. 2 of a Series dealing with famous dance

band orchestrators by

LEONARD
FEATHER



CARMEN
MASTREN

ONE of the most discreet and retiring figures in Tommy Dorsey's Orchestra is Carmen Mastren, who is not only a much more brilliant guitarist than his rare solo appearances give one a chance to realise, but has also contributed to the Dorsey repertoire some of its most successful special arrangements.

Twenty-four years old, chubby-faced and very well liked among musicians, Carmen has had all too little attention since he joined up with Tommy two and a half years ago. Neither in his own nor in other orchestrations are there openings for guitar solos, the trouble being that it is difficult to amplify a guitar so that the audiences can hear it in the crowded dance halls where bands like Dorsey's so often have to play.

It was as a violinist that young Mastren started his musical education in the small town outside New York where he was born. After

some six or seven years diligently practising fiddle he fell for the banjo craze, and from there it was a natural step to the guitar.

Got a Break With Wingy

When he first came to New York City, Carmen did not have to wait many weeks for a break. Wingy Mannone heard him, and shortly afterwards he was playing in the Mannone quartet at Adrian Rollini's Tap Room, the others being Mannone, Joe Marsala and the bass player, Sid Weiss.

These four had such a happy association, and the guitar-bass rhythm section was such a refreshingly different setting, that the efforts of various band-leaders to lure Wingy's three cohorts away from him were for some time unsuccessful. However, Sid Weiss eventually left to join Charlie Barnet (he is now in Artie Shaw's Orchestra); Joe Marsala formed his own band when Wingy went out of town; and Carmen, after numerous appeals from Tommy Dorsey, finally went into that band, replacing Bill Schaeffer.

At that time the stormy Tommy was in the midst of an unrelenting tide of

personnel changes; but despite the many comings and goings since then, Carmen has managed to remain friendly with his temperamental leader and has never strayed from the band.

During the Mannone period, strangely enough, Carmen did not make many records with Wingy, who generally recruited a different combination for his studio dates, including some of Bob Crosby's boys, with Nappy Lamare on guitar. However, with the far more exciting Roy Eldridge replacing Wingy, the quartet made two splendid sides for Decca under the name of the Delta Four: *Swingin' At The Famous Door* and *Farewell Blues*. (Brunswick 02273.) These will give you examples of Carmen's ability as a guitar getoff man—and swell examples they are too.

There was also a session made for Rollini—"The Tap Room Gang"—on Victor, in which the quartet, augmented by Adrian and vocalists Putney Dandridge and Jeanne Burns, turned in some good stuff.

Although his excellent tonal and rhythmic work as a section man can be discerned through all six sides, there are two which contain particularly worthwhile glimpses of Carmen as a soloist. In *Jazz O Jazz*, on Con-

tinental H.M.V. JF44, he has a short passage which he plays in chords, and *Weather Man*, on H.M.V. B8660, contains a single-string solo.

Another Segovia Enthusiast

Like most of the jazz guitarists who are great rhythm section men and all-round musicians, Carmen Mastren takes a passionate interest in the straight aspects of his instrument, which means that he listens to every Segovia recital he can possibly catch, and has even thought seriously of taking up concert work of this nature himself.

When Tommy Dorsey was just beginning to earn a personal reputation for his classic-jazzing specialities, Carmen was hard at work studying orchestration in his spare time. It was thus that he came to establish himself as an arranger by writing some of the best-known transcriptions of this kind featured by Dorsey. One of the first of these was *Liebstraum*, which, as reviewers commented, sounded in the end more like a slight variation of *Basin Street Blues*.

Although Tommy Dorsey's name appears on the labels as co-arranger of this and other Mastren efforts, it should be remembered that beyond supplying one or two suggestions for the main outline of the scoring, Tommy did not contribute very much, partly because he is too busy to spend his time at an arranger's desk and chiefly because he could trust Carmen to do a good job.

Whatever you feel about the Dorsey policy of adapting these classical pieces, it must be admitted that Carmen Mastren surmounted some of the difficulties excellently and avoided any lapses from taste. Notice the way he works Dave Tough into an integral part in *Liebstraum*, as a tribute to

the man he considered one of the greatest drummers in jazz history. And observe one or two unexpected effects of dynamics, such as the diminuendo in the passage following Dorsey's solo.

On the back of *Liebstraum* (H.M.V. B8578) you will find another good example of the Mastren manner in orchestration: *Melody in F*. The sax section in the second chorus is mobile and nicely voiced. Carmen is fond of using effects for three trombones, an understandable trait in a band such as this. His backgrounds for the solos by Bud Freeman and others are generally of the utmost simplicity, simple

organ harmonies rather than figures which he feels might distract the soloists. The last chorus of *Melody in F* is nothing more than straightforward block-scoring, but again with a fine sense of phrasing and of voicing.

Another good example is *Black Eyes* on H.M.V. B8592. Commercial considerations make it necessary to follow a stereotyped pattern, with the muted trombone solo and clarinet background, in most of these numbers, but after this part of the routine has been estab-

lished Carmen gets away from convention as far as he can. On this disc he gives the clarinet solo the background of a simple repeated riff instead of organ harmonies, and develops the idea behind Erwin's trumpet.

It should not be inferred from this analysis of Carmen's work as an arranger that he inclines heavily towards the orchestral trend in jazz. He enjoys himself as much as ever to-day in the atmosphere of a jam session; in fact, many English listeners noted that his contribution to the Marsala relay from New York in November was one of the few features which came over extraordinarily well.

Young Brother On the Way

And in the meantime there is a younger brother, Al Mastren, who has been recording with Wingy and was recently a member of Red Norvo's Orchestra; he is believed to be one of the most promising of the recent trombone discoveries. Keep an eye open for this Mastren family—and reserve a word of thanks for the leader under whose guidance the guitar-playing Mastren has earned his reputation. Tommy Dorsey has certainly proved to be a good pull-up for Carmen.

Dec. 24. 1938

"ROPHONE'S" CHRISTMAS RECORD REFLECTIONS

WELL, and the same to you. For me, at any rate, the reflection that all the December records are exhausted makes for a happy Christmas, since I can sit back and cogitate until the January flood surges in.

So I have another of those rare chances to talk to you about records in general and the job of reviewing them. Usually it is impossible in the space allotted me to answer the occasional criticisms of my work which find their way into the readers' letters column. The knowledge that I can't hit back probably tempts people to administer these little pinpricks.

For instance, a reader complained that the "M.M." should devote more space to record reviews. "Rophone" only gets through about four or five each week, sometimes not that. On an average I review at least eight records a week; sometimes a dozen or more. The fact that ninety per cent. of the records are issued at the beginning of the month means that my reviews have to be spread artificially and judiciously over four or five issues.

Sometimes in an effort not to be out of date, I get through the first-of-the-month issues quickly and I find I am only left with three or four mid-monthers for the last week of the month; but this is exceptional, and in any case provides the welcome opportunity of going into a little more detail about some of the discs.

Maybe you don't realize that there are quite a few records I have to listen to, but don't review because I decide they're not worth the space that might be devoted to something more important.

But the MELODY MAKER is the least

of sinners in this respect. No other musical magazine in the world gets through so many hot records in such detail and relative topicality.

Metronome of New York bunches hot and sweet records together, the average review going to two or three dozen words. *Down Beat* of Chicago omits many of the most important issues and gets through some twenty discs each month at 50 to 100 words each. *Tempo* of Los Angeles seldom devotes more than a sentence or two to any one record. In fact, my nearest rivals are also nearest in the geographical sense,



MAXINE SULLIVAN, one of the hits of 1938

Leonard Hibbs of *Rhythm* and Edgar Jackson of *The Gramophone*.

Critics Who Don't Economise Space

But the crucial matter affecting all of my fellow-critics and myself alike is that no criticism in the present style can ever arrive at anything concrete. There is only one absolute form of criticism, and that is a minute, technical inspection, with written musical examples, of why this phrase is good and that is bad, why a certain note or inflection or harmonic twist "sends" you or brings you down; why a band achieves what we choose to call an agreeable "tone colour"; what understood chords were at the back of the musician's mind when he produced such and such an inexplicable effect. In the old monthly "M.M." they

used to have technical articles on "hot choruses dissected." Arthur Young, for instance, might take the latest Earl Hines record, put it under an aural microscope and go into all the details that reviewers to-day are either too cramped or too incompetent to express.

That was my idea of a real record review, and that is the only way record reviewing can achieve something of any lasting value. The fact that the musicians who made the records may never have thought of all the little intricacies analysed by the reviewer is entirely immaterial. The musician's job is to create, not to reason why; the reviewer's is to pierce the mind behind the creation.

The bogey of space is a terrible mental hazard. If you keep to the bare facts with no literary embellishments you may be more succinct and technically better, but you make damn dull reading. If you spend a dozen words on a touch of levity or irrelevance, you are accused of reckless waste.

Concerning The Starring System

I thought it might save space when I started the starring system. The system proved a boomerang; readers wonder why I give this record three stars and that only two, and all my repeated insistence that the stars aren't a guide to comparative artistic merit doesn't help. When a record is not quite good enough for three stars and not quite bad enough for two, what am I to do? I have often been confronted with this, and after a mental toss-up have made a very shaky decision, repenting of it on seeing it in print.

You may think it is easy to solve this by awarding 2½ marks, but where will this end? The new in-between marking assumes its own character, and pretty soon you find you need further differentiations. In the end the number of different markings will be big enough to make things all the worse, because where a record might have been worth either two or three, it might now go into any of the umpteen intermediate categories.

In fact, it might be much easier to have only two categories: Buy and Don't Buy. At least there would be comparatively few borderline cases on that system.

When I was first offered the job of reviewing records I thought it was going to be the most exciting occupation in jazz, the job I had always hoped for. That enthusiasm has survived (at least I trust it can be said that I am the least blasé of critics), but in the years since I started to relieve "Mike's" burden in June, 1936, I have learned a lot that I never expected about the difference between listening to some records because you want to hear them, and listening to all the records because you've got to hear them. It sharpens the senses, but blunts the nerves.

Critics Very Seldom Agree 100%

The more records I listen to—and I have been listening, as a hobby, for ten years—the greater is my confidence in my own opinions. No two critics have ever yet agreed on all points, and no other critic believes me completely sane. But I feel the average "M.M." reader, who has so much less chance than I have to keep in complete and constant touch with everything that is going on in jazz, can at least count on my breadth of experience, careful attention to every record before writing a word about it (you'd be surprised how rare that is among critics!) and complete sincerity; but not on my infallibility, for this is too much to ask of any man on earth.

If, then, you disagree with something I write and are tempted to pen a shorting retort, remember that in a couple of years' time you will certainly disagree with your own views of 1938, and exercise that precious quality of tolerance, which breeds understanding. I'd better close down before this turns into a sermon. Merry Christmas

OTHER BANDS and ELLINGTON'S TUNES

December 31, 1938

Hot Records Reviewed

by "ROPHONE"

WHY BRITISH FANS CAN'T HEAR THE SID PHILLIPS STAR-ORCH. RECORDS

Behind-the-scenes Secrets of the American Record-release Angle

By "ROPHONE"

THREE WEEKS AGO, A BIG FRONT-PAGE STORY IN THE "M.M." ANNOUNCED THAT SID PHILLIPS HAD BEEN AWARDED THE "SMASHING HONOUR" OF RECEIVING CARTE BLANCHE FROM IRVING MILLS TO RECORD HIS OWN COMPOSITIONS WITH AN ENGLISH PICK-UP BAND FOR RELEASE ON THE BRUNSWICK LABEL IN AMERICA.

Since then, countless readers have written in to enquire why these records will not be released in England. The situation whereby the country in which they were actually made will be unable to hear the results seems to have confused everybody, so that a recapitulation of the problem regarding Irving Mills' recordings may now be timely.

Briefly, this is the reason you will not be able to get Sid Phillips' English records unless you send to America for them.

Two years ago, Irving Mills decided to inaugurate his own record labels, "Master" and "Variety." With a great splash of publicity the new company was launched, and Mills visited England expecting to bring off a deal for the foreign distribution of these discs.

However, nobody wanted to pay him the large advance sums he required, and shortly after his return to America he decided to abandon the independent labels altogether, merging the Variety on to the Vocalion label and Master on to the Brunswick.

HEAVY PRICE

Irving Mills are

deal include Duke Ellington, the Raymond Scott Quintet, Bobby Hackett, Sidney Bechet, Buster Bailey, Chu Berry, Chauncey Morehouse, Cab Calloway, Joe Marsala and numerous other small and large hot groups.

SID FOR SCOTT

Since Sid Phillips is the man who has impressed Mills as most capable of turning out music in the Raymond Scott style and since there appear to have been differences between Scott and Mills, the latter decided to use the English arranger in his place.

Never before in the history of hot records has such an important catalogue been withheld from the entire British, Continental and overseas market for such a long period. Unfortunately, too, it is a breach that does not seem likely to be filled.

Artists whose records have been denied to the English public through this failure to bring off a

voiced sax section stuff, and just as you are getting to enjoy it, in comes another frightfully busy bit (bar 16—it's only one bar, but they get a chorusful into it).

On the other side, in the unison obligato to the brass first chorus, you can hear some incredible dotted-quaver-semiquaver and triplet staccatos (bars 5-6, 9-10, 13-14), and a truly unmusical trombone lead-in to the second chorus. Sy Oliver's rumpet solo relieves the tension, but the rest is one more example of cleverness gone astray.

My admiration for the Lunceford

band at its best is unbounded. Maybe that's why I hate to hear records like his.

Teddy Grace.

"Monday Morning."

"Downhearted Blues."

(**Brunswick 02688.)

People who don't like Teddy Grace should have undergone the blindfold test before judging. Without seeing the label they would surely not have been certain she was a white girl—Edgar Jackson is still under the impression that she is coloured, vide last month's *Gramophone*. Her blues style has a great deal in common with the Smith family

Couple Of Swell Recordings

The above titles are session-sisters of *Crazy Blues* and *Love Me Or Leave Me*, with the extra treat of a more substantial Teagarden solo on each side; not technically impeccable, but unmistakably the old T-shape construction.

Take it from me, Miss Grace really sings Alberta Hunter's grand old blues, with Messrs. T. Teddy Bunn and Billy



LIPS PAGE—gets no bouquets from critic "Rophone" for his latest record.

Kyle contributing to the very exciting downheartedness

Louis Armstrong and the Lyn Murray Quartet (?)

"Going To Shout All Over God's Heaven."

"Nobody Knows De Trouble I've Seen."

(**Decca F6912.)

Something fantastic has gone wrong here; the description says "Louis Armstrong and the Lyn Murray Quartet, with Piano, Guitar, String Bass and Drums Accompaniment." I can hear no piano, no guitar, no string bass and no drums; on the other hand, I can hear something very much more than a quartet; I can hear the whole darn Lyn Murray Choir, probably more like two dozen strong and without instrumental accompaniment of any kind.

Is This A Blunder?

This is much on the same lines as *Shadrack*, quite straight and serious but for the note of humour creeping through in Louis's voice. Unusual and, to most people, attractive.

Ben Pollack and his Pick-A-Rib Boys.

"Rose Coloured Glasses."

"After You've Gone."

(*Vocalion S212.)

I hope I shan't be accused of carping, but this looks to me like another

error. These two sides were released in America as Ben Pollack and his Orchestra, so if you expect to hear the small jam combination as on the Connie Boswell records you'll be disappointed; if you don't, you'll still be disappointed, because the band is as bad as it's big. Arrangements straight from the factory.

Vocal on second side, not credited on label is by Paula Gayle. Tone all right, style negligible.

Reminiscent Of A Past Decade

Hot Lips Page and his Orchestra.

"He's Pulling His Whiskers."

"Good Old Bosom Bread."

(*Vocalion S206.)

After the two blues with which Lips made his Vocalion entry, these two tiresome titles make a considerable let-down. Rhythm section sleepy, teamwork all askew, arrangements dull, and vocal in *Bosom Bread* about the most terrifying case of repetitious monotony I can remember. There's a good tenor in this side, and Lips plays well towards the end of the backing.

Altogether this reminds me of some of the second-rate coloured band records that used to appear on Victor just about ten years ago. But they at least have the excuse of being old.

distinguished by an additional letter (V and M respectively) in front of the catalogue number, and are regarded as a separate part of the catalogue, which means that the English Parlophone-Columbia group, although it releases the ordinary Brunswick-Vocalion products, has to make a separate deal before acquiring the foreign distribution rights of Mills' records.

And, up to the present, neither Parlophone nor any other English company has agreed to pay what is generally considered to be the uneconomic price demanded by Mills. As a result, after nearly two years, not a single record has yet been released outside America.

Artists whose records have been denied to the English public through this failure to bring off a

STILL AT IT AFTER TEN YEARS!

Feather Forecast and News



Alice Frost and Nan Wynn featheredly forecast you a Happy Christmas.

Here we find "Detector" sarcastically thanking the B.B.C. for deigning to reply to criticisms of the absence of certain bands from broadcasting, notably the Savoy bands during the afternoons, Arthur Rosebery, and Billy Cotton.

Arthur Rosebery had a good band, it seems, at the Thames Riviera, which was not wired for broadcasting. The B.B.C.'s explanation was that the quality of the band was known, but it was impracticable to run private circuits all over London "on the off chance" of getting a good band. There's a paradox in that. As for Billy Cotton, apparently he was regarded as a palais de danse band, with "nothing exceptional about his playing."

Please understand I'm not trying to draw myself into the question of these disputes; I merely find it amusing that the same sort of bickerings have been going on for a decade or more. Today we have the present Ambrose business, which demonstrates that the same old troubles are still going on.

When It Was A Novelty

Commercial radio, by the way, was

DECEMBER 31, 1938

and that Eddie Lang and Pee-Wee Russell are playing in it.

Another phenomenon new to us in 1928 was the process of listening to gramophone records electrically reproduced. The Brunswick Panatrope was described in great awe as a novel and sensational advancement, the first real record amplifier. Except for the few modernists who had already got hold of one of these machines, everybody was still listening to the new hot records (such as Red Nichols' *Whispering* and the Original Wolverines' *Shim-Me-Sha Wabble*) on some acoustic affair which was as likely as not to reduce tenor sax, alto and trumpet to pretty much the same sound.

More interesting still is a trip back a further decade to inspect an article by a Monsieur Ansermet, writing in *La Revue Romande* of October 15, 1919.

This Man Was A Genius

This article, quoted in the latest issue of the French magazine *Hot Jazz*, showed an almost uncanny foresight in jazz appreciation, telling just what the real Negro jazz signified, its instrumentation and harmonic peculiarities. Particular reference is made to the London visit of the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, and to its extraordinary clarinet virtuoso, described as the first of his race to have composed perfectly formed blues on the clarinet.

"I've heard two of them which he

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Feather Forecast and News

NEW YEAR RESOLUTIONS FOR RHYTHM FANS



ALFIE KAHN, who has been "sending" Café Anglais audiences with his hot harmonica choruses.

has become so abused that it is better avoided altogether, though its use as a verb is permissible.

Perhaps you might also resolve to do one emphatic good deed in the interest of hot music; for instance, put aside a certain amount every week for records, or even do something that costs you only your time, such as writing a letter of protest to the next paper that prints a ridiculous story about jitterbugs

or a speech by a clerical gentleman condemning "swing" (I mean condemning hot music) as immoral.

Or you might join a rhythm club, or form one if there isn't one in your district, or possibly you could take out a year's subscription to—but there, I mustn't start plugging. Anyway, go into 1939 with the resolve to do something for the

"cause." You don't stand to lose much.

Duke Ellington has been talking again about that Negro opera. It seems that unless he can get it produced on the expensive non-profit-making lines he needs, the product of ten years' intermittent work will never be revealed.

He alone has the right to release the work, and it appears that he went straight to Mr. Rockefeller (don't ask me which Mr. Rockefeller) and asked him to sponsor it, explaining his motive in having written it and his belief that it must be done properly or not at all.

Musical Conception Of Negroid Progress

"It would have been easy," Duke is quoted as saying, "to have written an opera dealing with the trials, tribulations and tragedies of the Negroes, from the time they came to this country in slave ships, through the cotton-field, pre-Civil war era; but we've heard too much of this side of the Negro already. I've tried to make of this opera a musical conception of his achievement, his progress, his part in the building of this country which we call our own.

"I've tried to wipe out, in music, the subconscious feeling of inferiority which has been the Negro's yoke down through the years. I've tried to inculcate into the music which I've written the saga of a proud, a valiant, a courageous and a progressive group. And . . . I think I've done it."

Big words, Duke; big and significant. So let's hear the music soon.

I am gradually reaching the stage

where nothing surprises me. After hearing several instruments played hot in direct contradiction to my claims that they couldn't be, I have been along to the Café Anglais and heard some weird goings on in the pleasant little band working there.

Kahn, Millward And Others

Alfie Kahn, who is in my opinion, one of the best tenor sax and clarinet men in the country, does something more than play tenor sax and clarinet. In blues, stomps and pops alike he turned out some genuine hot choruses on, believe it or not, the harmonica!

I have seen so-called "swing records," advertised featuring harmonica playing, but Alfie gets nearer to the real style on his little mouth organ than any of the famous exponents. This is really something to watch for, and something for an enterprising record company.

To cap it all, Sid Millward, the leader of this band, started letting himself go on the oboe. What times we do live in!

* * *

Another cameo of American life, which I quote from the *Pittsburgh Courier*, writing of Jimmie Lunceford's opening night at a downtown (white) night club: "Milton Mezzrow received a Mickey Finn (knock-out drink served to obstreperous customers) because he insisted on being seated with his coloured wife at the opening, which they attended with Hugues Panassié."

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

AND the same to you! Now here's a New Year resolution that concerns us all. I want you to promise yourself, from now on, to avoid the use of the word "swing" as an adjective or noun as much as possible. There is absolutely no need for it; the word

and iron

TO S

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

IT would be difficult to resist the temptation of casting a retrospective eye on the year's dance music. Having made no attempt to resist, I propose to devote this week's column to some enlightening facts and figures entrusted to me by Philip Brown.

* * * *

Of the new bands introduced on the air during the twelve months, two seem to have made a lasting impression: Ken Johnson's West Indian aggregation, which made its bow on January 11 and has broadcast every month or so in the latter half of the year; and Hugo Rignold's group from the London Casino, a promising group ever since it took the air on August 6.

Two 'pick-up' combinations also stand out: one was Sid Millward and his Nitwits, whose success in several broadcasts led to the formation of the larger and permanent band now led by Millward at the Café Anglais. The other specially assembled radio combination was, of course, Phil Cardew's Band Waggoners.

The tendency, incidentally, has been to reduce the number of 'pick-up' bands during the year. There has been a wider divergence in the size of radio dance bands, though the average probably still works out about the same, since the large combinations in production programmes are offset by the little groups of Elrick, Lawrance, and others.

* * * *

Precedents set during the year included the presentation, during the summer seaside programmes, of as many as twenty-five bands from the well-known holiday resorts. Many of these were newcomers to the air.

From October, for the winter six months, it was decided to allot two or three late-night sessions every month to a studio broadcast in order to cope with such bands as Hylton's, Cotton's, Roy's, and Ambrose's, which could not broadcast earlier in the evening because of vaudeville engagements, and were unavailable for late-night outside programmes because they were not in a resident job.

At the same time a policy was introduced of giving three late-night sessions monthly to Regional bands, some of these times being split to accommodate two orchestras. Since October 1 the BBC has tended to concentrate on the outstanding bands, and this policy will be continued during the New Year. As the second-rate bands in England are, alas, very nearly third-rate, this seems to me personally a very sound system.

* * * *

As for American bands, there have been two broadcasts each by Duke Ellington, Bob Crosby, and Count Basie in 1938, as well as single programmes by sixteen others from the U.S. and eight from the Continent. While statistics are being discussed, it might be interesting to note some figures just compiled covering the last quarter of 1937 and the first three-quarters of this year. During that time Henry Hall had 35 broadcasts, Billy Cotton reached 20, Eddie Carroll 18, Geraldo 15, and Ambrose 29.

* * * *

The most unfortunate event of the year has been the breaking up of Ambrose's Orchestra. As was forecast here, some of his former men have banded together, and opened last week, under the direction of saxophonist Joe Crossman, in a new London edition of the revue *New Faces*.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

'VOCALIST' is a synthetic word which I dislike having to use. The main justification is that 'singer' becomes monotonous and 'crooner' is worst of all. During the past year or so new horrors have arisen such as 'croonette'.

In its present debased state the word crooning suggests something so artlessly empty that it is an insult to apply the term to some of our more acceptable radio singers. For this reason the series of questionnaires which starts this week, dealing with vocal personalities, has been given the following title:—

Don't Call Them Crooners

(1) PAT TAYLOR. Born London, 1918. Joined a juvenile troupe at twelve; two years later became one of Mrs. Rodney Hudson's Eight Step-Sisters, then appearing regularly on the air in Variety.

During a rehearsal someone discovered she had a voice; John Watt gave her a solo number in one of his 'Songs from the Shows' programmes. From then she did more singing than dancing; left the Step-Sisters at seventeen, joined an act with Sam Browne, but after a few weeks a car accident put her out of work for nearly a year.

Then Jack Harris engaged her to sing with his band. A year later C. B. Cochran offered to make her one of his new stars in *Many Happy Returns*. Has lately opened as one of the principals in the children's revue *Let's Pretend*.

Q.—Who is your favourite singer? A.—Deanna Durbin.

Q.—What is your favourite song? A.—'There's a Small Hotel.'

Q.—Do you play any instrument? A.—No.

Q.—What do you think makes a good jazz singer? A.—I think the essentials are a knowledge of rhythm and an ear for music and correct pitch; a real voice in the classical sense is not necessary.

Q.—What would you rather do if not sing? A.—Be a hairdresser or run a beauty parlour. I take a fiendish interest in everything connected with face massages, coiffures, and beauty treatment. But I still enjoy singing!

* * * *

Al Saxon and Eddie Carroll and their respective orchestras, which were coincidentally both on the air this Tuesday, figure in an interesting news item. After a long sojourn, Saxon and his men are moving out of Chez Henri, the West-End club where Charlie Kunz first became well known. Replacing them, Eddie Carroll is going in with a nine-piece orchestra.

* * * *

The striking success in America of such British songs as 'These Foolish Things' and 'Lambeth Walk' seems likely to be followed by a no less illustrious career for the Jos. Geo. Gilbert waltz 'Meet me down in Sunset Valley'.

Gilbert, who admits that his songs are 'corny' but believes they are what the public wants, has gone to the States to take a personal hand in the launching of his brain-child and has sworn not to return until he has succeeded. No doubt we shall be seeing him soon.



Pat Taylor

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

REG PURSGLOVE may well be envied for the simplicity of his task in preparing the short series of broadcasts entitled 'Love is On the Air', to be heard on Thursday next, and again on February 6 and 13. In choosing a programme for which every title has to be connected with the subject of love, his only difficulty has been that of rejecting the thousands of possibilities that he will find no time to include.

A series entitled 'Love is Off the Air' would put a far greater strain on one's resources. However, Pursglove will do his best to demonstrate that love, in addition to being the sweetest thing and making the world go round, can make an entertaining and surprisingly varied radio show.

His vocalists are comparatively little known: Virginia Dawn, whom he describes as the 'husky crooner type', first heard one Monday night at seven recently; Isabelle McEwan the Canadian semi-operatic star of Bill Williamson's 'How do you Like your Music?', and Max Oldaker, who has had considerable experience in acting and television.

The sweet-style band for Pursglove's presentation will include four more strings than he usually employs, and a harp will replace the trumpet. 'Love is On the Air', his signature tune, was composed by the late Richard Whiting, the American writer of 'Japanese Sandman', 'Where the black-eyed susans grow' and 'Till we meet again'.

* * * *

Fifteen years ago George Scott-Wood was singing tangos in Spanish when a notability from Spain in the audience told him that he could achieve an authentic atmosphere only by accompanying himself on accordion instead of piano. Instruments of this type being unknown in England at the time except in the simple forms of concertina and melodeon, George found they were obtainable from Italy and became an accordion pioneer in this country, writing one of the first tutors.

In the accordion band with which he broadcasts next Friday (February 3) for the lunch-time dance-music programme, the three 'first accordions', two second accordions, and the third accordions will be thus divided into sections and scored for orchestrally in the manner of first and second violins. The band will boast something near a thousand pounds' worth of accordions.

* * * *

Two broadcasts from the Continent during the coming week are of a sharply contrasted nature. On Friday the Belgian tenor saxophonist, Fud Candrix, will lead his orchestra in what will be more or less a hot programme (I have committed myself to avoid the use of the word swing whenever possible, but am forced to admit that 'hot' is very little better). On Saturday Henry Hall and his Orchestra will be heard from the big Scala Theatre in Berlin, where Jack Hylton played to tremendous audiences many years ago.



Reg Pursglove

Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English
Swynge Band.

"Widdicombe Fair."

"Colonel Bogey March."
(Decca F6897, 2s.)

Still sounds local, but is an improvement.

First tune is taken a little too sharply and is scarcely a good

Rhythm, January, 1939

theme on which to build jazz improvisations.

McDevitt plays very well before and after the vocal, which is adapted to bring in a string of jazz names and Uncle Tom Dorsey and all. The side ends with a very pleasant trio of trumpet, tenor, and clarinet.

Bogey is only fair and the sales will scarcely reach the peak they would have achieved had there been a vocal.

Trumpet gives us the tune against improvisations by the others. Then comes an excellent solo by McDevitt on alto. Leonard Feather tells me this is the first time Andy has recorded an alto solo. The figures behind the solo are poor and the following trumpet solo is disappointing. After a clarinet passage there are bits by piano and tenor and the record fades away because of untidy all-in at the end.

British Swing

LEONARD FEATHER AND YE OLDE ENGLISH SWYNG BAND

F6897 No. 7—WIDDICOMBE FAIR
("UNCLE TOM DORSEY").
No. 8—COLONEL BOGEY

THIS is the first time the famous Colonel Bogey march has ever been recorded as a "jam band" speciality, but the boys on this disc have such a good feeling for swing that the composition sounds as if it might have been made for this type of performance.

After an "all-in" first chorus there is an interesting innovation: a whole chorus on alto saxophone by Andy McDevitt. This is the first time the brilliant young Scottish clarinetist has ever recorded a solo chorus on the sax. Other solos by David Wilkins on trumpet, McDevitt on clarinet, Willie Solomon on piano, and Bertie King on tenor follow, with another jammed ensemble chorus to conclude.

Widdicombe Fair is an even more entertaining novelty, for David Wilkins sings a revised set of lyrics in the new spirit of the tune—telling us that he is going to a jam session to blow on his horn with Duke Ellington and various others, and old Uncle Tom Dorsey and all.

The rhythm section is composed of Willie Solomon (piano), Alan Ferguson (guitar), Hymie Schneider (drums) and Len Harrison (bass).

DECEMBER 30, 1938

THE ERA

SWING OUT THE OLD: SWING IN THE NEW

A Survey of the Year in Jazz

By LEONARD G. FEATHER

THIS time last year in these pages I asked whether British jazz was going to the dogs.

I wish it were possible to relieve the gloom of this picture, but it cannot be claimed that the passing of another twelve months has brought about any changes startling enough to put a more optimistic construction on one's view of British dance music, either commercially or artistically.

Taking last year's points one by one, the initial problem of price-cutting remains very far from fully resolved. By endeavouring to construct a watertight Union and fixing minimum wage scales for different grades of hotels and restaurants the unionists seem only to have arrived at the point where the offended restaurateurs, rather than submit to dictation, have cut down their bands or dismissed them.

The general attitude is that the band is an unfortunate addition to overhead expenses, a necessary evil rather than an important means of attracting the public. One large hotel closed its ballroom, and others continue to employ smaller or cheaper bands than in the halcyon days of the late 1920's.

* * *

The barrier between England and America is still up. Nothing at all seems to have been attempted during the year to increase the possibility that some great American band may soon come here to wake up the British people's interest in good jazz. Our only important visitors during the year have been two Negro pianists, Art Tatum, who was most rather inadequately received in a few night club appearances, and Fats Waller, who was conspicuously lost without his

Leonard Feather & His Olde English
Swynge Band
Early one morning
Drink to me only with thine eyes (Decca
F. 6810)

Skivan är den första i en nystartad "British Swing Serie" på Decca, som startats tack vare Feathers pålitliga övertalningsförmåga. En tidigare liknande serie fick ordentligt med skällning, som var och en minns. Feather spelar själv med: piano i den första och celesta i den andra titeln. Hur pass bra pianist, han är, är ogörligt att avgöra, men däremot kan man lugnt konstatera, att båda sidorna ha en mycket tilltalande atmosfär. Bästa solist är tenoren Bertie King och även McDevitt på klarinet har en del att säga. Solomons pianosolo i Drink to me är heller inte så oävet. Bemärk också den goda rytmsektionen med den fine basisten Harrison. Speciellt till sin fördel är denne i 3-mannasektionen i Drink to me. Det är tydligen, att det nu kommit fram många goda solister i England, men fortfarande spelar man mycket dåligt i kollektiv improvisering.

orchestra but managed to score a great commercial hit as a solo variety act.

There is talk of letting Ken Johnson and his West Indian Dance Orchestra into New York to appear at the West Indian exhibit in the World's Fair. This, again, would only be a freak circumvention of the barrier. Incidentally, Johnson has fulfilled the promise shown a year ago which caused him to be singled out here as a likely new star for 1938. His broadcasts, music-hall appearances, and records have now brought this British coloured aggregation into the forefront.

But there is a far less happy story to tell of other British bands. Ambrose, regarded as the one rock of British dance music, the one leader who invariably paid his boys well and still kept a vast amount for himself, has no band. His brilliant combination broke up a couple of months ago and the prospects are completely vague. Star men like Joe Crossman, George Chisholm, and Tiny Winters have got together in a small combination for the "New Faces" revue, while Evelyn Dall, Max Bacon, and a combination of cheaper musicians are touring the music-halls until something else turns up.

* * *

Another band which seemed like the most promising of the year, Hugo Rignold's, at the London Casino, has had to cut down its personnel. Eddie Carroll's all-star band, which seemed destined for such great things when I singled it out last Christmas, disbanded for want of a job soon afterwards, but Eddie has been kept going by commercial radio, jobs with a small band, and record sessions.

The B.B.C. during the year has done its best to placate Press and public and musicians all at once, a fantastically difficult task which requires all Philip Brown's tact and resourcefulness. At least one good new band, Sid Millward and his Nitwits, can claim to have achieved permanence through the publicity of radio appearances. Started as a pick-up combination for broadcasts, this combination recently enlarged to open at the Café Anglais.

Continental and American relays have also been numerous, and there is scarcely an American band of real merit that has not been heard on the B.B.C. during the year. The chances of starting a great American-style swing orchestra on the lines of those heard in these broadcasts is still remote, for managers

and bookers are sceptical, while the B.B.C. seldom accepts anything but an established combination (the above-mentioned Mr. Millward having been a lucky exception to the rule). Probably the best British band heard regularly on the British air-waves lately has been the Wednesday night Band Waggon group under Phil Cardew, recruited from

the bands of Syd Lipton, Carroll Gibbons, and others.

Record sales, and the situation regarding the hold-up of Irving Mills's American recordings, remain as last year, I regret to say.

Well, it may sound impractical and visionary after all this, but, in conclusion, I want to wish musicians a Happy and Prosperous New Year.

ESTRAD, Sweden

DAILY SKETCH 9.1.39

MUSICAL
MOMENTS
By EDWIN
SEFTON

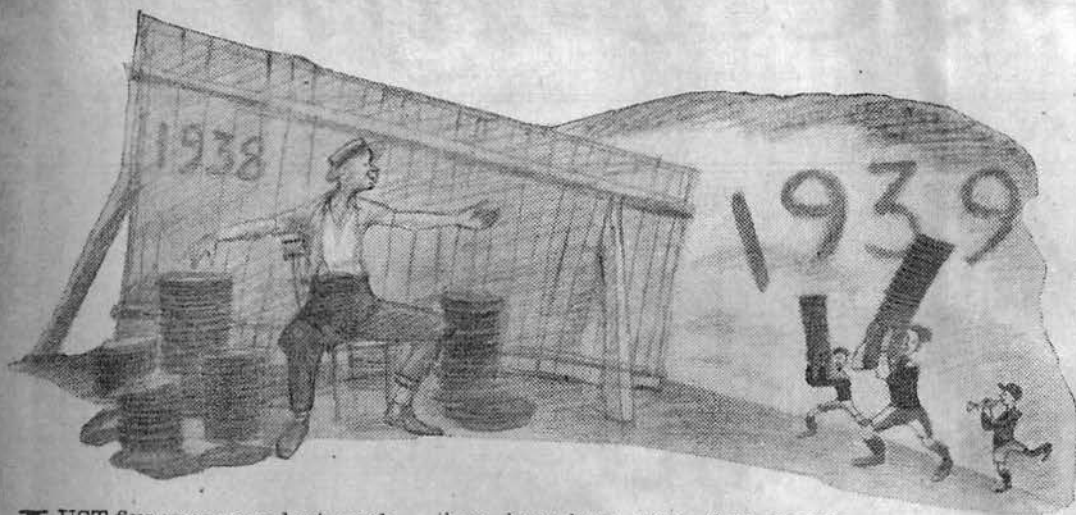
Leonard Feather is well known for his "swing" knowledge. His Olde English Swynge Band play and sing in Louis Armstrong style "Colonel Bogey" and "Widdicombe Fair." This will please real hot music followers. (Decca F.6897.)

HORIZON FOR 1939

by

Leonard Feather

Incorporating
Old Feather's
Almanac



JUST five years ago last week, my first article on jazz appeared in the MELODY MAKER. The subject was a debate on the comparative contributions to the advancement of hot music on the part of the white and coloured races. My side of the debate was the defence of the white. After five years, during which I must have scribbled something approaching half a million words for this sheet, my mind is no more made up about that particular problem than it was on December 30, 1933.

Nobody (that is, nobody except "Mike") could deny that the past year has provided continuous excitement, frequent surprises, and numerous new faces in the world of hot music, and nobody could draw any hard and fast line proving that either the white or the coloured have made the larger contribution.

Hot Jazz

The truth is that hot jazz, from the artistic standpoint, though not yet from the social, has surmounted the racial barriers and that it doesn't matter two hoots whether the latest sensational pianist or terrific trumpet is white, black or blue as long as he plays with the spirit that has become so widely disseminated in the days since 1933.

British musicians, particularly during this past year, have begun to see the light, and it can no longer be complained that nobody ever makes a good record in England. On the Continent

there have been more than enough discoveries to show that there, too, the musicians are struggling successfully against the difficulties of their environment and producing music which would almost convince you they had been brought up in Harlem or Fifty Second Street.

And all of this is born of two proud parents—the gramophone and short-wave radio.

1938 has been what is vulgarly called a "bumper year" for swing records. 1938 has been an even bumper year for short-wave radio sets. And between these two media, the young and aspiring European musician has his whole education. In 1939 it is safe to predict that the same developments will occur on an even larger scale.

Predictions

Which brings us to Old Feather's Almanac for 1939.

Instead of classifying the prophecies under instruments as in previous horizons, I will attempt to give a general survey of likely events. Now let's see what we can see in the crystal. . . .

Teddy Wilson leaves Benny Goodman after twenty-seven rumours to that effect and twenty-eight to the contrary. Teddy Wilson starts out on his own.

Lionel Hampton leaves Benny Goodman. Frequent shakeups in the Goodman personnel. Goodman's Band in December, 1939, almost a different band.

Several mixed band experiments tried along Fifty Second Street. John Hammond and a few optimistic newspapers hail new era. Managers complain, patrons abstain, bands disband.

Ruptions in the Gene Krupa camp. Some of his corner men leave him, including arranger Jimmy Mundy.

Billie Holiday finds herself a new job but leaves not very long afterwards

in mysterious circumstances, with contradictory stories emanating from bandleader and Billie.

Maxine Sullivan fades out.

Fats Waller returns to England, stays rather longer than last time, endeavours to get a band together. Writes several new tunes with Spencer Williams.

Charlie Shavers, trumpet player at the Onyx Club, is snapped up by a prominent coloured band.

Future Stars ?

Jack Teagarden forms own band, but includes several mediocre musicians in the personnel. Critics are not altogether in approval, but jitterbugs make new popular hero of Teagarden, who commences to rob Tommy Dorsey of trombone monopoly in musicians' polls conducted by *Down Beat* and *Metronome*.

Dave Tough rejoins Tommy Dorsey but not for long.

Tommy Dorsey, like his trombone, begins to slide.

Benny Carter starts to make records with his own band, rises beyond his former position of semi-obscure with American hot music fans. Trumpet playing improves. Trouble with his personnel.

People begin to notice some of the solo men who have done nothing much previously except recording work: Teddy Bunn, guitar; Billy Kyle, piano; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Zutty, drums; Dave Matthews, alto; Rudy Williams (Savoy Sultans), alto.

Flot And Jetsam

Death of a well-known girl personality in jazz.

Race records come into their own with white purchasers. New low reached in pornography. The blues as

a jazz form becomes the pet of the jitterbugs; new wave of blues playing by bands and artists of all kinds who have seldom previously tackled blues.

Famous coloured instrumentalist returns at last to America.

New crisis in situation regarding Irving Mills records and their projected release in England. Mills makes unexpected trip in connection with this.

Famous coloured band makes plans for second visit to Europe, endeavours to arrange London concert but encounters difficulties. Home office situation regarding admission of foreign bands not yet alleviated.

Danny Polo leaves Ray Ventura, but does not return to England.

Calamities

Rise of several British swing musicians. New British orchestra with surprisingly advanced policy is formed featuring several noted hot soloists. Several big bandleaders put out a feeler for trumpeter David Wilkins, who, however, decides to remain with Ken Johnson. Blind pianist George Shearing gets a break. So do George Chisholm, Andy McDevitt and a surprise Scottish discovery.

Ambrose gets a new combination of comparatively unfamiliar faces for an unfamiliar job.

Ben Pollack's Band breaks up. Joe Haymes' Band breaks up. Charlie Barnet's Band breaks up. Fletcher Henderson's Band breaks up. (This sort of thing is safe for any Old Moore of music, being more nearly a monthly than an annual event in each case.)

Disasters

New series of swing broadcasts projected by B.B.C. Artie Shaw makes his first transatlantic relay at long last. Several British bandleaders cry into laps of daily papers because B.B.C., fed up with their tantrums, has decided to cut them off the air. Serious trouble arises between Dance Band Directors' Association, Musicians' Union, B.B.C., and well-known West End restaurants and clubs.

All these statements, far from being shots in the dark, are based on an assessment of past events and logical deductions of what may be expected in the future. Keep this article by you and tick off the events as they occur during the next twelve months. You'll be surprised!

SWING With an English Accent

By **LEONARD G. FEATHER**

England's Foremost Dance Music Authority

NEXT TIME you are in a record store, listen to a number called *More Than Somewhat* played by Danny Polo and His Swing Stars on an American Decca release No. 1718. This will give you what may be your first introduction to British jam music.

Recently it was mentioned here (SWING, Nov., '38) that British musicians seldom have a chance to get together and enjoy music for its own sake. The exception to this rule is the recording studio, where a number of sessions have taken place at which some of Britain's best swing stuff has been created.

The Danny Polo records have an interesting story behind them. Danny is from Indiana; he played with Bix in the old Jean Goldkette band, then with Paul Ash and other big-timers of the twenties. He came to France, where Bud Freeman and Dave Tough were his buddies in a small night club band. After Freeman and Tough returned home, Danny wandered around with Continental bands, eventually landing a job with Ambrose, where he soon came to be known as the finest clarinetist in England.

However, like all English bandleaders, Ambrose believes in giving the public what it wants instead of educating it to want something different. Consequently, swing numbers were always few and far between in the Ambrose library, and Danny eventually assembled this little jam band to let himself go on records. After he'd produced several highly successful records, he left Ambrose, and is now in Paris playing

● **DANNY POLO**



with Ray Ventura, who has a far more interesting policy and gives Polo plenty of featured numbers.

This turned out well for Danny, as the Ambrose combination, at the present time, is out of work with no prospects, and may break up completely. The organization is such an expensive one that few music halls or restaurants can book it.

It is curious that the men who got the bands together for Britain's best swing discs have generally been Americans. Apart from Polo there was Benny Carter, who spent a year in England as staff arranger with the resident BBC broadcasting band of Henry Hall. Carter, considered one of the world's greatest on alto, as well as an expert on trumpet, clarinet, tenor and many other instruments, recorded regularly over here with a specially assembled band, thirteen strong.

If you would care to know just how good a British swing band can sound under the right leadership, you can't do better than listen to some of these Carter records which are released in America: *Big Ben Blues* on Brunswick 7786 and *If I Could Read Your Mind* on 7853 are among the best.

In the blues you can hear four of Britain's best known Scottish soloists—strangely enough, many of this country's best swingsters, even before the Maxine Sullivan vogue, were Scotsmen. The names are Buddy Featherstonhaugh on tenor, Andy McDevitt on clarinet, Duncan Whyte on trumpet (behind the vocal) and Tommy McQuater, trumpet solo, who is also heard in the Polo record.

Nobody has offered a logical explanation for this Scottish predominance in

The author gives you some tips on good English swing discs and introduces you to some of the outstanding British artists, but can't explain the Scottish predominance in local jazz

our local jazz, yet it's a fact that Benny Carter and others have invariably used a large proportion of talent from the land of the highland swing.

Fats Waller, when he made some records for Victor's affiliate over here a couple of months back, found the same thing. In fact, the real star of his session was Trombonist George Chisholm, a Glasgow boy who really sent Fats with his terrific get-off work.

Chisholm, twenty-three years old, came to London two years ago unknown and broke. He worked in a cellar night club for months and was then discovered by Benny Carter, who took him to Holland in an international mixed-color band. Early this year Chisholm was signed up by Ambrose.

One of the main reasons for the lack of musical enthusiasm in England is, of course, that American musicians, who would stimulate the interest and create a demand for the best jazz, are not allowed in the country, except under terribly restricting conditions. Duke Ellington's was the last great American band to score a resounding success here, and that was four years ago.

The only colored band in England today is run by Ken "Snakehips" Johnson, a young dancer born in British Guiana, who was in the States a couple of years ago dancing with Fletcher Henderson's stage-band show. Last year he toured the West Indies rounding up talent for an all-British Negro band, and the difficulty he had in finding the talent seems to prove that the instinct for swing music is something natively American
(Continued on Page 25)

● **BENNY CARTER**



SWING with an English Accent

(Continued from Page 16)

(regardless of color) rather than natively Negro, for the British colored boys, with few exceptions, have absolutely no sense of swing.

However, Ken Johnson got a good band together which is now scoring on the air and on records. There is a possibility of your seeing this combination during the World's Fair, as Ken is negotiating to bring the band over to represent the music of his native territory at a West Indian exhibit.

Apart from the "live" swing music in Britain at the moment, we are still getting plenty of interesting moments through radio and records. Early in November a great jam session was organized in the Viennese Room (of all rooms!) at the St. Regis Hotel, N. Y. C., specially for a broadcast to England. This was not heard in America, and when you read the list of names included in the lineup you'll be sorry you missed it.

Among those present were Joe Marsala and some of his boys; Bobby Hackett, Pee-Wee Russell, Mezz Mezzrow, Max Kaminsky, Yank Lawson, Hot Lips

Page, Bud Freeman, Jess Stacy, Dave Tough, Zutty Singleton, Tommy Dorsey, Lee Wiley and W. C. Handy. Benny Goodman and Fats Waller were about the only ones who promised to show up but didn't.

Bobby Hackett's full band was lined up for a special airing to England later in November, and other transatlantic programs, mostly in the swing category, are expected regularly during the next six months.

News of the English bands is scarce at present. Roy Fox, who was supposed to start a new orchestra for a variety tour, was taken seriously ill and the arrangements have been suspended pending his return from Switzerland. Billy Bissett, with some of the original Canadian gang he brought over here last year, has a good band at the Café de Paris. Jack Hylton is doing some of his very infrequent broadcasting work. The BBC's rates of pay being still more or less nominal, some bands go on the air because they value the publicity, and others refuse to do so because it actually costs them money every time they broadcast.

Harry Roy, returning from his South American tour three months ago, gave up radio work completely, but there was a big outcry from his fans and things have since been straightened out, resulting in his return to the ether in November.

Commercial radio being forbidden on the government-controlled BBC, many of the biggest bands earn a tidy income by recording a commercial series for some English sponsor, who has the programs shipped to a Continental station in France or Luxemburg where they are broadcast from transmitters powerful enough to be heard in England. The Sunday programs from these stations built up a tremendous following, because dance music and variety were not allowed on BBC stations on the Sabbath. Recently, however, the BBC has been retaliating by relaxing its rules regarding Sunday shows, and there is a possibility that the commercial shows may lose some of their power.

It's a strange battle, but the main thing is, as long as the British musicians are kept working one way or another, everybody will be happy.

IF LOUD = GOOD DOES BIG = LOUD?



Eugene Sedic, who, with his Honey Bears, makes his recording debut this month. (See page 18.)

Hot Records Reviewed - - by "ROPHONE"

Dicky Wells and his Orchestra.
"Japanese Sandman."
Trio Of Trumpets.
"I Got Rhythm."
(**** H.M.V. B.8826.)

I GOT RHYTHM proves that regardless of whether a band has to be loud to be good, it doesn't have to be big to be loud. In this counterpart of the Hawkins-Carter session on which four saxes and rhythm (*sans* piano), were employed, we hear four brass and rhythm (*sans* piano), and the result is even more majestic in its drive and fervour.

After the opening chorus, in which the brass is well established and well recorded, each of the trumpets takes a chorus. Bill Dillard might be considered good enough in less fast company, but he is completely eclipsed by the ensuing chorus of Bill Coleman, whose purity of tone and fluency of style are unique in jazz—and I mean unique, because at his best Coleman is a match for any trumpet player in the world.

That Little Yellow Basket

Shad Collins' chorus is delightful chiefly because of the sense of humour displayed in his first eight bars—a series of staccato notes played dead on the beat, but finally lapsing into syncopation. The effect is one of great tension.

I won't talk about the other side except to mention that it has the same personnel minus Shad and Dillard; that Coleman and Wells and Django have solos, all in good form; but that after *I Got Rhythm* any backing would sound secondary.

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.
"I Found My Yellow Basket." (***)
"Ella." (**)
(Brunswick 02687.)

Well, that's good news. We shan't have so many feeble imitators trying to find it for her. The follow-up song could hardly be as good as the original (is any follow-up song ever?). Very simple in the main phrase, it becomes downright trite in bars 21-24, where you may revel in the oldest phrase on earth. But Ella sings it all with that expressive charm, and some of the clichés in the arrangement are at least good clichés.

The backing, with shoddy reed section tone and no blend, vocal and

trumpet contributions by Taft Jordan and an Ella chorus on stupid lyrics, cannot get me worked up.

I must call attention to an irritating mannerism now used for the coda of almost every disc by Dorsey, Goodman, Webb and dozens of others. It consists of a Charleston beat which, in C major, generally has G diminished followed by the tonic with added sixth and ninth. I liked it until they all started doing it. Now it's gone the way of all original ideas. You can hear it on both sides of this disc.

Count Basie and his Orchestra.
"Topsy." (****)
"Jumping At The Woodside." (****)
(Brunswick 02684.)

The simplicity of Basie's theme is devastating. *Woodside* is the same old stuff, eight bars of B flat and F 7th with the middle part of *Honeysuckle Rose*; and *Topsy*, made a year earlier, is the same sort of thing in the minor.

Moreover, I could swear that the main phrases in both sides have been used before by Basie, perhaps as backgrounds. *Topsy* is very much like *Swinging At The Daisy Chain*, even to Buck Clayton's grand muted solos.

The most interesting point about *Topsy* is a baritone chorus, carelessly described by colleague Hibbs as a tenor (my own carelessness, while we're on the subject, tripped me up last week. The rhythm section can be faintly discerned behind that Louis Armstrong-Lyn Murray Choir; but I'm still right about the size of the choir. Apologies for the other point.)

Basie Hands Out A Basinful

Note also in *Topsy* what Basie's rhythm section can make out of a plain vamp till ready; the brass crescendi behind the baritone; and the glorious four-bar crescendo at the end, capped by the bass drum thud.

In the middle of the second chorus of *Woodside*, and elsewhere in both

titles, Basie's piano darts through at you with a violence known only to American recording. If Basie made a session in England, how flabby and flat these effects would become!

If you are one of the learn-from-others troops, listen to the vital part dynamics play in Lester Young's tenor solo; the one-note entry, and the amazing cluster of soft, medium and loud notes in the second eight bars. It is Young (not Evans, Leonard H.) who plays the clarinet later on. He still has a real beginner's tone, and what a pity he fluffs that final note, anti-climaxing such a swell record!

To The Pure, All Things—

Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English Swynge Band.
"Widdicombe Fair (Uncle Tom Dorsey)."
"Colonel Bogey March (. . . And The Same To You)."
(Decca F.6897.)

Once again I will refrain from marking my colleague's efforts, but would refer you to the review in *Rhythm*, with most of which I agree. McDevitt certainly makes a sparkling debut on alto, and Wilkins' trumpet solo in *Bogey* may give you some idea, though not a complete one, of how extraordinarily far he is above the British average.

The subtitle is probably the best thing about *Bogey* (but, of course, there's a word missing), and the lyrics are the novelty in *Widdicombe Fair*, in which Wilkins tells how he's going

to town with Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, etc., old Uncle Tom Dorsey and all.

Technical Titbit: In bars 13-18 of his clarinet after the vocal, Andy thinks of B flat minor instead of the B flat which is going on in the background. A curious point which passes by without any over-awkward clashes.

Suggestion for Leonard's next session: *Londonderry Air* (or isn't that Olde English enough?)

Quintet of The Hot Club of France.
"Them There Eyes."
"Swing From Paris."
(* Decca F.6899.)

The bass has been listening to Slam but the bowed solo doesn't help *Swing From Paris* any more than Django's pointless shout of "Yeah!" in the second chorus. This is all the old stuff, in which the few strikingly original bars, the last sixteen, only lead up to that wicked, wicked cliché coda AGAIN!

This Brown Isn't Black

Les Brown and his Duke University Blue Devils.
"When You Wore A Tulip."
"Mutiny On The Bandstand."
(** Vocalion S.211.)

I can't imagine how anybody could mistake this for a coloured band. It's so typical of the after-Goodman school that the best one can do is to stand behind it, pat it on the back and say patronisingly, "Not bad, old son." And then turn one's attention to something more distinguished.

MILLS BROS. AND FATS WALLER RETURNING

Long Theatre Tours Fixed Up In England

WILL ARMSTRONG MAKE A FILM HERE?

IN AN EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW WITH THE MELODY MAKER, LESLIE MACDONNELL REVEALED THIS WEEK THAT HIS M.P.M. ENTERTAINMENTS CORP. HAS ARRANGED TO BRING BACK TO ENGLAND THE TWO MOST FAMOUS COLOURED ATTRACTIONS OF THEIR TYPE, FATS WALLER AND THE MILLS BROTHERS, WHOSE OPENING DATES IN ENGLAND WILL COINCIDE ON MARCH 6.

The Mills Brothers, who in 1937 arrived here for a short visit but were obliged to remain for forty-three weeks, will be in Europe by February 13, when they open a three week's concert tour of Scandinavia, fixed up during Macdonnell's recent flying trip through Sweden and Denmark.

Both Fats and the Brothers will play at least fourteen weeks on the Moss Empires and G.T.C. circuits, and to judge by the shoal of enquiries for their services they are likely to stay considerably longer than that.

Waller will open as a single act, though there is a chance this time that his desire for a small English jam band to go on the stage with him may be granted later in his tour.

VENTURA PLAN

Macdonnell's two big coups mean that in March he will have four units touring the halls, the other two being under Tom Walls, the noted comedian, and Arthur ("Street Singer") Tracy.

To-day (Friday) he is flying to Paris to fix up further dates for Ray Ventura, whose successful B.B.C. relay last week was one of the month's biggest swing music events.

Ventura's arrangements will probably include a few days here during the last week of February for concerts and radio or television work.

With all these international activities keeping Macdonnell (and the airlines) so busy, it seems appropriate to express the wish that negotiations now pending for the importation of Louis Armstrong may be brought to a successful conclusion.

ARMSTRONG HOPE

Joe Glaser, who manages Louis and so many other Negro stars, has been in close touch with the English office while Louis has been busy in Hollywood on the film "Going Places," in which he is co-featured with Maxine Sullivan.

What an experience it would be if an artist like Armstrong, who is now noted not only as an instrumentalist and singer but also as a natural comedian and actor, could be specially starred in a big musical film here!

According to the present situation, this plan is by no means impossible.

Feather Forecast and News

**AMERICA COPIES
OUR ALBUM IDEA**

for Bob Zurke, Irving Fazola, and the trumpet man, Billy Butterfield. The Bob Cats play three titles, two of them featuring the current Crosby canary, Marion Mann.

Cutting down to only four cats, they play two instrumental quartet numbers, and the twelfth side reduces the band to a mere couple, Bob Haggart and Ray Bauduc, in what must surely be the first string-bass-and-drum duet ever recorded: *The Big Noise From Winnetka*.

Somehow I feel that the big moment of this album for me will not be the big noise, but the far subtler noise of Mr. Zurke beating out the *Honky Tonk Train Blues*.

* * *

**Old Timers Still
Get Spotlight**

Funny how the fashions have thrown the limelight on to people who have been known on and off for years, but never to the general public. After the recent rediscovery of Sidney Bechet, twenty years late, comes news of a

record session awarded to that old stalwart of the Fats Waller records, tenor man Eugene Sedric (the bulletin styles him Cedric, but it's a moot point).

**Sedric's Wanderings
Are Interesting**

Many of you may remember the rotund Sedric who, a decade ago was touring Europe with Sam Wooding's Orchestra. You might call him a veteran by jazz traditions. When his father, who was known as Con-Con, taught him the piano back home in St. Louis, ragtime was quite a novelty. After studying clarinet and then saxophone, Sedric at sixteen joined the orchestra of Charles Creath, that riverboat pioneer who still churns up and down the Mississippi to-day.

Sedric was with Wooding from 1926 to 1932, his wanderings including South America, and since 1934 he has worked with Fats' big band as well as the recording sextet. Now we hear of "Sedric And His Honey Bears" in their disc debut, playing mostly Waller tunes with mostly Waller musicians. The titles were *Off-Time*, *The Wail Of The Skromph*, *The Joint Is Jumpin'* and Fats' latest, *Choo-Choo* (where have we heard that title before?).

For your personnel notebook: Sedric (tenor); Jimmy Powell and Freddy Skeritt (altos); Herman Autry (trumpet); Hank Duncan (piano); Albert Casey (guitar); Slick Jones (drums); Cedric Wallace (bass); and a couple of choruses by Fats' beauteous vocalist, Myra Johnson.

Buster Bailey has also made another date which promises to be slightly terrific. He ventures forth as a singer in *Light Up* (which, as you can assume in all doubtful cases, is all about reefers), and plays eight consecutive clarinet choruses in *Man With A Horn Goes Berserk*. With Frank Newton, Russel Procope, Billy Kyle, Danny Barker, O'Neil Spencer and Johnny Williams (who seems to have replaced ex-leader John Kirby in the bass department of this group).

**The Duke's
Very First**

Duke Ellington's first composition ever, the *Soda Fountain Rag*, which was committed during his teens at the Poodle Dog Café in Washington, has just been unearthed in its original manuscript and reorchestrated for recording by the band. Time marches back.

* * *

Have you heard the true story about the little old lady who went up to the bandstand on Boxing Night and asked them to play this Lambeth Waltz she'd heard so much about?

Remind me to tell it to you.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

AMERICA has caught the hot record album craze—another phase in which she has copied Europe several years late. The H.M.V. Connoisseurs' Album and Duke Ellington Album were issued here long before anyone across the Atlantic had realised the sales impetus of these ideas.

Since the hot music fad over

there, however, we have had a Symposium of Swing, a Bessie Smith Album, a Benny Goodman Album, and now news is to hand of a Bob Crosby album issued by Decca, which you may count on seeing eventually in this country.

The attention to variety indicates something for everybody in this Crosby venture. Of the twelve sides, six feature the full band, including a speciality number each

HANDSOME IS AS —!

“MUSICIANS are an ugly lot of mugs.”
 “Why are musicians so divinely good-looking?”

How often I have heard statements of these two conflicting and contentious natures, the first spoken by men and the second by women. Though it has never bothered me seriously whether musicians have faces like the backs of horses as long as they play well, I must admit to having been pondering the problem extensively since receiving a volume called *Swing Photo Album*, 1939.

Biographical And Pictorial Album

This is an art album comprising studio portraits and candid camera shots of numerous jazz personalities, together with biographies in nearly perfect English, the whole having been produced by Baron Timme Rosenkrantz, the noble and enthusiastic Dane who never ventures forth in Harlem without a camera.

Some of his pictures have been

ANOTHER
 ELLINGTON
 IN JAZZ!



Beautiful Jean Ellington, NBC blues songstress—no relation to Duke.

reproduced in the “M.M.” The album contains many that have not been seen before, and I for one wish he had concentrated more on the candid stuff, though the studio portraits are admittedly better for the fan who wants to frame them.

Anyway, after studying the faces, particularly the Negro physiognomies, in this interesting survey, I have concluded that all jazz musicians look like (a) business men, (b) gentlemen or (c) toughs. A few of the business men look like gentlemen as well, but most of the faces look like neither. I tried to draw some parallel between the character in the faces and the character of the music, but it didn't often work.

“Reposeful” And “Gentlemanly” Faces

The most reposeful and gentlemanly faces seem to be Trumbauer, Andy Kirk, Edgar Sampson and Teddy Wilson. It is instructive to contrast the regular features of Buster Bailey and Cozy Cole with the more emphatically Negro cast of Earl Hines, King Oliver, Count Basie; the expressive miming of

Feather Forecast And News

those two natural comedians, Stuff Smith and Jonah Jones, with the utterly negative expressions of Don Redman and the quizzical Benny Carter.

The most sinister-looking figure in the whole book is dark, thin Floyd O'Brien, with circles and all the world's grief under his eyes. The Luis Russell band of 1930 would take some beating for a collection of saturnine-looking dials. Willie The Lion Smith is a treat with his cigar and jaunty hat, confident grin and tatty clothes.

Much Food For Thought

The leering O'Neil Spencer and Lips Page, the oriental Roy Eldridge, the bony and weary Dave Tough, the grins at some hidden secret of Pee-Wee Russell and Coleman Hawkins, the businesslike Red McKenzie and spectacled Hershel Evans; all provide food for thought.

The front cover is a splendidly compiled photomontage in which I still have to recognise many of the faces. It's a pity so many of the best pictures are back to back; for instance, if you want Billie Holiday for a mural decoration you have to turn Ina Ray Hutton's face to the wall.

If You Should Want A Copy

Anyway, the book is a good job, produced in pages over a foot deep, and provides a sort of visual complement to the listeners' data furnished by *Hot Discography*.

If you want to know where to get it drop me a line (and don't forget the S.A.E.). It costs 3s. 9d.

* * *

Believe it or not, those two MELODY MAKER shows at the Trocadero, and one other in Paris, were the only concerts Duke Ellington's Orchestra had ever played. The first presentation of Duke in this manner to an American audience took place only last week in a big hall of City College in Harlem, under the auspices of the Harlem Y.M.C.A. The programme included an excerpt from the Ellington opera.

Ducal Broadcast For N.A.A.C.P.

Duke's music will also be heard at simultaneous charity dances to be held by Negroes in every big city in the United States on February 11 for the benefit of the National Association for the Advancement of Coloured People. Playing at the New York dance, Duke's band is to be relayed to each city where the other balls are in progress.

In case it matters, take note also that the new console model piano used by the Duke enables him to play standing up, which helps him to conduct the band at the same time. Or so they tell me.

Jan: 13th 1939.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

TWO new names crop up in the current programmes. New, that is to say, as radio dance-band leaders, though long established in the profession. The first is Bill Williamson, whose initial presentations in the series entitled 'How Do You Like Your Music?' take place tonight (Friday) and on Wednesday.

Interrupting him at the country retreat where he has spent many days working on the arrangements for the first programmes, I learned some of the facts about this series. 'It's essentially a study in contrasts', he



Bill Williamson

emphasised. 'We're taking different types of numbers—waltzes, sentimental fox-trots, swing numbers—and doing two of each, one to show an old style and the other a modern style in the same class of tune. For instance, in the waltzes for the first programme I'm contrasting Tchaikovsky with Jos. Geo. Gilbert!'

Well, nothing could be more contrasted than that. However you like your music, it seems that this new addition to the production programme ranks, this thirty-one-year-old veteran free-lance arranger, will be serving your requirements. His personnel includes several welcome and familiar names. The band, which will be invariable, consists of Harry Owen and Jimmy Wornell on trumpets; Leslie Thompson, the coloured West Indian trumpeter and trombonist who used to play in brass bands in Jamaica; Eric Breeze, trombone; Frank Weir and Frank Johnson, alto saxophones; Johnny Raitz, the old-time Hylton star, on tenor sax; Laurie Bookin, tenor sax and flute; Phil Green, that most ubiquitous of piano and accordion stars; George Elliot on guitar; Wally Morris on bass, and Jack Simpson on drums and vibraphone. Completing the combination is a string quartet under the direction of Jean Pougnet.

* * * *

The other leader making his first dance-band broadcast next week, Syd Seymour, should be an old friend to those who have seen his comedy-musical act during the band's twelve continuous years on the music-halls.

Born in Leeds, Seymour once worked in the markets, attracting attention to the goods he was selling by placing his drum kit in front of the stall and twirling the famous bowler hat he uses on the stage today.

As a solo singing, dancing, and acrobatic novelty Seymour later toured South Africa and Australia, and it was during these travels that the idea for the band evolved. 'I was fooling around with the musicians on board', he relates, 'and we got up one or two ideas to entertain the passengers. Pretty soon I realised that between myself and a band I could organise a novel show. I arrived back in England during the musicians' slump, when talkies were driving them out of the cinemas. Back in Leeds I found several old school pals who had become musicians, and brought them to London where we auditioned as a band and comedy unit. We started the very next week as Syd Seymour and his Mad Hatters. Half the band still consists of Leeds men.'

Seymour has appeared in Variety broadcasts, but Monday's forty-minute broadcast is his first big individual break on the air.

RADIO TIMES, ISSUE DATED JANUARY 20, 1939

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

A NEW dance-band production programme, which will probably be more production than dance band if all the expected celebrities take part in it, will be presented on Monday evening (National, 8.20-9.0).

'Birthday Party', as it is called, has as its foundation the orchestra of Jay Wilbur, and will serve to introduce noted personalities of all kinds whose birthdays happen to fall this month. Bebe Daniels will be among those present.

It is worth recalling that Christopher Stone, who returns to the BBC in this show after several years' absence, was a pioneer of swing-record recitals. Many years before the present vogue, at a time when the public interest in this type of record was almost nil, he presented exclusive performances of discs unissued in this country. To this day he confesses to knowing or caring very little about hot jazz, but as long as someone appreciated those early experiments he was always glad to concede that there must be something in it.

DON'T CALL THEM CROONERS

2—Ivor Davis

Born Johannesburg, 1911; father, violinist, mother, cellist. Spent several months as a farmer: after droughts and dying crops, turned his mind to something else, and at eighteen took a course of marine engineering. Interested in music, he bought a saxophone and clarinet, sang with a little band in Durban. Finding music had a bigger hold on him than engineering, joined his brother Vic Davis's band, one of South Africa's best. After eighteen months decided to take the risk of a trip to England.



Ivor Davis

Soon after his arrival here he worked for a month or two with Henry Hall late in 1935; went on a Variety tour with Lou Preager; worked in a night club with Arthur Rosebery's Orchestra, then toured again with Billy Reid's Accordion Band. His last two band jobs of importance were with Jack Payne and Eddie Carroll, until early this month, following the abrupt departure from Syd Lipton's Orchestra of the two star vocalists, Chips Chipendall and George Evans, he joined this band as saxophonist and vocalist.

Q. *Who is your favourite singer?* A. Barry McKinley (American broadcasting star) or Bing Crosby.

Q. *What is your favourite song?* A. 'Night and Day'.

Q. *What is your favourite orchestra?* A. Benny Goodman's.

Q. *What do you think makes a good jazz singer?* A. Jazz is something you can't pick up from a teacher in the ordinary way. I have had straight singing lessons for voice production and diction, but style and the interpretation of a song can only spring from a natural feeling for it, which can be developed by listening to the best American records.

Q. *What would you rather do if not sing?* A. Suppose I'd go back to farming.



EDGAR
SAMPSON

UNTIL a couple of years ago it was taken for granted that any really great jazz musician was unappreciated by the general public. Nowadays most of the deserving minority have earned recognition, but there are a few figures whose names convey little or nothing even to the fairly well-informed jazz fan. Among these is Edgar Sampson.

From time to time Sampson's name has appeared in these pages, and it is accepted that he is a more than competent arranger. But measured by the influence

he has had on jazz and on some of the biggest bands of the day, this extraordinarily bashful and modest fellow deserves at least as much publicity as people like Don Redman and Benny Carter.

A New Yorker, Sampson has been interested in music since he began studying the violin in his eighth year. In Charlie Johnson's Orchestra at the famous Harlem resort, Small's Paradise, and later in Fletcher Henderson's combination,

he played fiddle as well as sax, one of the few remainders of this being his solo in *House of David Blues* on Brunswick 1205.

After he had extended his studies to alto, sax and piano, Sampson worked for one season with Duke Ellington's Orchestra in its Kentucky Club days. Not until he played with Henderson and Chick Webb did Edgar start teaching himself orchestration.

Physical Strain Prompted Change

From 1934 until July, 1936, when he handed in his notice to Chick, much of the best Sampson work was done; work which, in fact, helped to build up the band's reputation with musicians to the point where, ironically, it has been able to exist since then on other people's arrangements and on the commercial value of Ella Fitzgerald. Nevertheless, anyone who has a sincere admiration for the Webb of 1935-6 will not yet have ceased to regret Sampson's departure.

His move was made after careful consideration. The physical strain of playing sax and clarinet on the stand and writing ceaselessly all day in trains, motor-buses and hotel rooms between one-night stands, proved too much for him. Moreover, he felt that by giving up active instrumental work and spending all his time in New York, as an arranger, he could augment his income considerably.

Carefully Planned Modus Operandi

There are very few arrangers who think as rationally as that. Fletcher Henderson, his brother Horace, and other noted coloured writers, would have had far more success and fame if they had planned their careers as quietly and methodically as the refined, spectacled and respectably married young Sampson, whose private life is as quiet and charming as the average musician's is fast and hectic.

After leaving Webb, then, Edgar made an extended tour of Tin Pan Alley (which, geographically, nowadays means one particular Broadway skyscraper encompassing all the principal music publishers' offices), and in addition to making plans for the writing of some commercial orchestrations, ran into one or two white bandleaders who decided to tie up with him. One of these was the eccentric and mercurial Richard Himber, for whose more or less straight band Sampson did some work, also collaborating with Himber on the writing of a pop number called *Goodbye To Swing*.

Possibly it was ordained that no combination which produced a song called

Goodbye To Swing should survive; anyhow, the Sampson-Himber alliance proved to be less fruitful than Edgar had expected, and much of his time was taken up writing for Teddy Hill, Red Norvo (for whom he did *Clap Hands, Here Comes Charlie*) and Artie Shaw (the string-swing group recorded Sampson's arrangement of *My Blue Heaven*).

A more important contact had come about through Benny Goodman's interest in the tune *Stomping At The Savoy*, which had originally been written as just another swing number for Webb's band, named after the place where Webb happened to be playing at that period. When Goodman took the composition under his wing, publishers were soon after it, and before long it was one of the biggest sellers of the year, even boasting a set of commercial lyrics.

New Arrangements Of Old Successes

The exact procedure adopted for this number was soon copied for other Sampson pieces. Goodman would pick out a tune Edgar had written years before for Chick Webb; Edgar would write a new arrangement; Goodman's name would be added as co-author (this helped the commercial value, since nobody had heard of Sampson), Andy Razaf would write some lyrics, and pretty soon the song would be in the Hit Parade class. Thus it was with *Don't Be That Way, I Dream Come True*, and lately *Lullaby In Rhythm*, which Sampson did in co-operation with the pianist Clarence Profit.

Bunny Berigan similarly helped to revive *Blue Lou*, and other Sampson compositions from the old Webb days suddenly took on a new importance, among them *Blue Minor* and the fascinating Webb signature tune *Get Together*.

Man Behind Goodman's Band

Within a year of leaving Webb, Edgar Sampson was snowed under with demands of orchestrations for countless bands, white and coloured. Day after day he sat in a small room in his Harlem flat, sometimes trying a phrase out at a miniature piano, but generally working in silence but for the occasional interruptions of his nine-year-old daughter practising on the other piano next door.

Then came the crucial time when Jimmy Mundy left Benny Goodman's arranging staff. In spite of their joint interest in the various tunes Benny had launched, Edgar was no bosom pal of the clarinet king. Yet the inevitable tip-top was soon effected, and in March, 1937, Edgar Sampson replaced Mundy as Goodman's No. 1 arranger.

Only a week or two later Goodman made a session at Victor featuring four of Edgar's first contributions to his library: *Always and Always*,

Please Be Kind, Ti-Pi-Tin and *Oooh Boom!* British arrangers who become disheartened by having to arrange tunes of this kind should notice carefully what a remarkably good job this coloured jazz wizard made of such singularly unlikely pops.

By now Sampson is well established as the man behind Goodman's band. He recently acquired ASCAP membership, which means that he is a qualified composer and can at last make some real money out of it. Apart from which, Goodman's band eats up new material at such a rate that he is turning over a pretty penny on this side

of his affairs alone. Success has at last come to him, four years late, but better late than never.

Finally, for those who want to study every aspect of his work, here are some of the best records: Webb's versions of all the principal compositions already mentioned; also *Soft And Sweet; Go Harlem; Are You Here To Stay; Facts And Figures; I'll Chase The Blues Away*. On alto sax Edgar plays in the Bunny Berigan records of *I'm Coming Virginia* and *Blues on Parlo*, R.2316. *You Took Advantage Of Me* and *Chicken And Waffles* on 2327, also playing clarinet in the last title.

Melody Maker
Jan. 21st
1939.

Personnel Guide to Mid-January Hot Record Releases

Three-shilling Discs

Casa Loma Orchestra (N.Y., 1936). *Jungle Jitters* (comp. Larry Clinton). 1937: *Memories Of You*. Frank Zullo, Grady Watts, Walter Smith (trumpets); Billy Rauch, Pee-Wee Hunt, Fritz Hummel (trombones); Clarence Hutchinrider (clarinet); Art Ralston, Dan d'Andrea, Kenny Sargent (altos); Pat Davis (tenor); Joe Hall (piano); Jack Blanchette (guitar); Tony Briglia (drums); Stan Dennis (bass). Brunswick 02692.

(clarinet); Lil Armstrong (guitar); O'Neil (drums); John Kirby (bass). Brunswick S.215.

Milt Herth Quartet (N.Y., Autumn, 1938). *Home Cookin' Mama With The Fryin' Pan; La De Doody Doo*. Milt Herth (Hammond organ); Teddy Bunn (guitar); Willie The Lion Smith (piano); O'Neil Spencer (drums and vocals). Brunswick 02691.

Spud Murphy and his Orchestra (Los Angeles, May, 1938). *Ecstasy; Dancing With A Debutante*. Earl Boyle (alto); Bill Depew (clarinet); Dick Pettit, Bill Covey (tenors); Nate Kazbier, Joe Meyer, Oliver, Buderman (trumpets); Santo Pecora, Al Sherman (trombones); Chuck Edwards (piano); Woody Bushell (guitar); Mack Halladay (drums); Al Costi (bass). Vocalion S.213.

Willie "The Lion" Smith and his Cubs (N.Y., Spring, 1937). *Knock Wood; Get Acquainted With Yourself*. Frank Newton (trumpet); Pete Brown (alto); Buster Bailey (clarinet); Willie Smith (piano); Teddy Bunn (guitar); O'Neil Spencer (drums and vocals); John Kirby (bass). Brunswick 02692.

Paul Whiteman and his Swing Wing Group (N.Y., September, 1938). *I'm Coming Virginia; Aunt Hagar's Blues* (comp. Handy). (Vocals: Jack Teagarden and the Four Modernaires—Chuck Goldstein, Spook Dickinson, Bill Conway, Ralph Brewster, Charlie Teagarden (trumpet); Jack Teagarden (trombone); Al Gallodoro (alto); Sal Franzella (clarinet); Art Dollinger (tenor); Walter Gross (piano); Art Ryerson (guitar); Rollo Laylan (drums); Artie Miller (bass). Brunswick 02693.

Two-shilling Discs

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra (N.Y., Summer, 1937). *I've Got A Heart Full Of Rhythm*. Armstrong (trumpet and vocal); Shelton Hemphill, Louis Bacon, Henry Allen, Jr. (trumpets); Wilbur de Paris, Geo. Washington, J. C. Higginbotham (trombones); Pete Clark (alto); Charlie Holmes (solo alto); Albert Nicholas (clarinet); Bingie Madison (tenor); Luis Russell (piano); Lee Blair (guitar); Paul Barbarin (drums); Pop Foster (bass). June, 1938: *I've Got A pocketful Of Dreams*. Ruper Cole, Otis Johnson replace Clark, Bacon. Decca F.6915.

BENNY C. IMPROVES BENNY G.



BENNY
CARTER

Hot Records Reviewed - by "ROPHONE"

Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
"Blue Interlude."

"My Melancholy Baby."
(**H.M.V. B8841.)

BENNY CARTER had only been back in America a few weeks when he tied up with his fellow-Benny to produce the above new arrangement of his old tune. It is wonderful what the Carter touch does to any band; those brass figures in the first and last passages remind one vividly of his English records, with the difference in recording as a contrast that makes one green with envy.

Note the Carter effect of having the saxes repeat a phrase played by the brass, used here in the intro; and the straight clarinet with swell Stacy piano obbligato and typical Carter brass figures. And those Carter harmonies in that Carter doubled phrase in the coda! Benny's trademark is all over this charming record, in which I suppose we must excuse Martha Tilton's vocal on the grounds of the title. There *has* to be one blue interlude.

Sticking To The Tune

It doesn't seem so long since Goodman made *Melancholy Baby* with the quartet; however, that wasn't a Fletcher Henderson arrangement. Benny sticks rather religiously to the tune in the second chorus, which is all right as long as this doesn't develop into religious mania. There is also some half-straight but admissible Vernon Brown trombone.

Why are so many of Goodman's recordings so short? This runs to under 2½ minutes.

Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra.
"Stop Beatin' Round The
Mulberry Bush."

Tommy Dorsey and His Clambake
Seven.

"You Must Have Been a
Beautiful Baby."
(*H.M.V. B8842)

How unkind of me to gasp with

relief at the news that Edythe Wright has left this band! If there is anything worse than her vocal in *Mulberry Bush* it can only be the Skeets Herfurt "comedy" (?) vocal which follows.

Jam And Tripe—Mixed

Yank Lawson, over the fence from Bob Crosby's bunch, turns up for his first Dorsey disc on *Baby* and leads the jamming very nicely indeed while Tommy trundles out tripe. He also has another peculiar solo. Mince takes a ducky clarinet chorus. Rhythm section great. No use being annoyed with Edythe this time because even a good singer could do nothing with a tune like this.

Somebody—clarinet, I think—plays the last note a semitone flat. Sounds vile.

Sid Millward and His Nitwits.
"Oh, Will You Wash My Father's
Shirt?"

"Merry-Go-Round."
(*Parlophone F1314.)

Nat Gonella and His Georgians.

"Limehouse Blues."
"Tea For Two."
(*Parlophone F1302.)

"Tu-li-Tulip Time."
"Honey Chile."
(*Parlophone F1301.)

Little Mary Lee.
"Ma Ain Folk."
"Ma Curly Headed Baby."
(*Parlophone F1318.)

The Ballyhooligans.
"Who?"
"Stardust."

I stopped reviewing records of this kind long ago, and people sometimes ask me why. My answer is that the same derogatory remarks month after month do nothing but offend the musicians, and I have no desire to hurt people's feelings.

"Father's Shirt" Just Suits Him!

Just to remind you, though, that I do still keep track of the British quasi-swing stuff, here are this month's efforts.

I like Sid Millward's *Father's Shirt* best (now don't get me wrong). It has drum breaks and other things I

can't take, but the band has the right kind of enthusiasm, a goodish trombonist, Sid's clarinet, and the vocal work of Sid Colin, who sounds as though with a little more encouragement he might furnish an English counterpart to Leo Watson. Unfortunately he is not well featured here.

No Dynamics From Nat

The other side is an alto solo on the accepted lines—fast, technical opening movement, slow, melodic middle movement, etc. I can't say this is my cup of tea and I think Sid will agree in any case that he has played it with more accuracy on other occasions.

Nat Gonella is an everlasting enigma to me. Apart from the lack of jazz tone, there is no real improvisation about his style; it seems to me that he just uses the different notes of each chord, adds a few passing notes and appoggiaturas and leaves it at that. There are no dynamics, no subtleties of tone or phrasing, none of the qualities I find in real jazz trumpet playing. And when he tails off or fluffs neither the listener nor he himself can tell what note was supposed to come there; it is as if the mathematical combinations of notes have suddenly run dry on him. When a star player fluffs, at least you and he both generally know what he *meant* to play.

As for his singing, I never heard anyone sound less Kentuckian than Nat in his impression of a southern accent (*Honey Chile*).

Pat Smuts, the tenorman, played well in this title, but seems confused at faster tempi; notice how he seems to lose the sense of the chord sequence at the end of his *Tea For Two* solo. Harold Hood's piano, sometimes too florid, should be capable of swinging, but the drummer never seems to inspire anyone; he is very much like dozens of other English drummers.

Little Mary Lee has fallen for the Scots-ballad-swinging stuff, but has enough artistry almost to make one forgive her. A stilted trumpet doesn't help the accompaniments, and except for a short bit of *Ma Ain Folk* there isn't much genuine jazz. Andy McDevitt's clarinet and Jack Nathan's piano have brief spots. I don't like the words of *Ma Curly Headed Baby*, in fact I object to some of them, but the tune is charming.

Ballyhooligans Are Bally Impossible

The Ballyhooligans are just impossible. Better jazz than this was played twenty years ago in saloons. If you tolerate this type of thing you have no business to be reading the "M.M." or any musical publication—but there, I mustn't be rude. Of course, I didn't mean *you*.

Gene Krupa and His Orchestra.
"My Own."
"You're As Pretty As A Picture."
(*Columbia FB2103.)

The two greatest tunes ever written. Out of this world. Skip it.



Tommy Dorsey shows his paces

THE Smith is dead—long live the Smith!

Since the death of the Empress of the Blues, various claimants have put themselves forward as successor to the great Bessie. Now comes somebody with two big advantages. Firstly, she has attracted the interest of John Hammond; secondly, she happens to be Bessie Smith's niece.

Ruby Smith was a featured soloist in the "Spirituals To

Swing" concert, tracing the history of Negro folk music presented recently in New York with John Hammond as producer, and sponsored by the "New Masses," the Communist paper for which he writes.

Featuring such old Bessie numbers as *One Hour Mama*, *One Minute Papa*; *Nobody Knows You When You're Down And Out*; *Back Water Blues*, and Clara Smith's *He's Mine, All Mine*, Ruby is declared to carry on the Smith tradition with remarkable fidelity,

Feather Forecast and News

WHO IS BESSIE SMITH'S SUCCESSOR ?

Niece of Famous Blues Singer Attracts Notice

resembling her aunt not only in voice but in looks, though she is young and attractive.

When she was only fourteen she danced in one of her aunt's shows, but except for occasionally taking her place when she was ill Ruby never thought of singing as a career. From 1930 to 1932 she worked with Bessie, then went into night club jobs, and has not recently been working, until the appropriate tie-up with this concert, which was dedicated to the memory of the Blues Empress.

I observe in the Bluebird lists the following item: *Selfish Blues, Flyin' Mosquito Blues*—Ruby Smith, blues singer with piano. Will H.M.V. or Regal-Zonophone kindly oblige?

Incidentally, Ruby Smith's real name is not Smith at all, it's Mitchell. Of course she had to change it because Mitchell is such a common name.

* * *

What A Negro Critic Said

News of the concerts in New York comes in so overwhelmingly that it is hard to sort out who is playing at what. Anyway, this report by a Negro critic on Armstrong's appearance with Whiteman at Carnegie Hall should settle the dispute regarding the colour of the Lynn Murray choir featured with Louis on those spiritual records:—

"Take it from us, Louis without his trumpet is like eggs without ham, or Scotch without soda . . . accompanied by the ojay (white) Lynn Murray

Singers, he was true to form as a Negro preacher singing 'Shadrack,' but when he came round to that grand spiritual 'Nobody Knows,' well, we got an awful feeling that, maybe, he shouldn't have tackled it at all, and the audience, from its reaction, felt the same way . . . migaud, Paul, why did you take away his trumpet?"

If you look more closely at that simile about Scotch without soda, you'll find it more than a little ambiguous!

* * *

Screwy Music (Without Bagpipes)

Those who are nuts about screwy music should note the name of Alec Wilder, whose ideas and personal eccentricities are reputedly wilder and more entertaining than Raymond Scott's. He has done a disc session using harpsichord, bass, clarinet, flute, cor anglais, drums and bass. (What, no bagpipes?) The percussion was played with wire brushes on a hat box and a piece of tin.

Titles written by this gent include *A Little Girl Grows Up*; *Debutante's Diary*; *Concerning Etchings*; *The Proud Baby And The Bouncing Father*.

Raymond Scott's latest include *Bumpy Weather Over Newark* (which is the New York airport); *Mexican Jumping Beans*; and *Suicide Cliff*.

But for sheer mouthful-ness I like one of the recently recorded Sid Phillips' specialities: *The Wedding Of The Sophisticated Dutch Doll*. Say that ten times quickly, and by the time you're through it'll be twilight in turkey.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.



Says Tommy Dorsey: "What are you doing, Edythe?"



Says Edythe Wright: "Playing drums, of course."



Says Tommy: "Anyone can play drums ... watch!"



Says Edythe: "Anyone can play trombone, come to that ... watch!"



Says Tommy: "Now you're getting personal."



Says Edythe: "I'm a personal singer."

Whiteman Makes A Come-back With His "Swing Wing"

HOT RECORDS REVIEWED

by
"ROPHONE"

Paul Whiteman and his Swing Wing Group.

"Aunt Hagar's Blues."
"I'm Coming, Virginia."

(***Brunswick 02693.)

THIS would have been a surprise at any time coming under Whiteman's name, but coming also after the two ultra-mediocre discs with which Whiteman reappeared on the lists last month, it is quite a sensation. You would hardly believe that these sides were made at the same session as *Sing A Song Of Sixpence* and *I Used To Be Colour Blind*.

Jack Teagarden is very much the star here, singing on the first side and playing on both. It's the real old Teagarden; the terrific phrase with which he makes his trombone entry in *Aunt Hagar* is alone proof of that, but after all these years I still can't bring myself to like his out-of-tempo cadenza introductions, another of which crops up in *I'm Coming, Virginia*.

Rare Qualities, And So Different!

There are two more reasons why this record, though not perfect, is good enough and different enough to be bought by everybody.

Firstly, *Aunt Hagar* is a comparatively unknown Handy blues tune with quaintly-dated lyrics, and melodic phrases that have been used in countless blues "improvisations" in the twenty years since this number was written.

Secondly, the use of the Modernaires vocal quartette in the orchestration, rather in the manner of a brass or

reed section, is most unusually and effectively done.

It was only after several playings that I realised that *Virginia* includes no actual words except "Here I come, Virginia" in the coda. The vocal chorus is "scat singing," though not the vulgar thing implied by this name; and the trombone provides a delightful obbligato.

Delightful Blending— Real White Jazz

Apart from the vocalists, the rest of the band blends delightfully in the nicely arranged passages, and you may discern some good work by tenor, piano and guitar.

Another important thing about this record: it's real white jazz—that is, nobody could mistake this for a coloured band, yet the music is a hundred per cent. authentic.

Willie Smith (The Lion) and his Cubs.

"Knock Wood."
"Get Acquainted With Yourself."

(***Brunswick 02692.)

Johnny Dodds and his Chicago Boys.

"Blues Galore."
"29th and Dearborn."

(**Vocalion S.215.)

Milt Herth Quartet.

"Home Cookin' Mam With The Fryin' Pan."

"La De Doody Doo."
(**Brunswick 02691.)

Of the six swing mid-month issues, Willie the Lion enters into two, while O'Neil Spencer plays and swings on three, and Teddy Bunn is also in all the above three. If you read Ivor Mairants' excellent analysis of brother Bunn you will find him in a total of forty solo bars on the Herth record, which is otherwise the weakest of the three discs.

The Lion must be the only man in the world with more personal foibles than Fats Waller. Thank goodness nobody has tried to imitate him. In *Knock Wood* (American for touch wood) and *Get Acquainted* (rewrite for *Nagasaki*) he trots out the same old licks, and I continue to bask in them.

Other points in these two sides; the first choruses, semi-arranged but without manuscript; the roughness of the all-in-jamming at the end; Buster Bailey's weak work; Frank Newton's strong trumpet; O'Neil Spencer's wondrous power of playing good drums during his own vocal. Pete Brown's alto is insufficiently prominent.

Johnny Dodds is an odd proposition. His silly exaggerated vibrato and formless, unphrased arpeggi cannot conceal that at times his ideas are splendid. But he is nowhere near the class of, say, Jimmy Noone at his best.

The best things in his disc, both sides of which are twelve-bar blues, are the trumpet contributions of Charlie Shavers, who, though resorting to a phrase from *Royal Garden* in both sides, puts up a great show.

Study every note he plays in his second chorus of *29th and Dearborn*. The title, by the way, like *35th and Calumet*, indicates two Chicago streets at the corner of which is a certain club).

Murphy's Music, Cordial, Palatable

Herth's organ achieves some excellent staccato rhythm effects but is still ripe corn in the solo parts. The Lion is less effective in these surroundings. Spencer's singing sounds better in the lower register of *Frying Pan* and worse than ever in the incredibly banal *La De Doody Doo*.

Spud Murphy and his Orchestra.

"Ecstasy."
"Dancing With A Débutante."
(***Vocalion S.213.)

Murphy's music is not ginny or whiskey music; but it's cordial and palatable. Since he used to arrange so much for Goodman it's not amazing that both these numbers sound like a goodish Goodman performance; the band is clean and polished.

The trumpet, whom I suspect of being Nate Kazebier, comes out best (except for the unlucky thirteenth bar of his last solo in *Débutante*), but the clarinet (Bill Depew?) and tenor are no pikers either.

Ecstasy has some nice scoring and harmony. The faster number is more conventional, on the chords (and, in the last chorus, the tune) of the Earl Hines-Jimmy Mundy *Cavernism*.

Casa Loma Orchestra.

"Memories Of You."

"Jungle Jitters."

(**Brunswick 02690.)

Both these titles were waxed two or

three years ago. *Memories* is mostly a "vehicle" for some spectacular trumpet playing, probably by Sonny Dunham, who is regarded with great esteem by America's jitterbugs. His high notes remind me of the more reprehensible Lunceford tricks.

He has a fine technique and some-

times style, but now and then reveals a trick of phrasing or intonation that is not in the pure hot spirit. Honestly, I'm not wild about him.

Jitters, a Larry Clinton opus, reminds one of the old Casa Loma days of *White and Black Jazz*. Good of its kind.

CECIL BEATON ON HARLEM SWING

Feather Forecast and News

IT is seldom that an outsider venturing into the fields of jazz criticism earns anything but contempt or sarcasm from the self-appointed guardians of this field. Their attitude is generally justifiable, but there is an interesting exception to the rule in the recently published "Cecil Beaton's New York" (Batsford, 10s. 6d.), in which this talented artist-photographer and writer has a page on music.

For a newcomer his descriptions are unusually accurate and vivid, one or two of the portrayals of artists having a terseness of epithet all too rare in jazz analysis. He gains one's confidence immediately by remarking that in New York "diseases, those wretched women with no voices, closed eyes and love-jags, are met with much sympathy."

In his tour of the night clubs, "At the Onyx, Maxine Sullivan sings folk-songs in the dark with a childish freshness and the clearness and purity of dripping water. . . . If you can stand the nervous strain, Joe Marsala's band swings thunderously in the centre of the oval bar at the Hickory House, in a room like a large, black cafeteria."

Describing the resemblance of New York's bands to bacteria, ever splitting up, rejoining and separating again, he arrives at the band of Eddy Duchin, "has become the most popular for 'corny' music." And then this perfect bit of description: "Miss Billie Holiday's plaintive urchin voice . . ."

Fats Waller is "the pianist who plays like a mechanical piano in a

public house—a mechanical piano with a sweetness all its own." Distinguishing between the hot and sweet bands, he adds that "Sammy Kaye and Guy Lombardo are 'sweet,' and could play a eunuch's serenade Louis Armstrong, with the 'after-math' voice. . . . if Diaghileff were alive, he would doubtless commission the Raymond Scott Quintette to do a ballet for him."

There is also an occasionally brilliant chapter on Harlem, with a description of an evening at the Savoy

the painting of the Negro murals at the old Shim Sham in Wardour Street.

Sanderson relates an incident in which figured the members of a native tribe in some remote spot. To relieve a somewhat tense atmosphere he and his friend brought out a gramophone. Hot records were a passion with them, and there was a particular disc which they used as a national anthem of the expedition to start every gramophone recital.

"There happens to be a group of persons of most undoubted African descent," as Sanderson puts it, "now resident in America, who call themselves — or are called by their manager — the Washboard Rhythm Kings, and they make music. . . . The opening bars caused a riot. It immediately became apparent that we were among people with tastes uncannily similar to our own. The whole compound began to rock with syncopation . . . banks of drums appeared from beneath cloths—little skin-covered fellows, angular earthenware instruments, and giant hollowed logs. These fell in to the rhythm one by one."

Sanderson explains how the Africans intuitively knew when the breaks were coming, and the whole banks of bass drums would drop out precisely on the beat. Cuban rumba music was no less successful; it was "not only augmented but a great deal improved by the extemporizations of the Africans."

Soon everybody was firing off guns at "rhythmically psychological moments," and the session ended in the atmosphere of a real clambake.

All this reminds me of the cartoon in this month's *Rhythm* showing an evening-dressed English drummer beating it out in a native compound while an African chief explains: "Our talent scout found him in a London night-club."

Maybe that story isn't so far-fetched!



Henry Hall (centre) making some records in the Billy Higgs studios (Bill on right), with the aid of Mr. F. Morena (left) language expert, so that he can memorise announcements in German for his forthcoming tour in the Fatherland.

ballroom, an unnecessarily gloomy picture of the financial state of the rest of Harlem's night life, and an amusing impression of a highbrow party given by rich coloured society folk.

Illustrated with photographs and sketches, the whole book gives a good picture of New York, and these chapters in particular are worth the jazz fan's attention.

Even more remarkable is an excerpt from just about the last book in which you might expect to find something about jazz, "Animal Treasure" (Macmillan), describing the adventures in West Africa of Ivan Sanderson, who went out there to make a general survey of the animals, reptiles and amphibia of the country, and whose strangely varied talents extended to

BRITISH BLUES

—as played by Chisholm & Co.



George Chisholm and his Jive Five.
 "No Smoking" (****).
 "Penalty £5" (***).
 (Decca F6939.)

THIS record has made me realize two things, among others: first, what was wrong with the previous Chisholm disc and why this is so infinitely better, and second, that it is no longer possible to pretend that British musicians can't play the blues, for in *No Smoking* you have a blues more authentic than any other made by an all-British combination (excluding those directed by Americans such as Polo, Carter and Una Mae).

Another point proved by *No Smoking* is that there's danger in numbers; for, like Nichols' expanding Pennies, the Jive Five are now

PHIL LANG, who recently made his record debut as composer-conductor - arranger on American Brunswick. With a 15-piecer he recorded his own "The Hare and the Hounds," "Bric-a-Brac" and others. At the same time was released his swing arrangement of "Listen to the Mocking Bird."

Hot Records
 Reviewed
 by
 "ROPHONE"

seven. The addition of some tasteful and well-recorded guitar work by little "F e r g y" adds invaluable to the atmosphere.

Apart from this, there is an avoidance of the collective jamming which generally spells danger for British combinations, and which caused the rough spots in the earlier *Archer Street Drag*. McQuater plays only sustained notes in the first chorus and a riff in the last on *No Smoking*, while in *Penalty £5* (no prizes for identifying this chord sequence!) he shares a chorus in four-bar spasms with Chisholm and again plays only figures and sustained notes elsewhere.

Treat For Real Fans

George's brutally matter-of-fact blues style will be tough, meaty stuff for people whose idea of trombone playing is mixed up with images of Tommy Dorsey playing a straight first chorus of *Night And Day*; but to the real fans (which, of course, means you) there is

nothing quite like a dose of Chisholm to revive one's faith in British jazz.

Benny Winestone's palpitating and yet wistful clarinet, sometimes hesitant in technique, is nevertheless an attractive feature of both sides. Eddie Macauley's first chorus of *Penalty £5* is good, but not quite up to form. Notice effective use of Tiny Winters' bowed bass behind Benny in the blues, and the dotted rhythm in the following chorus.

The entry of that riff in the last chorus of the blues makes a climax the equal of which I haven't heard since the famous "Jam Session" on H.M.V. Solid, man!

Ambidexterity, With A "Circus" Finale

Bob Crosby and his Orchestra.
 "Louise, Louise."
 "Tea For Two."
 (***Decca F6930.)

Admitting that there are cartloads of Bob Crosby blues records by now and all rather similar to a certain extent, I still believe most of you will find this one worth while. For one thing I think this is Matlock's clarinet this time, though it's from the same session on which Fazola played *Milk Cow Blues*. Also, Eddie Miller sings a couple of choruses, boyishly, sounding as if he is enjoying the novelty.

Tea For Two is more of a Zurke concerto. The mechanical piano aura, more obvious than usual in the first

chorus, seems to be accentuated by the tone of the instrument used in the Decca studios (I remember Joe Sullivan's solos underwent the same process, probably for the same reason). After a nice tenor chorus, Mr. Zurke re-enters with a sustained bass tremolo, then alternates with the band in some well-routined stuff in which his ambidexterity is more admirable than his swing.

The last moments are a wee bit concert-platform, with odd bass harmonies and the smart-aleck tutti chord in which the band as good as says "hoop-la!" to show that the trapeze act is over. Still and all, a "different" disc.

Concerning Hearts, And Pockets

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra
 "I've Got A Pocketful Of Dreams."
 "I've Got A Heart Full Of Rhythm."
 (***Decca F6915.)

Cute of Decca to pair these two titles. At first I thought they illustrated the improvement in the Russell band, between mid-1937 (*Heart Full*) and mid-1938 (*Pocketful*). If I hadn't received an official personnel from America listing Russell's men, I should perhaps have realised sooner that *Pocketful* is played by a white band. The official personnel must be wrong, because Luis Russell never played as much piano as is heard in the four short solos here, nor did his ensemble ever sound as clean as this band in the introduction.

Rampant Trumpet, Shy Clarinet

The other side is really played by Russell's shoddy gang, with spots of Al Nicholas' clarinet and Charles Holmes' alto (both good). Louis's vocals are held down by the tunes on both sides, but his trumpet knows no bounds; hence the F above high C at the end of *Heart Full*.

Commercial, but good neo-Armstrong. Sidney Bechet with Noble Sissle's Swingsters.

"Blackstick" (***).
 "Southern Sunset" (****).
 (Brunswick 02702.)

That Mr. Bechet, for all his grey hairs, should not be regarded as infallible is proved by *Blackstick*, a poor composition rendered acceptable only by the improvisation, which is fortunately plentiful. Bechet's styles on his two instruments are so similar that it's only when he takes up his soprano towards the end you realise he's been playing clarinet.

Design For Melancholia

There is something of the cloudy pensiveness of an old Ellington blues about the chords and choruses of *Southern Sunset*. This record strikes just the right balance between composition and improvisation. Apart from Bechet's soprano, which at first will seem to be all vibrato, but soon grows on you, there is tenor and trumpet work enough to keep the standard up.

A minor marvel of melancholy.

THREE ELLINGTON BANDS!

Feather Forecast and News



DANISH SWING—led by bassist Sv. Oppenheim (who doubles journalism as a side line!), this talented quartet tickles the ears of visitors to the Bellevue Strandhotel, Copenhagen

BELIEVE it or not, but in the near future it may be possible to hear three American orchestras bearing the famous name of Ellington.

Duke is not going in for a band agency or anything of that kind. It is simply that Mercer Ellington, when his education is finished, will probably branch out on the lines of his illustrious

father; and completing the family scheme, Ruth Ellington will be sponsoring an all-feminine symphony orchestra formed recently by a group of serious-minded coloured girls in Harlem.

This unusual organisation hopes to secure up to 150 players. During its early stages it will consist entirely of strings, and applicants are now being trained on payment of a weekly due of one shilling. The

members of this venture are sponsoring a big affair to be held next week at—of all places—the Savoy Ballroom!

Let that be a lesson to those of you who imagined jazz to be the only musical product of Harlem.

Incidentally, very few people know that Duke's talented sister, who is president of this symphony organisation, was in London for quite a while only a few months ago.

* * *

Americana

Recording news from America is plentiful at the moment. Here is an up-to-date miscellany which may irritate the advocates of the "jazz-is-dying" hypothesis:—

Goodman's two featured trumpet players have both gone in for individual ventures. Ziggy Elman and his orchestra are now featured in the Bluebird lists, while Harry James, who has left Benny and formed his own band, will be trying the boys out in Boston shortly and expects to get a recording date with the new combination.

By way of poetic justice, it is being bruited abroad that in place of James in the Goodman band will be another trumpet player who once decided to start a band of his own, but has been tempted to give it up as a bad job—Bunny Berigan, who was with Benny before for a few months in 1935. Let's hope the discouragement doesn't depress Harry James too much.

Venuti is back on records again . . . Johnny Hodges has a new composition, *Wanderlust*, which, true to its title, promises to go places. . . . Buster Bailey has estimated that in his record called *Man With A Horn Goes Berserk* he plays over a thousand notes, or about six per second, but says he isn't sure because every time he tries to count them he falls asleep during the third chorus. Any-

way, does all this make it a good record?

* * *

Good Taste?

The best bit of American good taste for years is this pearl from a publicity sheet: "*Only God can make a tree, but Bunny Berigan and His Orchestra have made their own version of Trees.*"

* * *

Billie Holiday hasn't taken long to fix herself up after the break with Artie Shaw. Her singing along with the band of Frank Newton and the music of such soloists as Mead Lux Lewis, Albert Ammons and Tab Smith, can be heard at a new Greenwich Village hot spot called Café Society. Oddest angle of this story is that the sponsor of the venture is John Hammond, who was involved in that acrimonious argument with Billie when she accused him of having had her fired from Basie's band last year.

There's a great deal to be said for reconciliations if they can result in producing a line-up of talent like the above.

* * *

Any Claimants?

Do you remember Ernest (Wilson) Myers, that terrific bass player who played bowed solos with the Spirits of Rhythm long before Slim and Slam were ever heard of?

Well, not long ago he formed his own band, which has been sending the winter sportgoers in Chamonix. Myers is playing piano and arranging in addition to his bass work (you remember he wrote some fine orchestrations while he was with Willie Lewis). The orchestra, of which I hope you may hear more, boasts of being the most cosmopolitan in Europe. Its members come from England, France, Brazil, U.S.A., Mexico and Egypt.

I'd like to hear from any band that can claim to beat this.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Radio Times
Feb. 3rd.

SIGNATURE TUNE.... By Leonard G. Feather

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

THE allegation that 'scat singing' is a form of musical degeneracy sponsored by jazz can be easily refuted. 'Scat singing' in some shape or form has been going on for centuries, as will be shown in an amusing programme compiled for presentation next Friday, February 10 (National, 7.30). The title selected for this saga of 'scat singing' is 'With a Hey Nonny No and a Hi-De-Ho'.

* * * *

Another 'anti-brass' band-leader has ceded. Billy Thorburn, who has generally adhered to a policy of excluding all brass instruments from his broadcasts, has engaged a trumpet-player for next Friday's lunch-time programme, in which the seven-piece band used for his stage act will be enlarged to twelve.

* * * *

The well-known orthopaedic surgeon who takes an interest in the historical side of jazz will be broadcasting again next week in Wednesday night's 'Swing Time'.

His collection of antique jazz and ragtime discs is worth hundreds of pounds. He recently refused an offer of £5 for his copy of one of the earliest Ellington records in existence, 'Parlour Social Stomp', which he will include in his recital of old blues recordings.

* * * *

DON'T CALL THEM CROONERS

3—Alice Mann

Born near New York, 1911. Father owned grocery; family not outstandingly musical. Worked for a year as stenographer; was heard by a radio executive when she sang at a

private party. Soon had her own regular programme on the air. Worked with Sleep Hall and other American bands. Billy Bissett, listening in Canada, heard her on the air and sent for her late in 1935. After singing with him in England, went on a Continental tour including night-club work in Paris, broadcasting to London. Also worked for some time with Jack Hylton.



Alice Mann

Went to Billy Bissett's home town in Canada, St. Catherine's, and married him in August, 1937. Now permanently featured with her husband's band at the Café de Paris. Will be on the air on Thursday, late night.

Q.—Who is your favourite singer?

A.—Connie Boswell.

Q.—What is your favourite song?

A.—'Smoke gets in your eyes.'

Q.—Which is your favourite band?

A.—Tommy Dorsey's.

Q.—Do you play any instrument? A.—Piano.

Q.—What do you think makes a good jazz singer? A.—An idea of phrasing and instinct; legitimate training and ability to read music aren't essential.

Q.—What would you rather do if not sing?

A.—I'd go round to the other side of the fence and become a music critic!

Performing Right's Gazette
Jan. 1939.

New Members.

THE following Composers, Authors and Arrangers have been elected to Membership of the Society since the publication of the last list in our October, 1938, issue. The total number of members of the Society at the present date is 1,703.

Mr. Béla Bartók (Composer).

Mr. Horace P. Barton (Composer).

Lady Naomi Boynton (Author and Copyright Owner).

Mr. Bretton Byrd (Composer and Arranger).

Mr. James S. Coulter (Composer and Author).

Mr. R. S. Eckersley (Composer).

Mr. L. Geoffrey Feather (Composer and Author).

VICTOR RECORDS

RCA MANUFACTURING COMPANY, INC. • CAMDEN, N. J.

Bulletin No. _____

Amends No. _____

Supersedes No. _____

BLUEBIRD POPULAR RELEASE NO. 208

January 12, 1939

TO RCA VICTOR RECORD DISTRIBUTORS:

"FATS" WALLER

B-10100 DON'T TRY YOUR JIVE ON ME - Slow F.T. (V.R.)
HAVIN' A BALL - F.T. (V.R.)

"Fats" Waller
and his Rhythm

DON'T TRY YOUR JIVE ON ME is one of the tunes "Fats" recorded while in England. In this particular composition, Waller is featured on the pipe organ, an instrument particularly adapted to his talents. In fact, our catalog contains too few pipe organ solos by this virtuoso. HAVIN' A BALL was recorded by the usual Waller combination.

* * * * *

No Jitters

JAZZ bandmen who specialise in swing music joined in a Leonard Feather jam session at a hall in High Holborn last evening, but no jitters were allowed. If there were any jitterbugs present they restrained themselves.

At a jam session the audience yell their request tunes, and the bandmen should improvise instantly. At this one a trombonist from Ambrose's Band gave an exciting demonstration of swing with eyes closed and cheeks puffed for minutes on end, but the most to which he could rouse his audience was a little foot-tapping. Nobody had convulsions or the shakes. Jittery, in fact, is as dead among swingsters as it is supposed to be in Downing-street now that Chatfield has taken charge.

Boogie-woogie Now

THE only man who displayed any clonic emotion at this gathering of swing men was Mr. George Shearing, a remarkable blind pianist of some 19 years, who comes from Battersea and has played the piano since he was six.

He is self-taught, and, after listening to American swing records, plays in the strange discordant style of negro pianists known as boogie-woogie.

Boogie-woogie baffles our crack jazz pianists, but Mr. Shearing sits at the piano in happy ecstasy, swaying to and fro, crashing his feet on the pedals and his hands on the keys, playing pure boogie.

Swing men say he has a big future.

The Star
Feb. 7th

DORSEY SHOWS HE CAN DO IT

Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.
 "Boogie Woogie."
 "Tin Roof Blues."
 (**H.M.V. B8854.)

Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra.
 "Livery Stable Blues."
 "High Society."
 (**H.M.V. B8855.)

TWO white bands make a startling come-back this week. Now don't get me wrong. This only means that the records selected for HMV release this month happen to be good ones. It doesn't mean that Dorsey's band has previously produced nothing but the commercial tripe that has been put on the lists here and has now suddenly reformed his policy.

Dorsey has always had a good band and has always produced an occasional good record like the above; it just happens that this is the first we have been lucky enough to get for some time.

Pity If This Band Breaks Up

As for Berigan, we have hardly had any of his numerous records at all. On his showing here it seems a shame the band is likely to break up. The arrangements, probably by Joe Lippman, are typical big white band stuff of the better variety.

High Society actually puts over the street parade atmosphere without too many "effects"; in fact, in this respect it is ahead of *South Rampart Street Parade*. Bunny takes one of his half-fluffed half-choruses; it must have been one of those typical Berigan session days when his lip was like underdone roast beef.

The best things in the disc are Joe Shkin's admirable piano in *Livery Stable*, and the unusual tenor of George Auld.

Tommy Dorsey's *Boogie Woogie* is

grand if you don't expect a whole band to sound like a Pinetop Smith piano solo—though there are times when the clever scoring almost gets as far as that. Notice how the rhythm section moves with the ensemble in the jump rhythm passages.

The letdown at the end, from Tommy's solo, commits mayhem on the genuine boogie atmosphere, but before this point it is a fine job, with honours to that grand piano man, Howard Smith.

When Strength Is A Weakness

Tin Roof is over-arranged, perhaps by Dean Kincaid, who has transferred his Dixieland stuff from the Crosby camp. The band sounds about nineteen strong, and its strength is its weakness.

But still it is far and away above the recent Dorsey issues, the early parts giving everything but the rattle of the roof. Tommy plays less like a gentleman, thank goodness, and Mince's clarinet is the goods.

Of special interest to students of: trombone (Yank Lawson); clarinet (Johnny Mince); tenor (Babe Rusin); piano (Howard Smith).

Fats Waller and his Rhythm.
 "If I Were You."
 "Two Sleepy People."
 (**H.M.V. BD5452.)

Fats Waller (Organ).
 "Water Boy."
 "Lonesome Road."
 (*H.M.V. B8845.)

Adelaide Hall (Vocal) and Fats Waller (Organ).
 "That Old Feeling."
 "I Can't Give You Anything But Love."
 (**H.M.V. B8849.)

Six sides by Waller in one month are quite an armful, though hardly harmful. I will dismiss the two organ solos as I did the others, throwing in the comment that they come a little closer to jazz this time on account of the more or less steady tempo.

The band sides again place me in that awkward position where, not knowing how much the average record buyer can afford each month and what constitutes a fair proportion of

Hot Records Reviewed . . . by "ROPHONE"

Waller in the average library, I just don't know whether to recommend it or not. Though both tunes are up to the usual high standard of banality, there is some attraction in *If I Were You* when Sedric, a fine tenor man to whom nobody pays enough attention, takes a really outstanding chorus, followed by Autry in a much better than usual solo.

In fact, any English trumpet playing as well as Autry does here would be considered quite phenomenal, though by American standards he is not more than run of the mill.

Adelaide Hall's *Old Feeling* illustrates perfectly what happens to a Harlem singer who goes Mayfair. One or two of her passing notes jump up like cats on hot bricks.

The other side is sung much better, presumably because Adelaide has been practising it for eleven years. But even this is a far cry from the girl who scat-sang on Duke's *Creole Love Call*.

Fats plays his very best organ and does a little amusing vocal mugging on each side.

Of special interest to students of: piano, trumpet (Herman Autry); tenor (Eugene Sedric) (BD.5452).

Note This Ingenious Idea

Mildred Bailey.
 "Too Late."
 "Dear Old Mother Dixie."
 (**H.M.V. B8847.)

Mildred Bailey and her Orchestra.
 "My Melancholy Baby."
 "Lonesome Road."
 (**Parlophone R2622.)

The HMV Baileys, dating from the Whiteman era some eight years ago, should not be held against Mildred at this late date. She is accompanied by a non-swing band led by Matt Malneck, who wrote the second tune. This side also seems to have the old Rhythm Boys doing some not very effective sustained harmonies.

But if you take other Bailey records of this period, or later ones like the Parlophone *Squeeze Me*, you will find that the recently made *Lonesome*

Road illustrates her decline. Something has gone out of Mildred's voice, and I think it is enthusiasm. I am all the sorer because *Lonesome Road* is one of the loveliest songs I can remember, and even the Fats Waller version (see col. 2) doesn't quite get inside the number.

I like Mildred's habit of unearthing verses to tunes which you never suspected of having one. In fact, I like *Melancholy Baby* fairly well altogether, though it's still below the best Bailey.

A most extraordinary thing happens here in the eight-bar solo before Norvo comes in. This passage starts off as a tenor solo and ends up on clarinet. Listen very closely and you'll detect the transition just half way through the fourth bar. Probably a Sauter idea, and ingenious.

Of special interest to students of: singing, xylophone (Norvo), accompaniment orchestration.

Disturbing And Stimulating Mixture

Billie Holiday and her Orchestra.
 "The Very Thought Of You."
 "Back In Your Own Back Yard."
 (**Parlophone R2621.)

Nan Wynn and her Orchestra.
 "The Gandy Dancer."
 "Think It Over."
 (**Parlophone R2623.)

All six sides issued in Parlophone's swing series this month are by female singers. I'd hardly call this the spice of variety, nor would I call the Wynn record hot jazz at all. It is strictly a straight streak of streamlined commercialism quite nicely played and sung and about as disturbing and stimulating as a big armchair in front of the hearth. Nan Wynn, white, has taken up where Maxine Sullivan left off, but by now the glamour-coating has worn off.

The Gandy Dancer, by the way, has the unoriginal-est tune and stupidest lyric of the month.

Though the second Holiday title was

made a year ago, it has pretty much the same line-up as its recent backing; the usual Basie gang. *Back In Your Own Back Yard* was, I imagine, always a rather tuneless tune. Billie's habit of reducing a tune to its essentials, therefore, doesn't quite click this time.

Band Which Sounds Pessimistic

Her treatment of the other number, though, makes you reflect that Ray Noble didn't write such a bad tune, at that. (*Technical Titbit*: Surely that B flat chord in bar 14 should be an F 7th?) The band sounds pessimistic; the rhythm section gives no encouragement to the tired trumpet of Buck Clayton and clarinet of Lester Young. Billie just about saves this side.

Of special interest to students of: singing (R.2621); tenor (Lester Young); bass (Walter Paige); drums

(Joe Jones); (R.2623, 2nd side); singing (1st side).

Coleman Hawkins Trio.
 "Blues Evermore" (**).
 "Way Down Yonder In New Orleans" (**).
 (Vocalion S.218.)

No, it's not a twelve-bar blues, but another of Hawk's own slow compositions. The Hawkins with more romance than rhythm reappears here. It's still high-class stuff, but not to be recommended to anyone who hasn't yet bought the two previous Hawkins-Johnson releases.

By the way, this gent remains my disfavoured pianist.

Way Down Yonder gives the drummer a chorus of breaks, and Freddy Johnson's left hand is paralysed, one would say, whereas his right hand is an incarnated off-beat. But Hawkins is fine.

Of special interest to students of: tenor sax.

Melody Maker
 Feb: 11th

Melody Maker.

FEBRUARY 11, 1939



Left: Una Mae Carlisle. Above: Jerry Mengo (drums) and Louis Vola (bass). Right: Alix Combelle (tenor) and Philippe Brun (trumpet).

Right: Oscar Aleman, sensational Argentine guitarist. Below: Garland Wilson (piano).



Participants in the Danny Polo Session

IS is being written during the rebound after Montmartre week-end culminated in the Danny Polo session at the Paris studios.

thing passed off as d, and Danny played so idly that you would never had spent two weeks at

the Moulin Rouge cinema singing French comedy numbers in Ray Ventura's stage show. This band is committed to even more commercialism than Hylton's. In fifty minutes' "entertainment" Danny had one eight-bar solo.

But Ventura has a potentially great band, which will be strengthened shortly by two of the

tenor player; and Jerry Mengo, the American drummer who has been in Paris for ten years.

With Danny, plus these men, plus Philippe Brun on trumpet and Vola on bass (both of whom were on the session) Ventura has the basis for some solid stuff. Let's hope his London visit next month, in which Danny expects to be included, will give them a chance to get away from all that galling Gallic gagging.

Show Starts At Two Ack-Emma!

Completing the disc line-up were three important coloured personalities. First, Oscar Aleman, an Argentine Indian who started on ukulele in Brazil, has been knocking around Europe for a decade and currently leads a curious band in an old-fashioned French dance-hall where jazz generally gives way to tangos and rumbas.

The point is, though, that Aleman is a grand hot guitarist, probably the best in France. Then we had the pleasure of hearing Garland Wilson on piano for two sides, and Una Mae Carlisle for the other two.

Montmartre night life consists of leaving one's job around 2 a.m. and wandering to a little room called the Swing Club, where, "sent" by the music of a gramophone and a big selection of hot discs, the show people "have a ball" which seldom ends before 7 a.m. and often goes on until ten o'clock or midday.

Since the record session started at 9 a.m., the job of rounding up the musicians may be better imagined than described. However, despite constant complaints of tiredness, Garland played magnificently.

"Cheese," "Moons," And "Love"

His two numbers with the band were an original called *Doing The Gorgonzola*, and a pseudo-original entitled *Polo-Naise*, which was bad Chopin but good Polo. Garland also made two duet numbers with Danny, a slow blues (*Montmartre Moan*) and *You Made Me Love You*. The two band sides featuring Una Mae were a fast blues (*Montparnasse Jump*) and *China Boy*.

It was lucky we were able to get such a good combination together, for the supply of hot talent in Paris is irregular now. The rebels who fled to Egypt from Willie Lewis's band without a word of warning (Bill Coleman, Byrns, Chittison, etc.) have apparently

FEATHER FORECAST

PARIS WEEK-END

Danny Polo's Small Band Session

boys we used on Danny's records: Alix Combelle, a voluminous and vivid

been officially punished to the extent that they may never be able to work in France again.

Willie has assembled a good new band, with remarkable speed, including two or three white Frenchmen. (Stéphane Grappelly was supposed to start with him on piano this week, but is still very ill.) The trumpet player Teddy Brock, is quite promising.

Haunt Of Real French Jitterbugs

Line-up now comprises Willie Lewis, Raoul Cordesse (altos); Roscoe Burnett (tenor); Brock André Colin (trumpets); Eugene d'Hellemmes (trombone); Ray Stokes (piano); John Mitchell, the only man left who's been there all along (guitar); Tommy Benford (drums); and, on bass, Willie's original June Cole, who had been ill for three years and given up for lost (he was even reported dead), but returned to the fold recently and is playing better than ever.

The band is at present only working a tea-dance job, but Willie expects to open a "chez" of his own later this month. Elsewhere in Paris one finds Valaida at a smart Champs Elysées joint; Garland and Una Mae still at the Boeuf Sur le Toit, where there is also a coloured band featuring the swell Joe Turner on piano.

If you want to see real French jitterbugs you can go to a place called simply "Le Club," where you'll find them trucking and shagging to the music, just as good-looking and vapidly keen as the American ickies. Combelle will be replaced here soon by the huge tenor-trumpet-clarinet-vocal-comedian Big Boy Goodie.

Paris,—Is Still Paris

Django Reinhardt is working at some night club. (The quintette as such has a very spasmodic, occasional existence apart from its tours abroad.)

Then there is always a record session or jamming going on at the Hot Club de France's permanent headquarters, or there may be a meeting of "Le Swing Club de France," where I heard a session including a fine pianist named Ward Warner, a German refugee, jamming with Polo and others; and this week saw the first session of the "Crazy Rhythm Club," featuring a quintet with Charles (Discography) Delaunay on drums.

So you see, Paris is still not such a bad place to get into the groove.

But it's also a hell of an easy place to get into a rut.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

"HERALDS of SWING"

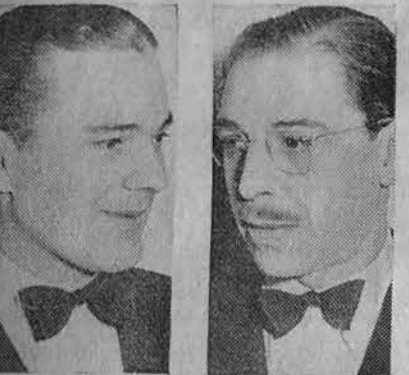
Musicians' Idealism Results In Formation Of First All-Star Co-operative Orchestra ENGAGED BY THE PARADISE ROSEBERY ALL-OUT FOR DOLPHIN RESTAURANT



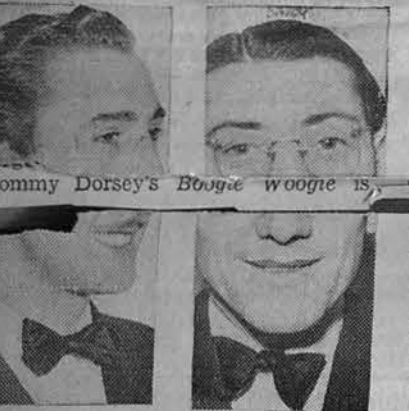
TINY WINTERS BERT BARNES



GEO. FIERSTONE SID COLIN



DAVID SHAND NORMAN MALONEY



TOMMY MacQUATER BEN WINESTONE



ARCHIE CRAIG GEO. CHISHOLM



ARTHUR ROSEBERY

THIS WEEK A MUSICIAN'S "DREAM" ORCHESTRA HAS COME INTO EXISTENCE. LAST NIGHT (THURSDAY) IT GAVE A PREHEARING, TO THE PRESS AND THE BOOKING MANAGERS OF MANY BRANCHES OF THE SHOW BUSINESS, AT THE "PARADISE" IN REGENT STREET WHERE, ON FEBRUARY 20, IT IS TO OPEN A RESIDENT ENGAGEMENT.

This leaderless orchestra grew from the ideals of several of the country's recognised ace swing instru-

Towards the end of 1938, several men in Ambrose's old orchestra, only being casually employed, discussed the idea of joining up into a co-operative band untrammelled by any such commercial considerations. Other star players of equal eminence were invited to join in, and there were many comings and goings before the personnel was finally set.

By this time, however, the players had pledged themselves, if necessary, to make the utmost financial sacrifice to get the band going, and the first moves were made to find work.

Largely through the advice of Leonard Feather, whose enthusiasm for the project was immediately and understandably at white-heat, Leslie Macdonnell, principal of M.P.M. Entertainment Corporation, Ltd., was invited to take over the booking and the first overtures to the Paradise management were made through him.

This avenue could not have been exploited, however, had it not been for the fact that Arthur Rosebery, who has been band-leader at the Paradise for the past fifteen months, had already intimated to his Paradise

employers that his many other activities were making it impossible for him to carry on indefinitely for them.

Persuaded not to retire from the job until the management had the chance to find a strong enough successor, he was in no wise an obstacle to the hopes of the co-operators, willingly giving up responsibilities which were handicapping him elsewhere.

But more of that anon.

BAND BOOKED

After a couple of auditions, the Paradise directors came to terms with Leslie Macdonnell for the new dream band. It meant opening up their purse fairly wide, but, of all the managements in London dancing, this is the one which knows best how to spend well to get the right attractions.

The quality of the entertainment which this management gave its guests all through 1938 had not only packed the ballroom to overflowing, but had pretty well closed down several other West-end establishments running on a tight-fisted policy.

The Paradise is a bottle party place, which, normally, hardly wakes up till midnight, but then remains open until the crack of dawn. The guests who frequent it know how to appre-

ciate good acts and good music, and know, incidentally, how to show their disapproval of anything sub-standard.

Rosebery's music had always satisfied them, and since there is never anything corny about Arthur's music, it is apparent that the Paradise clientele is just about the ideal one, and the only one, for a real swing music policy.

This prospect of appreciation, however, is now to be put to the test.

THE OUTFIT

When the Paradise "Heralds of Swing" succeed Arthur Rosebery and his Band, they will, it is confidently expected, produce real swing music for the first time in England, a forecast based on the boys who are in the venture. They include:

Bert Barnes, piano; Tiny Winters, bass; George Fierstone, drums; Sid Colin, guitar and vocalist; Dave Shand, lead alto; Norman Maloney, 2nd alto; Benny Winestone, tenor; Tommy MacQuater, lead trumpet; Archie Craig, 2nd trumpet, and George Chisholm, trombone.

It will be recognised straight away that the last three are all from the Ambrose brass section, and that the whole band, racially speaking, is practically fifty-fifty Scottish and Jewish.

Some of them have left lucrative "safe" jobs to join the venture. Others have turned down highly paid "sinecures" to have an opportunity to play dance music for the first time in the way they think it ought to be played, and regardless of whether they lose money, pro tem, by doing so.

Incidentally, they are being thoroughly well paid by the Paradise for what they are doing, and they will still have their corner in "sessioneering."

It will be observed that this orches-

trumentalists, including many of the corner men of Ambrose's late peerless band.

Ever since jazz shaped itself into an organised art-form, musicians in this country have groaned at the impossibility of giving full rein to the musical urge which is within them.

Even in the best bands existent in this country they have had to repress their playing ideals at the dictates of commercial necessity.

Never has there been a real swing band with a radical policy of concentrating upon the best elements of rhythmic music only.

tra is exceptionally well equipped to produce its own swing orchestrations. In Bert Barnes and George Chisholm there are two outstandingly good and often inspired arrangers; in Sid Colin there is possibly the cleverest point-song and special material writer who also is a brilliant instrumentalist.

The whole venture, in fact, is launched in a particularly well-found craft, destined to plough unknown waters but seeking no illusory goal.

Given that the Paradise habitués fall for it and that the boys can agree among themselves without any particu-

lar leader directing them, there is no reason why they should not blaze an entirely new musical trail through the ballrooms, concert platforms, recording and radio studios of this country.

It is, anyway, a bold challenge to the music lovers of Britain, and it comes at a time when the whole business is flat and in grave need of new glands.

Reverting to Rosebery, however, it must be said that a rank injustice would be done him were it not to be acknowledged that he has proved a veritable mascot to the Paradise.

BUSINESS BUILDER

When he took his band there in the first place the ballroom was a struggling enterprise and, as many times before, Rosebery had a real job of work on his hands in creating a new atmosphere there.

By using his head as well as his hands he quickly got the place humming, and the alert management, with fresh sinews of war at their disposal, immediately built up their floor attractions with a wise recklessness which soon made the Paradise a West-end sensation.

Then Rosebery made himself doubly useful by writing the floorshow music and numbers, and, incidentally, will also be doing this for the new show which is about to commence.

While this was going on, however, he had also dug himself into the Dolphin Square Restaurant, where business had slumped to such a danger point that abandonment of music altogether had been contemplated.

ANOTHER TRIUMPH

If Rosebery had wrought a triumph at the Paradise, he achieved a virtual miracle at the Dolphin, and indeed, latterly, has taken a more and more active part in building up the attractions here.

So much so, indeed, that recently he took over the complete responsibility for the Sunday nights in this restaurant, both financially and as a booker, by staging therein unique supper concerts in which are being featured some of the most notable performers in the land.

By this policy the business has soared to such a satisfactory extent that it well serves Arthur's interests to be free to devote himself to it exclusively for the time being.

Rosebery's Paradise band is, of course, unfortunately breaking up, and that is a great pity, because it is a grand bunch. One of its outstanding members is Alan Kane, the singer whom Lew Stone first produced and who afterwards joined Ambrose.

Alan, judging from his previous work, is just about the best



"HERALDS OF SWING" IN A POW-WOW.

able to report that he is to remain associated with Rosebery at the Dolphin Restaurant until such time, as will inevitably happen, when he will be snapped up for really good things.

To get back to the Heralds of Swing, however, it still remains to be said that they have yet to prove that they can put over their swing music

policy, or that they are even capable of specialising in this idiom.

Some there are among the cognoscenti who believe that it is only the Negroes who can swing. Others, a little more catholic, avow that it is the prerogative of American bands only, white or coloured, and very few will admit that we have any players here who know what it is all about.

Be that as it may, here once again is the personnel and a few notes about each.

Reflect carefully before you dare to say that such instrumentalists, given freedom to play as they feel the urge, and certainly animated at this moment with a corporate desire to indulge their ideals, will not be able to deliver the real goods.

Bert Barnes, English. Came to great prominence as pianist and orchestrator with Ambrose. Latterly has been confining himself to arranging. Has most advanced ideas and a brilliant swing style.

Tiny Winters, English. A protégé of Lew Stone who will always be remembered as bassist with Lew's famous Monseigneur Band. Latterly with Ambrose and inevitably in nearly all the British hot recording outfits.

Sid Colin, Jewish. Has jumped to stardom in association with Sid Millward's Nitwits on the air. A fine guitarist, excellent rhythm singer, original songwriter and talented caricaturist.

George Fierstone, Jewish. The co-operators' "infant" who made his drumming mark with Al Berlin's Band and who since has been zooming also with Sid Millward's Nitwits.

David Shand, Scot, holding his M.A. degree. First big break with Jack Hylton, then Jack Payne and afterwards Sydney Lipton. Always considered one of the best sax leads in the country.

Norman Maloney, English. A great sax technician who has had solo broadcasts. Comes immediately from Hugo Rignold's London Casino Orchestra. Most accomplished all-round musician with considerable arranging skills also.

Benny Winestone, Jewish Scot. Many trips to and from America in ships' orchestras endowed him with the current American swing style. Plays hot tenor and clarinet with real transatlantic conviction. Last resident job was in Joe Kaye's Orchestra at the Ritz.

Tommy MacQuater, Scot. Virtual discovery of Jack Payne, until given a job to lead by Lew Stone. Since has soared to first choice as hot trumpet in the minds of all fans through his brilliant work in Ambrose's Orchestra, and with Phil Cardew's Band Waggoners.

Archie Craig, Scot. Nearly starved in London until he got his due recognition. Made good in Sydney Lipton's Band, and recently joined Ambrose speaks musically in much the same terms as Tommy MacQuater, who has married his sister.

George Chisholm, Scot. Said by many who should know to be the most advanced swing instrumentalist in Great Britain. Trombonist whose outstanding ability went practically unrecognised in London night clubs till Benny Carter "found" him and took him to Holland. Finally Ambrose took him and made him the tops.

*All the saxes play flutes.

SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A BAND-LEADER without his arranger is not necessarily like bacon without eggs; but one case where a simile of this kind must be applied is the alliance of Red Norvo and Eddie Sauter. Few arrangers have meant as much to the success of a white orchestra as the brilliant Sauter has to the Norvo-Bailey aggregation.

Biographically there is nothing to tell of his career, for before working with Red he had had little experience of any note, and after tying up with him he remained with the band through thick and plenty of thin, despite offers from monied leaders whose efforts to lure him away only strengthened his loyalty to the Norvos.

His age is another reason why there is no Sauter life story to tell as yet. Only twenty-three years old now, he is an ex-Columbia College boy. After completing his formal education he augmented it by a walking tour through most of Europe.

Commencement Of A Famous Association

Apart from walking, another of his hobbies is the writing of orchestrations in odd surroundings. Sometimes he has figured out a whole score and written each part separately in the course of a short subway journey. Anyway, that's what they say.

The story of his unusually faithful association with Norvo began at the Famous Door, where, late in 1935, Red started the quintet which eventually doubled itself and finally became a full-sized band. During the early days Sauter would occasionally play mellophone or trumpet, but later confined himself to writing.

Long before the band had established itself as any sort of a commercial success, while it was still fighting the eternal shadow of unemployment and disruption, Sauter had worked tirelessly and unremuneratively to equip it with a full library of original orchestrations. Some of his early arrangements of standard tunes, never recorded, were as great as anything Norvo is playing to-day, possibly greater.

Some Effects Really Extraordinary

The same might be said of his contributions to the repertoire of the original small combination. When the melody line consisted, apart from Norvo himself, simply of clarinet, trumpet and tenor, it might seem absurd to reflect that Sauter spent so much time writing music for a band obviously capable of jamming. Yet the results, in this exceptional case, justified every minute of his efforts. The effects he obtained with this "Dixieland Trio" melody section, often hat-muting the trumpet for a better blend, were quite extraordinary.

Of these early works, three recorded items stand out: *Decca Stomp*, *I Got Rhythm* and *Lady Be Good*. Only a minute study of these discs can convince you of the brilliance with which Sauter handled so small a band. The little riffs, partly unison and partly

No. 4 of a Series on Famous Orchestrators

by LEONARD FEATHER

harmonised, the sustained chord backgrounds occasionally bursting in front of Norvo, the neat modulations—all the qualities that could not quite have been achieved without a little pre-arrangement, are there to justify his work.

That Sauter took the trouble to write for this little band is another proof of something evidenced even more strongly in his later work for the full band: he is the least lazy of arrangers. Passages block-scored or written in unison simply because it takes less time are not found in his work; the scoring is generally intricate but seldom affectedly clever or "screwy."

It is impossible to list in full the contributions made by Sauter to Norvo's recordings, for they constitute a large proportion of his entire output. However, there is room here to deal with a few outstanding examples. One of the most fascinating was a re-write of *Nagasaki*, which was titled *Jivin' The Jeep*. The ingenious intro starts with a brass figure of five quavers, followed by a sort of vamp-till-ready in which the bass and piano play the melody, two notes in a bar.

Full Of Attractive Passages

Then, instead of the conventional first chorus, Norvo comes right in with a xylophone solo, with a quiet background, at first plain sustained chords, then more rhythmic. As he goes into a second xylophone chorus, the brass creeps in to supply rhythmic figures. By now one is conscious of the whole

band working with him, yet Norvo retains attention as the central figure.

Other bits I find attractive: the bridge passage after the trumpet chorus, for which the rhythm section tacets, but the rhythm is by no means dropped; the figures with the tenor solo gradually increasing the tension; the grand melody played by unison brass, only one note on the last beat of every two bars, while the saxes fill in with a much fuller series of phrases; the way the band suddenly drops out to let Red take the last four bars of the chorus; the savage trill by clarinets at the end, while the rhythm suspends and then moves together with the brass behind the trill; and the perfect use of the flattened third in various passages throughout the record.

Has Never Written Anti-climax

For illustrations of Sauter's fine sax section voicing and scoring, the first chorus of *Do You Ever Think Of Me* and *Remember* are excellent, the latter also typifying his treatment of a slow, melodic tune in an advanced hot style.

One of Sauter's most individual characteristics is the ability to discover new tone-colour effects. I remember being enormously impressed by the unusual sound the band made in the last two choruses of *I Know That You Know*, playing a most unusual repeated riff; and the intro and coda of *Smoke Dreams*, more deliberately exotic, are quite indescribably original.

Sauter pays careful attention to the rounding-off of an arrangement; I have yet to hear an anti-climax on anything he has written, which is more than can be said even of Duke Ellington.

One of the best Sauter effects is that in which a rhythmic trombone movement comes upwards to meet a trumpets-and-saxes front line (*Remember* and *Please Be Kind*). Notice, too, the after-thought sax trill effect which concludes *Liza*.

It would be quite easy to go on for another fifty-seven issues trying to analyse Sauter's work in cold print, but I would rather refer you to a few more recordings, which will speak louder than words: *Anything For You*, *You Leave Me Breathless*, and practically any of those recorded under Mildred Bailey's name, for Sauter has specialised in providing Mildred with just the setting for which she had always longed.

Another Contributor To Norvo Repertoire

Lastly, a word or two about Bob Macdonald, who in the past year has also contributed more than usefully to the Norvo repertoire. Bob is another ex-trumpet player who has played in the bands of Vido Musso and Gil Evans. He, too, is only twenty-three. He has a music degree from a college in Los Angeles, the city where Red Norvo first found him, later bringing him back to New York as staff arranger.

I am at present less familiar with Macdonald's work than with Sauter's, but as an example of his ability would call your attention to the original composition *Tea Time*, a minor theme in which the climax played by clarinets against brass is especially effective. The voicing of the muted brass, and the quiet, queer coda also reflect Macdonald's ingenuity.

Arrangers Deserve Full Credit

Red Norvo and Mildred Bailey are two of the great personalities of jazz, but those who have traced their recorded career with any interest should give full credit to the work of the arrangers, who have provided such an admirable setting for their performances.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

ARTIE SHAW will be on the air on Tuesday (Regional, 7.50). His is the only great American swing band never to have broadcast previously for the BBC.

That double-edged weapon, publicity, has prevented Shaw from receiving his just dues in this country. Benny Goodman, who also plays the clarinet and has a band patterned on similar lines, is peremptorily regarded as 'king of swing' because he happened to arrive first. The fact is that Shaw's band, though less than two years old, is at least as important as Goodman's, and Shaw is no less brilliant a clarinetist.

This talented leader has the advantage of being a composer and arranger. His signature tune, 'Nightmare', and many of the original works in his repertoire, are his own work.

A New Yorker, he has spent many years in the biggest radio studios sinking his individuality into the commercial studio bands. The chance to emerge from the rut came unexpectedly. Once each week he and some friends used to congregate privately to play Brahms and Mozart quintets. The clarinet-and-strings idea appealed to Shaw, who adapted it to jazz at a concert. The following day he was besieged by managers suggesting that a permanent band should be formed on these lines. For a while Shaw used a band comprising string quartet and brass section, but later conceded to the standard swing band construction—brass, saxes, and rhythm, no strings. Today, at twenty-eight, he has had the satisfaction of seeing his name rise above those of Goodman, Crosby, and Dorsey to the No. 1 position in a ballot to determine America's most popular swing band.

The soloists in his personnel include Tony Pastor, tenor saxophone and vocals; George Arus, a first-class trombonist; and at least one excellent trumpet player.

* * * * *

Second only to Al Collins in job-tenacity is Alfred Van Straten, featured at Quaglino's, the West-End restaurant which has just been wired for broadcasting. His band, which will make its bow in the late-night programme on Monday, first played there eight years ago. One of his musicians has played with him during his entire eleven years of band-leading, and the others have mostly had at least four or five years under Van Straten.

This name is a familiar one in the dance-music profession. Alfred is the youngest of three brothers who were all musicians in the early jazz days. Leon, the eldest, a frequent broadcaster in the old days, is now a Harley Street osteopath, and Joe has also deserted active playing to become Alfred's manager.

The family is of Dutch origin, but the sax-playing leader at Quaglino's is London-born; in fact, his solitary visit to Holland in 1924 was made under an English pseudonym, and he recalls that during an argument with a Dutchman in the band there he astonished everybody, after weeks of guarding his secret, by suddenly letting loose a torrent of handy Dutch invective!

His orchestra in its broadcasting form will include three saxophonists who 'double' on violins; an accordionist, Tommy Nichol; and a new girl singer, Julie Dawn, whose brother is Mantovani's first violinist.

* * * * *

Wednesday's 'Swing Time' recital of Louis Armstrong records will be given by Bill Elliott, a London bank clerk, whose hobby is the running of a Rhythm Club.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

ONE thing is certain about Ben Frankel's 'Swing Song' series, the first of which will be heard on Wednesday (National, 7.0). There will be no half-way opinions. Some listeners will consider it a revolution in British jazz, while others will no doubt hold out that it doesn't swing, or that it swings too much.

The idea is to show what my band can do in the way of English swing', Ben Frankel points out, 'without repelling the people who can't endure an out-and-out programme of hot music. The band will swing all the time, but commercially. And nearly all the orchestrations will be my own work.'

A novelty in each programme will be the dancing of Buddy Bradley, the celebrated coloured dance producer. Frankel and Bradley have been writing ballets together, and, in the words of the conductor, this music is composed 'note by step'.

Much of Ben Frankel's time these days is taken up with theatre work. He wrote the whole score for the music of *Under your Hat*. Now he is looking round for new star musicians to help him in the 'Swing Song' series, for in a programme of this type it is necessary to find instrumentalists with a flair for improvisation.



Adelaide Hall

DON'T CALL THEM CROONERS

4—Adelaide Hall

The new featured vocalist in Joe Loss's broadcasts is one of America's veterans of jazz singing, her career dating back to the first big Negro revue, *Shuffle Along*, produced in 1921.

Her big break came in 1927 after the death of Florence Mills, whom she succeeded as star of the *Blackbirds of 1928*. Since then she has broadcast and recorded with a wide range of artists, from Ellington, Calloway, and Fats Waller to Rudy Vallée, Ray Ventura, and Willie Lewis.

Last year she was running a small night club of her own in Paris before coming over here to appear in the Drury Lane show *The Sun Never Sets*. After touring with this production she opened her own night club in the West End.

Her style nowadays has very few of the Negro characteristics of her early work but is still very personal.

Q.—Who are your favourite singers?

A.—Ethel Waters and Maxine Sullivan for jazz; outside jazz, Beatrice Lillie and Florence Desmond.

Q.—What are your favourite songs?

A.—'I can't give you anything but love', from the original *Blackbirds* show, which I've featured ever since. More recently, 'Small Fry' and 'Change Partners'.

Q.—Which are your favourite bands?

A.—Ray Noble, Duke Ellington, Don Redman—and dozens more.

Q.—Do you play any instrument?

A.—Guitar.

Q.—What do you think makes a good jazz singer?

A.—Intuition.

Q.—What would you rather do if not sing?

A.—Be a modiste. I nearly finished as one after leaving University.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THOSE who associate the name of Geraldo with such specialised performances of dance music as tangos, rumbas, and symphonic jazz presentations should be particularly interested in the new series of programmes in which this versatile leader is employing a straightforward dance orchestra. There will be a session for dancing on Thursday afternoon at 4.20, and a vocal session with the same combination during the following week.

With the exception of the brass section, Geraldo is employing almost the same combination for these programmes as he does at the Savoy Hotel. The band was recently strengthened by the addition of several notable stars, not the least of whom is George Evans, a treble valuable asset as tenor saxophonist, arranger, and vocalist. Andy McDevitt, already familiar to 'Band Waggon' listeners, is also with Geraldo now, playing tenor sax and clarinet, while the other saxes are Harry Hayes and Cyril Grantham.

The brass section consists of Max Goldberg, Clinton French, and Chick Smith on trumpets with Eric Breeze on trombone. Sid Bright, Geraldo's brother, is at the piano. Bill Tringham plays guitar, Jock Cummings is the drummer, and Don Stuteley the bassist. With Campoli and Thompson on violins, and arrangements by Phil Cardew, Stan Bowsher, and others, Geraldo completes this excellent combination.

* * * * *

Another leader who was chiefly associated with 'atmosphere' music, but has more lately been identified also with ordinary dance music, is Mantovani. Probably few listeners remember that during his long stay at the Monseigneur his Tipica Orchestra was engaged to play light music, while another band took over for dancing. As an experiment Mantovani tried out some numbers in strict tempo one evening, and was pleasantly surprised to find that some of the early diners got up and danced to his music. This initial success with a dance band lacking the usual brass section led to the band's engagement at another restaurant in the capacity of dance orchestra.

* * * * *

This week's Continental broadcast, to be given by Willie Lewis and his Orchestra, will introduce a combination almost entirely different from the one heard previously under his name.

Lewis, one of the most popular musical figures in Paris, seems to be one of the few band leaders boasting a genuine baritone voice. He is planning to introduce one or two guest stars in the programme, selected from the wide range of coloured talent which is generally available in Paris.

* * * * *

Wednesday night's 'Swing Time' record recital will be another memorial selection of recordings by the late Eddie Lang, still regarded as America's greatest jazz guitarist. The name of 'B. M. Lytton-Edwards', deviser of this programme, conceals the identity of two feminine students of Lang's work.



THE PENNSYLVANIANS REHEARSE.—Jane Wilson, Fred Waring and Patsy Garrett—Fred with The Two Bees and a Honey—Donna Dae—Fred shows drummer Poley McClintock—Gordon Goodman, tenor vocalist.

Teddy Wilson Catches the Comeback Habit

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

- Benny Goodman Quartet.
 "Opus 1."
 "Sweet Georgia Brown."
 (***H.M.V. B8851.)
- Benny Goodman and his Orchestra.
 "Ciribiribin."
 "The Blue Room."
 (**H.M.V. B8852.)
- "Is That The Way To Treat A Sweetheart?" (**).
 "I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart" (***).
 (H.M.V. B8853.)

LAST week it was Tommy Dorsey who made a smashing come-back. This time it's Teddy Wilson, whose last few issues have presented commercial tunes, a bit muddily recorded and played without the old Wilson legerdemain.

Cavorting Like A Temperature Chart!

He is his old brilliantly deft self again in the new Quartet release. (N.B. Any reports that Stacy plays on this disc are childish.) Teddy and the other three concocted *Opus 1* at rehearsals, as you will see from their names on the label as "composers," and perhaps the delicious originality of this morsel is one of the reasons why the Wilson of yore has returned here.

The little frill played together by clarinet and vibraphone are as charming as ever. Tough sounds alternately like a frog and a woodpecker, but gives tremendous support.

Sweet Georgia Brown is only a mite less great. Hampton's second chorus has more swing and clarity of style than anything I can remember in his career, and the harmonic obliqueness of the first phrase captivates me. Notice also

someone (probably Lionel) grunting and mumbling at intervals, and just after the record ends. Or is it Tough emulating Krupa?

Benny Goodman's notes cavort like a temperature chart. He is still one of the clarinet players.

Of the four band sides, I will skip the first and third, as they are just routine stuff. In passing, though, I'll point out that *Ciribiribin* moulds into a passable twin brother of *Chinatown's* chord sequence.

A Long, Yawning Chasm

The other numbers, *Blue Room* and *I Let A Song*, are almost certainly Fletcher Henderson arrangements. Nice alteration of the chords in bars 5 and 6, first chorus, *Blue Room*. Benny's second chorus sounds like diluted Pee-Wee Russell. Last chorus uninteresting. Band sounds no better or worse for having 3-coloured rhythm section and Lester Young in sax section.

I Let A Song is a truly magnificent arrangement, boldly different, yet not screwy. The muted brass passages are what I am really talking about; and the coda.

But in the middle, including Martha Tilton's vocal, there is a long yawning chasm—and I mean yawning.

Of special interest to students of: clarinet, vibraphone (Hampton), piano (Wilson), drums (Tough) (B.8851); clarinet, brass section, sax section, orchestration (B.8853, 2nd side).

- Jimmy Noone and his Orchestra.
 "I Know That You Know."
 "Sweet Lorraine."
 (*Vocalion S.216.)

Jimmy Noone is one of the best clarinetists in the world, and one of the worst. It is perhaps the prerogative of untrained or un-"sophisticated" artists to be erratic. Noone's playing sometimes descends into the slimy, smeary, sentimental and banal (*Sweet Lorraine*), or the busy, staccato meaninglessness of *I Know That You Know*. The irritating return to the "tune" half-way through each chorus, and the crude attempt to harmonise it, make this side even more tiresome.

Don't allow the fact that this disc comes from the same session as the elegant *Bump It* hoodwink you into believing that there must be some obscure beauty in the new coupling.

To cap it all, O'Neil Spencer sings a chorus of *Sweet Lorraine*, and turns the lady sour.

- Al Cooper's Savoy Sultans.
 "The Thing."
 "Jeep's Blues."
 (**Vocalion S.214.)

Johnny Hodges fixed up a beautifully simple, simply beautiful routine on the blues, recording it with some of Duke's boys as *Jeep's Blues*. Cooper's gang has tried to copy this record, but is just that much too much out of tune.

The same faulty pitch makes me shift uneasily in my chair at *The Thing*, a record comprising two elementary riff choruses, one good but uncertain trumpet chorus, and a bowed bass solo by Grachan Moncur (Cooper's brother). This novelty is okay once in a while from Slam, but as a habit it will become tiresome.

Melody Maker

Feather Forecast and News

ARTIE SHAW TOPS POLL

TO my amazed delight Artie Shaw retained the lead right to the end of the recent *Down Beat* poll and finished up ahead of Goodman, Crosby and the whole gang. I don't suggest that the results indicate any real order of merit; it is merely gratifying to see that Shaw has at last won the recognition from which Goodman's priority obscured him for so long.

Some Really Curious Results

The voting was full of ridiculous anomalies, of course. Coloured bands were inevitably low in the running, Basie being fourth, Ellington eighth and Lunceford ninth. The arrangers' list produced a hideous result: Larry Clinton won, with Fletcher Henderson, Sampson, Haggart and Ellington as runners up in that order! And the No. 1 guitarist was Benny Heller!

There were crumbs of comfort. Billie Holiday rose to fourth in the singers. Jimmy Dorsey's band was ahead of Tommy's. But for the most part the results proved yet another dismal reminder of the ductile sheepishness of the American public.



Hugues Panassié looks around in New York, where he is at present on a trip.

In the meantime there are so many dozens of good Shaw records of the past year still unissued here that H.M.V. can never catch up. *Begin The Beguine; My Reverie; Back Bay Shuffle; Comin' On; Any Old Time* (with Billie Holiday); *It Had To Be You*—these are among the best. I suppose there's nothing we can do about it.

* * *
I am obliged to a Belgian reader for

the following admirable illustration of the reliability of us so-called authorities on jazz. The amazing thing is that both comments come from the same issue of the same magazine. "Count Basie's band. . . . 'Out The Window,' excellently arranged by Eddie Durham and full of brilliant solos by Lester Young, Benny Morton. . . ." (Hugues Panassié in "Hot Jazz," Nov., 1938, p. 17.)

"Count Basie and his Orchestra. 'Out The Window'; 'Every Tub.' These two sides are unworthy of a band like Basie's. I'll never understand how Eddie Durham . . . could give us as banal a work as 'Out The Window.' Benny Morton's trombone solo is not too successful: no interesting ideas, uncertain hesitant execution, painful to

head." (Hugues Panassié in "Hot Jazz," Nov., 1938, p. 21.)

What, my correspondent points out, can one think of an authority who makes such an astounding contradiction?

* * *
Fame and fortune don't always go together. I see that Slim and Slam, embittered by this, are talking about a legal fight concerning their recording royalties, since they believe that 104,000 records of *Flat Foot Floogie* were sold, though they have not received payment on this basis.

"It's the old story," they say. "We were such an overnight success that we didn't have time to get to know the ropes and find how to deal with managers. We're not the only coloured artists wondering why we don't make more money. We're practically broke all the time now, and if we can't straighten things out we're going right out of the business."

* * *
That erratic and brilliant guy, Charlie Barnet, is in the news again. He has opened with a band at the Famous Door, which is described as quite sensational; a full size affair crammed with Ellington, Carter, Basie and Henderson arrangements. Barnet has been fooling around with an alto lately, which he plays every bit as well as his tenor.

It Wasn't Serious

There was an incident the other night depicting beautifully the mentality of the average American song-plugger. Barnet met one of them and asked whether he'd heard the band's broadcast. "Sure," was the reply, "you were swell; but it's a shame they cut you off the air for an announcement. Something about an earthquake in Chile."

"No kidding," said Barnet, "was it serious?"

"Naw," said the plugger, "they only cut off one song."

Jam Session Next Monday

ON Monday night at 8.15, in the First Avenue Hotel, High Holborn, another jam session has been arranged for the swing fans.

Bertie King, tenor saxophonist, Leslie Hutchinson, trumpeter, Frank Denny, guitarist, and Bruce Vanderpuye, bass player, all from the coloured band at the Florida, will be playing real jazz.

George Shearing, the coming "Earl Hines of England," and soloist in last week's Band Waggon, is also performing.

In addition, Leonard Feather is bringing some brand new Ellington records, just arrived from America, and some copies of the recent Danny Polo-Garland Wilson session from Paris. All swing enthusiasts are welcome.

"Star"

YET ANOTHER COME-BACK!

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

Andy Kirk and his Clouds of Joy.

"Messa Stomp."

"Jump, Jack, Jump."

(****Brunswick 02707.)

ANOTHER come-back! Pha Terrell doesn't croon in either of these numbers. This is a back-to-nature, reversion-to-type Kirk record. Mary Lou Williams has written a great new arrangement of her old *Messa Stomp*, which, excepting one sixteen-bar minor movement, consists basically of twelve-bar blues chords, but disguised and adorned with an ingenuity and variety worthy of comparison with Ellington.

This is not the most polished band in the world, but it knows so much about phrasing and execution that the odd peccadillos can be overlooked. As a matter of fact, the ensemble plays unusually well in *Jump Jack*, a simple composition by an unidentified

Mr. Roberts, which affords fine opportunities to the saxes in general, and Dick Wilson in particular.

I cannot praise the American Decca recording too highly. How this music comes to life! As with Basie, the microphone seems to be right inside the piano when Mary Lou takes her admirable solos.

Of special interest to students of: piano and arranging (Mary Lou Williams); brass section; sax section; tenor (Dick Wilson); drums (Ben Thigpen).

Trixie Smith.

"Trixie Blues."

"Freight Train Blues."

(****Vocalion S.217.)

This is not a very remarkable blues record, unless you consider, like me, that all the hundreds and thousands of blues records just as good as this which appear regularly in the American lists are also remarkable. It is the fact that so few records of this kind reach the English lists that makes this a "must" for all conscientious collectors.

Trixie Smith sings the same sort of blues phrases as her dead namesake. She sings twelve-bar blues nearly all the time (including both these sides).

She would seem hopelessly monotonous to people who can't be bothered to get inside this music. Her diction is better than Bessie's, her style less shamelessly sensuous, but still powerful. The accompaniments are gloriously typical; the lyrics valuable to folk-lore researchers.

Of special interest to students of: singing; clarinet (prob. Sidney Bechet); trumpet (Charlie Shavers); guitar (Teddy Bunn); bass.

Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra.

"Ain't Misbehavin'."

"I Can't Give You Anything But Love."

(**Decca F.6954)

Decca was asking for trouble in get-

ting Louis to re-record two numbers of which his original versions (on Parlophone R 462 and R 753) are so famous.

It is useless to defend Louis on the grounds that comparisons are odious or that his style to-day is merely different, not better or worse. I defy anyone playing these records over after hearing the originals to declare himself more stimulated or satisfied by the new versions. It is simply a matter of good and bad.

No, I'm afraid if you must buy records of Louis Armstrong playing and singing these two numbers you will have to get Parlophone R.462 and R.753.

Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra.

"Darktown Strutters' Ball."

"Dusk in Upper Sandusky."

(**Brunswick 02706.)

It's all too seldom we get hot music from Tommy's brother's band. In this disc it's dangling in front of us and then snatched away. Most of the first side is vocal, featuring the fat coloured lass who used to be with this band (June Richmond), and too much of the backing sounds like the work of Irish revolutionaries, though actually it

is just Ray McKinley in an interminable drum solo.

That Jimmy can still play some nice clarinet and that he has a swell rhythm section is shown in the intro of *Darktown*. Miss Richmond, I might add, is not downright bad; she merely grates on me a trifle, and I try to concentrate on the clarinet background.

Moth-eaten

Riffing

I am not prejudiced against *Dusk*; in fact it was only after deciding I disliked it that I noticed Clinton's name as part-composer. Then, said I, "I thought as much!" Aside from the dreadful drumming drill, there is some riffing so moth-eaten that the holes are bigger than the material. This is one of the worst records of the year.

Ken Johnson and his West Indian Dance Orchestra.

"My Buddy."

"The Sheik Of Araby."

(**Decca F.6958.)

Would you please listen to the Andy Kirk record and compare it carefully with the above. You will then observe the handicap under which British bands record—the handicap of recording. The contrast is like looking first at a brilliant close-up in Technicolor and then inspecting a vague long shot in monochrome, slightly out of focus.

Disregarding this point, *The Sheik* has many good points. It's arranged by Bob Mosley, the coloured pianist who used to accompany Mabel Scott. He can be forgiven for lifting the intro of Duke's *Merry-Go-Round* on the grounds of the good stuff that follows. The solos (including David Wilkins' good trumpet chorus) are backed by appropriate figures. The tenor is gutless, and the whole band, especially rhythm, seems to need a shove in the back.



Jimmy Dorsey's brother Tommy enjoys himself under the chandelier

ting Louis to re-record two numbers of which his original versions (on Parlophone R 462 and R 753) are so famous.

Nothing could be more tragically illustrative of Louis's career than a comparison of these versions. The two modern sides are made with the white band heard in *Pocketful Of Dreams*. Compared with the Luis Russell band on the 1929 *I Can't Give You*, or the Carroll Dickerson band on the 1929 *Ain't Misbehavin'*, the white band is clean and correct; yet even with Dickerson's fiddle, the rough saxes, Louis's quotation from *Rhapsody In Blue* and fluffed notes, I would rather take the original versions, because all this has put me in the mood where I find an ounce of sincerity is worth a pound of polish.

New Aspects of Armstrong

The comparison has shocked me with things I didn't realise about the new Armstrong. It has shown me that the new Armstrong hasn't even as much swing or as free an harmonic imagination as the old. Louis's memorable vocal in the old *I Can't Give You* had a spontaneity that makes the present

~~Over-long~~

Bridge Passages

My Buddy is weaker all round, chiefly because there is no space left for improvisation, a grave fault in an ordinary chorus arrangement. And the first chorus is played straight on electric guitar, fortunately with rhythmic background figures as relief. There are over-long bridge passages with burdensome whole-tone effects. The chorus for four saxes may be excellently written, but it is in the Carter style and requires Carter technique and interpretation.

Jabbo Smith and his Orchestra.

"Rhythm In Spain."

"More Rain More Rest."

(**Vocalion S.219.)

Somebody should hint gently to Mr. Smith that he should give up writing lyrics. Even after *Absolutely*, his first release, he reaches a new low with *More Rain*. Why not spend that much time polishing up his trumpet playing, since apart from a tendency to hurry some notes he plays some grand stuff?

Machine Guns In Spain!

Recorded much earlier in the war and released just in time, *Rhythm In Spain* has nothing worse in justification of its title than a few machine gun effects once in a while. And one hand-grenade.

Of special interest to students of: trumpet (Jabbo Smith); alto (L. Johnakins); tenor (Sam Simmons); piano (Jimmy Reynolds).

ARMSTRONG STARTS SOMETHING

Feather Forecast and News

SOMETHING which threatens to become a new fashion has been launched by the extraordinary success of Louis Armstrong's excursion into spirituals. I am talking of commercial success, for, whatever the critics think of Louis's alliance with the Lyn Murray choir, he certainly started something when the Decca company dug up *Shadrack* and *Jonah And The Whale* as material for that session.

The story behind *Chadrack* is typical of the freakish way songs sometimes make a belated hit. Copyrighted in 1931, it was one of a series of "songs for voice and piano" written by a good-looking young white man named Robert Hunter MacGimsey, who is chiefly an attorney-at-law, but also a composer and whistler.

Phenomenal Whistling

After passing the bar examination he was private secretary to a U.S. senator, but his allegedly phenomenal whistling brought him back into the music business and into the White House as a concert artist. He calls himself a "trilloquist," which seems as good a name as any for it. He has broadcast and recorded for Victor, illustrating his ability to whistle classics in two- and even three-part harmony.

To come to the point, he was always fascinated by the native songs of the South, and, like Handy, picked up many ideas from the Southern Negroes. The song copies of the numbers Louis recorded are written in dialect, almost exactly as you hear them spoken on the discs. And *Shadrack*, in case you didn't bother to look it up, is the story of three Biblical characters — third chapter of Daniel—named Shadrach, Meshach and Abed-nego.

The revival of this number has so tickled the public fancy in the States that they now have all the bands playing it from a stock arrangement in what passes for swing style. I tell you all this because you will obviously be hearing more of it soon.

* * *

Goodman Rumour

It looks as though that rumour about Benny Goodman's retirement may, in a sense, be true. With so many of his men either forming their own bands or running off to other people's, and with Willard Alexander (Benny's manager) scouting for talent to be used in the bands of these Goodman alumni, there seems to be more solidity in the report that B.G. will give up active leading to become associated with Alexander in the job of advising on swing talent and lining up bands for MCA. This, however, can't happen until Benny's commercial radio commitments are at an end, which is some months ahead; and anyway HMV has enough back-number recordings to keep going until the early winter of 1937.

* * *

McKenzie Retiring?

Talking about retirements, you may remember that Alistair Cooke told us on the air during that last jam session that Red McKenzie was on his way home and was giving up the business. Maybe Red meant it when he said it, but I now see that the old Spirits of Rhythm-plus-McKenzie combination is back at work in a place called Kelly's Stables in the heart of New York. Including Leo Watson. Which is, methinks, a good thing all round.



Joe Marsala gives all he's got

Take It Or Leave It

You do hear some striking stories from the States. There are two this week, of which I'll give you one immediately with a take-it-or-leave-it:—Barney Bigard is experimenting with a new plastic material that may replace the use of reeds in wind instruments, because good reeds have been difficult to obtain in the past two years (why? are they needed for armaments?) and this may revolutionise the industry.

The other story is about Tommy Dorsey. He took his Clambake Seven to a party. The audience consisted of three chimpanzees. The object was to study the effect of swing music on "man's primordial ancestors." A spec-

tator of the ceremony was a sane man named Bolton, who was once head of a university psychology department. Said Bolton: "Simians react to the high frequency of vibrations in music played in fast tempo. They are soothed by sweet music."

Wait a minute, I haven't finished. This took place in Philadelphia, and, although his audience consisted of three chimpanzees, Dorsey had to pay a "stand-by" fee of forty-five dollars for local musicians in order to secure the Union's permission for this public performance.

You must excuse me now. I have an appointment to try out the effects of a Benny Goodman record on an audience consisting of Hitler, Goering and Goebbels. LEONARD G. FEATHER.

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Feb. 25th

NAT GONELLA

PRO or CON?

"Rophone," Our Hot Record Critic, Propounds a Problem for YOU

Since so many of my readers have taken exception to my attitude towards Nat Gonella's records, I am venturing to invite comments. Please write on a postcard and tell me in about a couple of dozen words: (a) Do you approve of, and agree with, my opinion regarding Nat Gonella? If so, why? (b) Do you disagree? If so, why?

The best answers from each faction will be published, and will receive respectively (a) a record by Louis Armstrong and (b) a record by Nat Gonella.

Write to "Rophone," THE MELODY MAKER, 93, Long Acre, W.C.2. No correspondence can be entered into.



Milt Gabler (who runs the Commodore Music Shop, New York's swing centre) and a pair of trumpet aces—Bobby Hackett and Max Kaminsky.

Nat Gonella
 "You Must Have Been A Beautiful Baby" (**)
 "I Must See Annie Tonight" (*)
 (Parlo. F1353.)

LET those who accuse me of "prejudice" regarding Nat Gonella take heed of the following incident: I walked into the room when someone was playing this record, and without any idea of what was being played I formed the immediate impression that there was something wrong with it, and especially with the trumpet playing (it was the latter half of the *Annie* side). Since I didn't even know Nat Gonella had recorded in America, does this sound like "prejudice"?

Having now found out all about the disc, I sum up as follows. To take people like Benny Carter and Billy Kyle and put them to work on tunes like *Annie* and *Baby* is the musical way of using a steam-engine to crack a walnut.

Not A Perfect Band

Not that this is a perfect band; the rhythm section is weak and doesn't even keep steady tempo in *Annie*. Buster Bailey, as you know, can be very bad at his worst, and is clearly not too well acquainted with the tunes here. Benny's alto is pleasant, if a trifle too florid.

As for Nat's work, he has a great deal in common with such American trumpet players as Louis Prima—that is to say, he plays hot but never seems to get off. He also plays one or two wrong notes, but that wouldn't matter if the general style compensated. His best work is the first chorus of *Baby*. I won't attempt to describe his vocals, because if you like them you will like them.

I'll keep this record, personally, because Kyle plays the opening chorus of *Annie*, and all Kyle should be preserved for posterity. But Heaven (and the red pencil-mark I've made on the disc) prevent me from ever again hear-

ing that awful clambake in the last two choruses.

Slim and Slam.
 "Buck Dance Rhythm."
 "Dopey Joe."
 (**Parlophone R2634.)

In an effort to find something else as different as the Floogee, Slim and Slam have desperately resorted to tap dancing. My sincerest condolences.

There is more of the bass-and-voice-unison stuff here, and a surprise packet in the shape of a tenor sax, excellently played. But Slim had better stop trying to "compose" tunes. The Floogee was never composed; it just happened.

Of special interest to students of: guitar, tap dancing (Slim), bass (Slam), tenor sax, piano.

Ella Logan.
 "Adios Muchachos."
 "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles."
 (**Parlophone R2635.)

The swing rumba delivery has a manner of effete sophistication to which I have extraordinarily strong sales resistance.

You won't believe me, but on the other side someone actually blows bubbles. Which may make this the first record on which someone has actually blown bubbles. Ella and Mr. Botkin's Band are both much more acceptable, bubbles or no bubbles.

Of special interest to students of: trumpet; bubble blowing.

Mildred Bailey and her Orchestra.
 "They Say."
 "Love Is Where You Find it."
 (**Parlophone R2633.)

I know I'm late in admitting it, because nothing is harder to shake off than a clinging sentiment; but Mildred Bailey's singing is past its zenith. I listened to this record the night after Spike Hughes put *What Kind O' Man Is You* on the air, and I almost wept. Since the days of that disc, Mildred has been sent to the laundry of commercial tunes and she's come back with all the dye washed out.

Of special interest to students of:

aylophone (Red Norvo); arranging (Eddie Sauter).

Red Norvo and his Orchestra.
 "I Have Eyes."
 "You're A Sweet Little Headache."
 (*Parlophone F1370.)

Let me prepare you for the shock. You'll hear a man singing on both these titles, and you're likely to always now that Mildred has left the band. The pillow-slip crooning of Terry Allen will assuage America's exhausted jitterbugs more frequently than before. Unless you want to study the scoring this is a pretty sad platter.

Of special interest to students of: arranging (Eddie Sauter).

Ovie Alston and His Orchestra
 "Spareribs And Spaghetti"
 "Twinkle Dinkle"
 (**Col. DB 5055)

Be it known to all men that *Honey-suckle Rose*, to all intents and royalties, is now *Spareribs And Spaghetti*, composed by Ovie Alston. The band still sounds like a bridge passage between Hopkins and Basie. Familiar stuff: first chorus with brass playing one riff against saxes playing another; then solos, and variations on the riff by way of dessert.

Reasons Various And Extensive

Although *Twinkle Dinkle* also has some good solos, I dismiss it not so much because of the spineless lyrics written and sung by brother Ovie, but because that electric guitar is here again, and again incongruously used.

Of special interest to students of: trumpet (Ovie Alston); trombone; alto and baritone saxes; piano; drums.

Gene Krupa and His Orchestra
 "Walkin' And Swingin'"
 "Since My Best Gal Turned Me Down"
 (**Col. DB 5056)

You can have a most illuminating time comparing this version of Mary Lou Williams' composition with the same arrangement as she played it with Kirk's band in this same Columbia series (DB5023).

Every point is in Kirk's favour; the recording, the life and attack in performance, Mary Lou's own solo. That version really did walk and swing. Krupa's merely struts—and it's quite typical that the tempo should have been increased.

Since *My, etc.* sounds better if only because there's nothing else to compare it with. There is a good trombone (Bruce Squires, ex-Pollack) and a trumpet with that strident Ziggy Elman tone, and some nice sax section stuff.

One thing stands out from both

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these sides. Success, adulation and killer-diller arrangements have had their effect, and Gene Krupa has matured into a very poor drummer.

Reissues, etc.:

Duke Ellington and his Orchestra.

"Black and Blue."

"Jungle Jamboree."

(Brunswick 02701.)

Frankie Trumbauer and his Orchestra.

"Get Happy."

"Futuristic Rhythm."

(Parlophone R2625.)

Don Redman and his Orchestra.

"Got The Jitters."

"Nagasaki."

(Parlophone R2624.)

Bing Crosby.

"Some Of These Days."

"Shine" (with Mills Bros.).

(Columbia DB1845.)

If you aren't well acquainted with these already, the Trumbauer is of more interest than the others, because Tram played one of his rare clarinet solos in *Get Happy* and Bix is on the other side. Tram also sings in his rather likeable manner on both titles, and, by the way, plays the sax solo in Bing's *Some Of These Days*.

Instead of cramming up the new lists with them, why can't records like these be put into a special repertory list so that everyone can have them who's interested, and so that there's room in the ordinary issues to put out more of the current stuff we are so consistently missing?

* * *

Parlophone have relisted the Venuti-Lang *Goin' Places* and *Doin' Things*, and have transferred from Vocalion the Basie Quintet's *Shoe Shine Swing* and *Lady Be Good*.



ADELAIDE HALL, ex-Ellington vocalist, now doing stage and cabaret work in this country and broadcasting with Joe Loss.

ANOTHER three hearty cheers! My correspondence burden will be further lightened by the news that Irving Mills has established the first information bureau for jazz fans.

In future, if you want to know who played what on

which, when, and you can't find it in *Hot Discography*, all you have to do is write to the information department of Master Records Inc., 1619, Broadway, New York City.

"The bureau," adds Mr. Mills, "will be prepared to furnish data on swing personalities, re-

Feather Forecast and News

THREE HEARTY CHEERS!

Irving Mills Establishes Information Bureau

cordings and bands." And the department is in the able hands of Al Brackman, who has been busy editing the recently published edition of a novel called "Love In Swingtime," which bears Tommy Dorsey's name as part-author and was serialised in a big New York paper.

If I were Irving Mills I'd be scared stiff of starting an information bureau. He admits that last year they received 2,000 miscellaneous enquiries, though there was no official information agency. The number of others who will deluge his office with queries now is quite unthinkable.

How about everyone starting the ball rolling by writing to ask why those records of his are still not released in England? Or maybe that's one question to which nobody knows the answer!

Latest Album

Shaw's is the latest band to produce an album of records. It consists of ten musical comedy hits, some of which you would hardly expect to suit his style: *Carioca*; *Bill*; *Donkey's Serenade*; *My Heart Stood Still*; *Lover Come Back To Me*; *Rosalie*; *Zigeuner*; *Supper Time*; *The Man I Love*; *Vilia*.

Do you remember De Lloyd McKay, the swell girl pianist who was over here with the Blackbirds? When she returned to the States she was signed for an appearance on Broadway with the "Old Maestro," Ben Bernie, and caused such a sensation that since then she's become a regular member of the Bernie organisation.

I'm very sorry to report that Herschel Evans, that fine tenor sax and clarinet man of Basie's band, is dead. He succumbed to heart and kidney trouble in a New York hospital a couple of weeks ago. Only thirty

years old, Evans had earned his reputation as a cornerstone of the Basie orchestra. He helped to compose and arrange a goodly part of the band's original material, including *Texas Shuffle* and *Doggin' Around*. He will certainly be missed.

What They Like

One of the most heartrending news items from the States lately is the crop of sales figures disgorged by the gramophone companies. It seems that Ella Fitzgerald's original recording with the Chick Webb band of *A Tisket* had a higher sale than any other record in America for the past eight years. It sold a quarter of a million copies!

The previous record for Decca in America was held by Bing Crosby's *Sweet Leilani* at 160,000. The original Farley-Riley version of *Music Goes Round* came pretty near a six-figure total, too.

In the more expensive records, Victor's 75c. label (3s.) didn't prevent Tommy Dorsey's *Marie* and *Song Of India* from reaching 150,000. And, hold your breath, one of the next best was the 100,000 of *My Reverie* by Larry Clinton. And the pornographic *Ol' Man Mose* by Eddy Duchin has topped 85,000.

American medley: John Kirby's band has left the Famous Door and Nan Wynn has opened there, singing with Charlie Barnet's new orchestra. . . . Kirby is heard in the first record by a new combination, the Benny Goodman Quintet, in which Wilson, Hampton and the new drummer Buddy Schutz play *I Cried For You*. . . . George Tunnell, alias Bon-Bon, whom you may remember as one of the Three Keys who visited London some five years ago, is the latest coloured singer to join a white band. Jan Savitt and His Top Hatters, who have taken over from Artie Shaw, signed him up. And that's the same hotel where Billie Holiday left Shaw's band because of alleged discrimination!

Melody Maker.
March 4th.

These names make news

DAILY EXPRESS, MONDAY, MARCH 5, 1939.

GOING home early yesterday morning, I was lucky enough to arrive at a fire in Bloomsbury just as the Brigade did, thus securing a front-row view.

It was only a small fire. In fact, we couldn't see anything of it for some minutes after the firemen had gone in: they went up a delicate-looking ladder, in at a first-floor window, each placing a stout foot on the slope of a sham-classical pediment, each sliding feet first into the room, turning his helmeted head towards us.

Then one of them opened a second-floor window. Instantly a smell of burning reached us, smoke poured out—mottled with light by flashes from firemen's lamps.

"WE" included by this time several taxi-drivers, women in evening dress, neighbours in dressing-gowns, homing waiters, down-&-outs, a couple of policemen who seemed to know all along, disillusioningly, dampingly, that there was "nothing in it."

THEN the front door opened. "Stand back, please." Several firemen appeared, carrying what thrill-seekers thought for a moment was a corpse.

It was only the smouldering, hardly recognisable remains of an old sofa. They dumped it in the gutter, squirted it with water, left it, an inglorious mess; drove swiftly off.

We moved on, too. As we went, I glanced at the name-plates by the open door. . . .

Good heavens! I *thought* there was something familiar about the building.

Why, I had called there a few months ago. And the occupant of the smoke-belching second-floor office had borrowed six rare gramophone records from me—West Indian records—and (of course) not yet returned them. . . .

Radio Times, March 3rd.

ON MONDAY there will be a programme that will give less trouble than most to Alexandra Palace's make-up department—'Harlem in Mayfair', the coloured show that made its television début last Saturday. Faces of coloured people televise particularly well just as they are naturally; a touch of rouge on the lips and they are ready to be put in front of the cameras.

My neighbour Leonard Feather tells me that Fela Sowande's orchestra will please connoisseurs of dance music. Among the players are Leslie Hutchinson (not the one you know of), who is a fine trumpet player; Bertie King, a Jamaican virtuoso on the tenor saxophone; and Frank Deniz, guitarist.

Sowande himself plays the piano in the Teddy Wilson Negro style. A Nigerian, he is one of the few African-born natives to adopt American methods of playing. In Nigeria he was a choirmaster and organist.

Also this week, on Thursday, there will be another band that earns the respectful attention of Leonard Feather—Ray Ventura's.

William Hickey

TYPICAL U.S. SMALL BAND'S FINE DEBUT

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

John Kirby and His Onyx Club Boys.

"From A Flat To C"

"Undecided"

(***Vocalion S. 220)

THREE cheers, or four stars, for a new band!

At least, new in this form. You've heard them accompanying Midge Williams, and most of the boys have been in countless small band discs this past year; also a few of you may have imported the discs they made under Buster Bailey's name. But these are the first two English-released sides by the band as a band, if you can use the word for six men.

This is the type of six-piece jazz you will never hear in England. Their arrangements are strictly informal, the compositions bafflingly simple in their effectiveness. The arranged parts have a spontaneity of expression, and a trumpet-alto-clarinet blend, for which charming is the best, though inadequate, description. Without any collective improvisation, they give an impression of complete freedom.

No Interference With "Jamming"

Notice, too, how they avoid letting the composition interfere with the jamming. For instance, the first phrase in the chorus of *From A Flat To C* finds its fascination in the descending sequence on A flat 7, G flat 7, E 7 and D 7; but in the solo choruses later this is simplified to the ordinary *Nagasaki* chords. Other grand bits in this side: the riffs with the piano solo and the delectable middle part unison riff. The lovely repeated triplet phrase with which the disc ends.

All the soloists are at the top of

their form in this, Mr. Kyle's opus, and Mr. Shaver's opus on the back is only slightly less engaging. Note the precision of the staccato syncopations in the chorus after the muted trumpet solo.

Of special interest to students of: trumpet (Charles Shaver); clarinet (Buster Bailey); alto (Russel Procope); piano (Billy Kyle); drums (O'Neil Spencer); bass (John Kirby); small band arranging.

Trotting Out The Waller Licks

Count Basie and His Orchestra.

"Panassié Stomp"

"Do You Wanna Jump Children?"

(***Brunswick 02711)

I'm getting a little tired of pointing out that this record is *Nagasaki* or that is *Honeysuckle Rose*, or the other is *Tiger Rag*. In future perhaps I'll assume that you're all used to identifying these chord sequences. Anyway, for peace and quiet, *Panassié Stomp* equals *Nagasaki*. Basie trots out some more of the old Fats Waller licks with impudent success. Surprise: Benny Morton back to form with 24 swell bars, especially the half-time *Frankie-and-Johnny* bit in the second eight. A short spot by the late and genuinely lamented Herschel Evans. Two final choruses of Basie ensemble riffing in excelsis.

Play this as loud as you dare; try to get right into the room with the band. It helps.

Other side: goodish commercial tune, Rushing vocal.

Of special interest to students of: piano, tenor (Evans, Lester Young); trombone (Benny Morton); drums (Joe Jones); ensemble; arranging; singing.

Keeping The Good Stuff Back?

Erskine Hawkins and His Orchestra.

"Miss Annabella Brown" (***)

"I'm Madly In Love With You" (*)

(Regal-Zono M.R. 2980)

If both sides were like *Annabella* this would be the best value of the month. Alas, *Madly* is badly off; it might even have been better to leave this side blank. So it still works out at eightpence a side.

This band has improved amazingly; ensemble and arrangements on the Lunceford lines, as is also Mr. Hawkins' own trumpet playing. I can even stand this, by the way, in the finale where the background keeps belching out the key-note and Hawkins ad-libs his way to an F above high C. But the excuse for accepting this is what goes before it.

Regal-Zonophone has tons more wonderful stuff like this up its sleeve—why not roll up your sleeve, Regal-Zonophone?

Of special interest to students of: trumpet; tenor; piano; brass section; sax section; rhythm section.

Woody Herman and His Orchestra.

"Calliope Blues"

"The Goose Hangs High"

(***Vocalion S. 221)

From a *Yancy Special* opening, the first title threads its way into a fairground. The roundabout impressions, and the phrasing, give the atmosphere a certain stiltedness, yet Herman's singing and the originality of treatment make this a good example of another white band that is Doing Its Bit for jazz.

Big Names, But Not Performances!

Other side is an unexciting but Only thing is that occu-



Guy Lombardo, reported to be going sweet on swing

Ovie Alston and his Orchestra.

"Home Cookin' Mama."

"Walkin' The Dog."

(**Columbia DB5054.)

Here's a coloured band that lacks the Sultan's grave fault. There is no flashy brass work or killer-diller arranging, either; just plain, home-cooked jazz with good solos, two-star trumpeting and three-star singing by the leader. *Walkin' The Dog* is the better side. It sounds like the old Hopkins' band. There is a second-hand Basie at the keyboard. I like the deliberately corny coda (*I'm sure it's deliberate!*).

Did I mention that the recording is pretty bad?

Of special interest to students of: singing, trumpet, trombone, piano, baritone sax.

Hoagy Carmichael with Perry Botkin's Orchestra.

"Riverboat Shuffle."

"Hong Kong Blues."

(*Columbia DB5053.)

There's a hot harpsichord (or a piano with paper in the keys) in this band. It's an idea I've often wanted to hear properly exploited in jazz. I'm still wanting.

I'm sorry to hear Hoagy singing banal lyrics to a number like *River-*

boat, which was never meant to be a vocal opus. The band is neither good nor bad.

Hong Kong has all the laboured Chinese fourths and everything I feared. For some people, perhaps, mild amusement; for me, drivelling boredom.

NAT GONELLA.
I am now sorting out the postcards I received on the Nat Gonella controversy, and will publish the result next week. No more postcards can be accepted.—"ROPHONE."

Mills Brothers.
"Asleep In The Deep."
"Funiculi Funicula."

(**Brunswick 02709.)

Andrews Sisters.
"Little Jitterbug."
"Pross Chal."

(**Brunswick 02696.)

Well, what next! Well, strike me pink! Well, stone me!

That's all one can possibly say about the Mills Brothers' funicular and naval occasions.

I suppose if the Andrews' disc weren't all alike their sales would collapse, so who are we to complain? But I would so much like to hear them in a number which is (a) not by Cahn and Chaplin, (b) not "novel" or "special," (c) sincere. After all, they're good singers.

Melody Maker.
March 11th.



Working from 1.0 a.m. until 7.30 a.m. six nights per week, Herman S. Krauser, N.B.C.'s Radio City piano tuner, keeps the 38 studio pianos at precise concert pitch.

At long last I have news from Benny Carter. He's had a band for about three months now, he writes, but apart from a few theatre and one-night jobs he hasn't had any sort of a break, and is still hoping for a resident job. He waxes enthusiastic about three men in the band: Ernie Powell, tenor; Eddie Heywood, piano; and Tyree Glenn, "terrific on both trombone and vibes."

"My ambition," adds Benny, "is to build a good band and bring it to Europe some day."

He also adds something which you should find more than interesting, coming as it does from a musician of unimpeachable taste and discernment: "How is our mutual friend, George Chisholm? Is he really developing into the world's greatest trombone player as we thought? I'm sure he must be playing marvellously now. . . ."

News also from Edgar Sampson, who tells me he is no longer writing for Benny Goodman, but is keeping busy

Feather Forecast and News

BENNY CARTER WANTS TO COME BACK TO EUROPE

as a free lance and thinking over the possibility of getting his own band together.

The battle of the century has been taking place in Newark, N.J., where Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw were playing with their respective bands in two of the biggest theatres during the same week. The clarinet maestros have never coincided before, so the rivalry was quite intense.

In fact, the scenes at Shaw's theatre were apparently so characteristic of jitterbugging behaviour that I wonder whether Artie doesn't often get tired of the whole business and turn it in for a quiet life. Dozens of youths swarmed up uninvited on to the stage and started shagging around; one of them jumped on the stage from a balcony box, and, I'm not sorry to say, hurt himself badly. So thick was this mob that Tony Pastor couldn't even make his way through it to reach the mike for a vocal chorus. The police had to call out reserves.

Willie Bryant —Now A "Villain"

Similar nauseating occurrences took place at Goodman's venue, though it seems that Shaw drew even bigger business at the box office. The theatres went to no end of trouble in the way of publicity tie-ups. Each of Benny's boys drove into town in a car decorated with signs advertising the theatre show, this stunt being the result of an enterprising car dealer's brainwave.

The whole story makes one momentarily very happy to be in England.

Did you know that one of Harlem's former big-time bandleaders is now an actor? Willie Bryant, since giving up his orchestra, has been playing the villain opposite Ethel Waters in a Broadway show called *Mamba's Daughters*, which is one of the biggest hits of the New York season. At least he was in it until one night the fight

scene between them, which had previously caused many minor injuries to fingers and arms, became so realistic that Willie limped off the stage and has since been under doctor's orders!

New York's latest jazz venue is the Friday Club, where for a dollar a head every week you can hear all the top stars in an informal session without colour-line, the profits to be put into the funds of the Society of American Musicians "towards the advancement of modern jazz music." Condon, Freeman, Zutty, Hackett, Shaw, Marsala, Bushkin, Russell—oh, what's the use of going on? The whole thing makes one momentarily very unhappy not to be in New York.

Rest Of The News

Carroll Dickerson, the coloured violinist whose band was fronted by Louis Armstrong at the Savoy Ballroom a decade ago, is planning a come-back with a new orchestra under his direction. . . . Harry James' Orchestra can now be heard on short waves; James has been aiming to have himself officially tagged as "Young Man With A Horn," subject to sanction from the book publishers. . . .

Duke Ellington has received an award from A.S.C.A.P. (the American song-writers' organisation) for one of the best compositions of 1938, *I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart*. This is his third time among the honoured few, previous awards having been made for *Solitude* in 1934 and *Caravan* in 1937—but where does that leave Tizol? . . . Rex Stewart's latest featured number with the band is called *Boy Meets Horn*.

Just as I finished writing this, the postman arrived with some new Commodore recordings from New York. Tell you all about them next week.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Melody Maker
March 11th

"RIDDLE RHYTHM" RENEWED

WHEN the "Riddle Rhythm" programme produced by Leonard Feather of THE MELODY MAKER concluded its present series from Radio Normandy a couple of weeks ago, the I.B.C. officials were so impressed with its success that they decided to start it off again.

Commencing this Sunday, "Riddle Rhythm," which caters exclusively to the followers of dance bands and jazz, will begin a new series under Leonard's supervision.

To-morrow (Saturday), at 2.30 p.m., the results of the previous week's questions will be announced, and anyone who has not yet entered this novel contest should make a point of listening.

Wednesday, February 22, 1939

British Fans Know Stuff, but If It Becomes Too Tough They Duck Quiz

London, Feb. 14.

Station Normandy, France, has had some revealing experiences in connection with the 'Riddle Rhythm' (sustaining) programs with Leonard G. Feather which are broadcast in English and concern themselves with asking questions concerning phonograph records. Contest showed both the extent of swing fans in England and the point at which making the questions too tough killed the mail response.

While none of the questions any week were really easy something like 1,000 replies fell to 40 when the quiz purposefully got complex. Listeners who knew their stuff wouldn't bother at all unless they were convinced they had a chance to win. Next week a reasonable set of questions again brought 800 replies.

Prizes offered were swing records.

"Variety"

...s clause for play
...one parks during the sum

New Eastbourne Dance Hall

PLANS have been drawn up and a site leased near Eastbourne for a huge new "Monsieur" dance hall, which, it is hoped, will be built this summer at a cost of £70,000.

The new dance hall will provide employment for some lucky English band, and will be one of the biggest in this part of the country.

There will be accommodation for about fifteen hundred dancers, with an illuminated glass floor, and a central stage, which may be moved back and forth to the centre of the floor to accommodate fashion parades, cabarets and other entertainments.

Underneath the ballroom, there will be accommodation for a hundred cars with an additional space built in, to provide gas-proof and splinter-proof shelter for four thousand persons.

The building will require two hundred men in its construction, and will probably be completed in six months' time.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

RAY VENTURA, who has the only dance band in France that has achieved musical and financial success on the American scale, has planned another visit to London. This trip will be modelled on the lines of the one he made last year, to include a broadcast, a television performance, a record session, and concerts.

The broadcast will take place on Wednesday at 7.0. It will probably differ considerably from Ventura's weekly programmes in Paris, which generally contain a large element of French comedy numbers and tunes from Ventura's recent film. Potentially this is an outstanding swing band, including as it does such soloists as Alex Combelle (tenor sax), Philippe Brun (trumpet), formerly with Jack Hylton, an American drummer named Jerry Mengo, and the noted clarinettist Danny Polo, who was with Ambrose for five years before joining Ventura last autumn. Another featured artist is Max Geldray, a Dutchman, who has almost a monopoly in the strange pastime of playing hot music on the harmonica.

* * * * *

My colleague 'The Scanner' tells you in his article on this page of a programme on Monday that deserves the attention of any dance-music fan within reach of a television receiver—'Harlem in Mayfair', featuring Felix Sowande and his Orchestra.

* * * * *

In Wednesday's 'Swing Time' programme an amateur enthusiast will describe the rise of Fletcher Henderson, who for fifteen years has been well known in America as a band leader and pianist. It was with Henderson's band that Coleman Hawkins, the tenor sax star, became famous. Hawkins is returning next week to England for a short tour.

DON'T CALL THEM CROONERS

5—Sam Costa

Now free-lancing as a vocalist with Jay Wilbur, Al Collins, Joe Kaye, Alfred van Straten, the Six Swingers, and other bands, Sam Costa started his career in an advertising agency. An old friend of Maurice Burman, who is now Billy Bissett's drummer, he used to play in odd band jobs with him as a sideline. When they both did an audition for a band job in Margate, one of them was required to sing. Sam Costa took the risk. He first became well known for his singing with Jack Jackson, and in Monte Carlo with Bert Firman. Later, teamed with Judy Shirley, he further strengthened his popularity. Twenty-eight years old, he was married recently to a daughter of Dave Comer, one of the pioneer jazz pianists, and composer of 'Hors d'Œuvres'.

Q.—Who is your favourite singer? A.—Tony Martin.

Q.—What are your favourite songs? A.—'I Surrender, Dear' and 'These Foolish Things'.

Q.—Which is your favourite band? A.—Benny Goodman's.

Q.—Do you play any instrument? A.—I have often played piano with Maurice Winnick, and accompanied myself on records.

Q.—What do you think makes a good jazz singer? A.—I have had a certain amount of training as a singer, but don't know whether it helped me. It's really a combination of feeling and knowledge that you need.

Q.—What would you rather do if not sing? A.—I don't know; but I have a very big collection of opera records, and I wish I could be another Gigli!

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

FOUR studio walls will probably swell tomorrow afternoon (Saturday) when Ambrose leads in his company of no fewer than thirty-five souls for the first of three special broadcasts. Those who like their dance music on the big scale will find themselves very much at home here. The band alone consists of twenty-five instrumentalists, the other ten being chiefly vocalists.

Max Bacon, Vera Lynn, and Evelyn Dall, who have been on tour with an Ambrose octet act in which the leader himself did not take part, will be there, and Denny Dennis, who left Ambrose a couple of months ago, makes a reappearance. The 'Singtette' (another of these etymologically-mysterious words) is not a new patent gadget but a quartet consisting of three men and a girl who will sing for the first time in this programme.

Two numbers that have been featured by the octet act on the stage have been adapted for inclusion in the broadcasts. They are 'The Chestnut Tree', which bears only a third-cousin resemblance to the song of that name, and the famous Rigoletto quartet, which is even more distantly connected with its original.

Robert Wilson, the Scottish tenor whom listeners may remember in Ambrose's big broadcast the Christmas before last, is another guest artist in this formidable line-up. Sid Phillips and others are busy on the special arrangements. The band will, of course, be specially assembled for the occasions, as Ambrose still has no permanent orchestra of his own.

* * * * *

At the last moment I hear news of another American relay by Duke Ellington and his Orchestra on Wednesday (National, 7.0). This band, greater than ever in the twelfth year of its fame, has been accorded the honour of a concert in New York's Carnegie Hall, which will take place early in April, shortly before Ellington's fortieth birthday.

* * * * *

On Wednesday we bid farewell to Band Waggon. At least, there is no indication as I write this that it will be 'au revoir'. The final programme will present the two 'New Voices' that have received most votes during the series—Millicent Phillips from Birmingham and John Curtis from Eastbourne.

During these forty-two programmes there have been about 125 special orchestrations written for the band, the majority by Phil Cardew himself. It is remarkable how little credit Cardew and his Band Waggoners have received for their part in these shows. Naturally Arthur Askey and 'Stinker' have shared the bulk of the fan-mail, but one would have thought that at least a few listeners would be interested enough to write to the leader who provided such excellent music every Wednesday. However, in the week following this one, look out for a programme called 'Tunes from Band Waggon', in which Cardew will have things all to himself.

* * * * *

This week has seen the launching of yet another song-and-dance hit, the new generation in the 'Lambeth Walk' and 'Chestnut Tree' dynasty. Since the lyrics more or less describe the steps of the dance you will soon know all about it. The title is 'Park Parade' and the team who wrote it includes Arthur Young, the talented Scottish pianist. It is ironic (though hardly surprising) that his association with symphonic jazz work has gone unnoticed by a public that will be giving all its attention during these next weeks to his most lowbrow creation.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

TUESDAY evening will bring an auspicious moment for thousands of dance-music fans, when Elsie Carlisle makes her official 'come-back' in a programme which will be shared with Dave Frost's Orchestra.



Elsie Carlisle

During her recent serious illness and recuperation in Hove, this unflaggingly popular singer found proof of the fidelity of her public in the unceasing flow of sympathetic correspondence and inquiries which reached her from all over the country and abroad.

In this special broadcast Dave Frost, whose music she thought would be eminently suitable to provide her accompaniment, will present new tunes as well as the hardy annuals; but this does not mean the abandonment of the 'When You and I were Dancing' idea, which has been his hall-mark on the air since 1937. The combination will consist of three saxophones, trumpet, and rhythm section.

Spring Dance Music

Plans for the next quarter's dance music are now being completed. The general policy of dance-music programmes during April, May, and June will be continued on the present lines, having proved satisfactory to everyone (even the musicians). 'Music From The Movies' will also go on fortnightly. There will be one American and one Continental band relay each month; also two big new series of production programmes, one of them devised and presented by Van Phillips.

Starting on April 4, for not fewer than six weekly shows, this will be a new-style presentation with the accent on light comedy as well as music.

Van Phillips, who has been busy with film work since he was last on the air regularly, is now working on the scripts as well as the musical arrangements for the first programme.

* * * * *

Billy Bissett's determination to make his band one of the country's best has led to two new and important acquisitions. Freddy Gardner, often heard with his own swing combination on special broadcasts, has joined the band as tenor saxophonist, and Bruce Campbell, the talented Canadian trombonist, is back with the band. Originally heard here with Bissett, he was subsequently in Jack Hylton's band, and later contributed many excellent orchestrations as a member of Hugo Rignold's Orchestra.

Musical Biography

Midland listeners should enjoy 'From Banjo to Baton' on March 21, for this is a musical biography of Billy Merrin. It is written by Charles Hatton, with the band itself taking part. His boyhood in Nottingham, playing banjo and mandolin, his Air Force service, and his first job after the war in a Covent Garden ballroom band, will all form part of the story.

ARTIE SHAW NOT AT HIS BEST IN NEW ISSUE

Hot Records Reviewed by "ROPHONE"

Artie Shaw and his Orchestra.
 "Indian Love Call."
 "Nightmare."
 (**H.M.V. B8869.)

AFTER I have been complaining of H.M.V.'s failure to release a single one of the dozens of records made by Artie Shaw in the last year, H.M.V. finally gives way, and what do we get? Another version of *Nightmare*, which is already available here in a previous recording on Parlophone. And a backing with an introduction that lasts for half the record, unison vocal effects and other jitterbug-fodder.

This Is Not The Real Shaw

If H.M.V., disappointed with the sales of this coupling, decides not to issue any more Shaw records, it will be a downright shame. For, believe me, this is *not* the real Shaw. The band has improved immeasurably, as you can glimpse from the first (actual) chorus of *Indian Love Call*; but like so many

other bands, it has a very varied repertoire. If you could hear *Back Bay Shuffle* or *Comin' On* or any of the other far superior sides, you'd get the idea.

I have never liked *Nightmare* overmuch, and this version has one intolerable fault: the tempo drags. It starts too slow and finishes too, too slow. Whether this is intentional or just due to bad drumming, it's unpleasant.

Honestly, you can almost get a better idea of the band from these—

- Artie Shaw and his Orchestra.
 "I Have Eyes."
 "You're A Sweet Little Headache."
 (**Regal-Zono MR2977.)
- "Deep In A Dream."
 (*Regal-Zono MR2979.)

The last side is backed by a band called Blue Barron's, but the two titles on MR2977 are, to say the least of it, better than the same two titles by Norvo on Parlophone. Commercial, and Helen Forrest is just one more singer; but I'd rather have a headache than a nightmare.

- Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra.
 "Weary Blues."
 "Washboard Blues."
 (**H.M.V. B8868.)

A pity these titles couldn't be re-

versed. *Washboard Blues* has a charming weariness, whereas *Weary Blues* is fast, flashy and sometimes corny stuff nearer the washboard spirit. This side is one of the first T.D. band discs ever made; I've had a copy since 1935, but seldom bothered to play it.

The drummer is, of course, not Dave Tough, but a kid named Sam Rosen; the clarinet is Sid Stoneburn, the tenor Johnny van Eps. This particular band only existed for a few months. It has no distinction in its ensemble. Tommy's own solo is about the brightest spot.

Tommy Inspired —Benny Dull

But *Washboard Blues*, by the late 1938 Dorsey band, really inspires Tommy; perhaps it's the historic associations the number has for him, plus the wonderful tone colours in this new arrangement, for which we can probably thank Dean Kincaide. There are also short but swell passages by Mince on clarinet and Herfurt on tenor. Tommy wobbles towards the end, his last three cadenzas being better conceived than executed.

- Benny Goodman Quartet.
 "Blues In Your Flat."
 "Blues In My Flat."
 (**H.M.V. B8872.)

This is from the session described at length in the "M.M." on May 14 last. It was the first time Benny had ever recorded two whole sides of extempore twelve-bar blues. The first side is much the better because Lionel

Hampton sings three choruses in the second, and whereas Lionel is just an all-right singer, he is keeping three fine instrumentalists out of the foreground—including himself.

Goodman's phrasing and ideas are rather lax on both sides; Lionel's vibes and Teddy's piano are good, though not at their best or best recorded; Tough is almost inaudible throughout. Though I have heard better blues records than this, it gets by chiefly on its atmosphere as a soothing and quietly sincere piece of jazz.

- Bunny Berigan and his Orchestra.
 "Jelly-Roll Blues."
 "Rockin' Rollers' Jubilee."
 (**H.M.V. B8873.)

It's now fashionable to take some ancient record and transcribe it for modern orchestra, the corny bits along with the style. *Jelly-Roll Blues* sounds like the application of this rule to some antique piano solo. That is, some of it is consciously old-world;

but on the whole it's a fine arrangement, no doubt by Joe Lippman, who also takes a nice little titt-bit on piano. *Bunny's* wrong notes are again condoned by the wistful beauty of the right ones.

Also to be noted: the strong support given by guitar to the rhythm.

Despite its title, the reverse is commercial, with puny lyrics sung by Jayne Dover of the kind against which there ought to be legislation. Can't stand this chorus, but like the solos. Typical of Bunny that they had to issue this although he half-fluffed the last note.

Rudolph Dunbar (who is scheduled for a clarinet recital in New York shortly) and Duke Ellington.



GONELLA BALLOT
 Pro-Gonella winner: B. Harris, of Southampton.
 Anti-Gonella winner: Stanley Nursey of Hornsey.

★ ————— ★
SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT—No. 5.



**Dean
 Kincaide**

man Columbia period, when Benny was recording with a small pick-up band, using mostly Kincaide arrangements.

A good example of this early era of Benny's development is *Love Me Or Leave Me* and *Why Couldn't It Be Poor Little Me*. Dean didn't appear to be handicapped by the three-piece brass section; the staccato backgrounds and the riffing at the end of the first side, with Jack Teagarden filling it, are examples of his neat handling of a small instrumentation.

Changes The Tune

Notice also how little he changes the tune in the first chorus of each number, relying chiefly on effects of syncopation and dynamics.

A more flashy type of job was done with *Bugle Call Rag*, played by the later and larger band at the Billy Rose Music Hall. This is somewhat in "killer-diller" style with a synthetic clarinet climax, and is not representative of Kincaide at his best, to my mind; but the curious accordion-like effect of the clarinet against the hand-opened-and-shut brass in the last chorus is worth studying.

A fine Crosby arrangement which I feel safe in attributing to Kincaide is *Between The Devil and The Deep Blue Sea*. The clarinet's rhythmic unison phrase starts the record as a vamp-till-ready, then becomes a background as the brass comes in with the melody. The saxes have a few lovely bars in the second chorus; then there is a modulation in which the use of trombone rhythm behind the unison trumpets is a typical Dixieland touch.

The variety of this type of arranging is part of its charm; there are no lengthy passages of scoring for the same group of instruments, and no over stressing of the same counterpoint construction; and there are moments of striking originality such as the background to the tenor at the beginning of the final chorus.

Dixieland Band

Although it is largely a vocal opus, there is no doubt that *The Dixieland Band* will always remain one of Kincaide's most popular contributions to any jazz library. The Goodman record on HMV is representative of the work Dean did on this number, with some more of his simple but perfectly placed staccato brass backgrounds.

And when Helen Ward tells you "Here is a sample of the Dixieland Band," Kincaide enters into the spirit of the thing and writes a few bars which have quite an indescribable atmosphere.

Listen to the respective roles played in this and subsequent passages by trombone, saxes and trumpets, and see if you don't find it fascinating to examine the workings of an arranger's mind and the means by which he achieves his ends.

Of Kincaide's work with Dorsey I know nothing at present, but you can be sure that he will make his mark there as surely as he has with the others who have used his work. Intelligent, studious-looking Kincaide, who was married not long ago to a charming vocalist named Sharri Kaye, has only one slightly eccentric ambition—to do some film scores.

Let's hope Hollywood doesn't lure him away from Dorsey. Incidentally he boasts of having written much of his work in buses and trams and tubes—he makes a hobby of studying the different lines and knows all the transport systems of each big city inside-out.

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

NOW that band personality has come to count for so much in jazz, it is a source of much perplexity to critics and fans why, for instance, many of Woody Herman's arrangements sound like Bob Crosby's band, and why some of Crosby's sound like Tommy Dorsey's, and why quite a few other things. Well, the answer in this instance is that probably all the arrangements are by Dean Kincaide.

This little - publicised figure, tucked away in the reed section of Crosby's band and more lately with Tommy D., has done more than one man's share towards the betterment of jazz. Like quite a few famous arrangers, he is not an outstanding instrumentalist, and has never been featured as a solo man on the records of his swell orchestras.

Kincaide is to all intents the man who "made" Benny Goodman's first great hit, *The Dixieland Band*. By the time that number

had run its course he could hum all the parts backwards—he had written different arrangements of it for Goodman, Willard Robison, Crosby, Norvo, Red Nichols, and don't ask me who else.

Commercial arrangements are also a strong point of Kincaide's ability. You will find his name on the printed parts of *Yancy Special*, which he has adapted so brilliantly from Mead Lux Lewis's piano solo, creating the same atmosphere in a full orchestration.

Comes From Texas

But this is running too far ahead. Let's pause a moment and establish the Dean's personal background.

He's a Texan, like Jack Teagarden and many other great men of jazz. Born just twenty-eight years ago—in March, 1911—he acquired very gradually during his youth a working knowledge of an odd variety of instruments. Starting on piano, he later picked up a cast-off flute of his uncle's, got hold of a tenor sax when he was told they needed a man for the school orchestra; learned to double on clarinet, and eventually settled down as an alto man.

But he also plays trombone, and it used to be a standing joke that a battered brass trombone which he once salvaged was always on the bandstand among the saxophones wherever he played.

His First Gig

Kincaide had his first big professional job as arranger with Ben Pollack. Then he disappeared for quite a while, returning to New York a year later to find the band had left Pollack and was under the direction of one Clark Randall, with whom he made a few recordings as sax man and arranger. Then Randall dropped out and the band took on Bob Crosby as its figurehead.

Dean remained in the reed section for some time until his arranging duties kept him so busy that in 1937 he dropped out of the picture instrumentally in order to concentrate on writing for the Dixieland lads.

Then last autumn Thomas Dorsey snapped him up and placed him in the reeds, augmenting that section to the prodigious total of five.

At odd times Dean has also worked with Lennie Hayton, Benny Goodman, Woody Herman and others, arranging extensively for most of them. In fact, some of his most interesting work, to my mind, can be found in the Good-

Melody Maker

March 18th 1939

Leonard Feather, in his "Feather Forecast and News," wonders

WHAT'S BETTER THAN ONE PIANO?

And begins to think that the answer might be "Two"



Checking Up Personnels?—Teddy Sandow, Hugues Panassié, Tommy Ladnier and Mezz Mezzrow get together over a copy of "Discography."

FOR years I have had a firm prejudice against more than one piano at one time in any circumstances. History seemed to have established somehow that a piano duet just can't swing.

Now I am beginning to change my mind. One of the new Commodore records from New York is played by a delightfully novel combination. Willie The Lion on celeste, Jess

Stacy and Joe Bushkin on pianos; and the other side is a piano duet by The Lion and Bushkin entitled *The Lion And The Lamb*. Actually the first side, called *Three Keyboards*, is plain blues, and the backing is *I've Found A New Baby*.

The success of these two sides is due partly to the addition of George Wettling on drums, but largely to the great understanding between the musicians. Even when

they clash they seem to do so politely. The Lion's solos are quite unchanged, but if he plays this stuff for another thirty years I may still like it. And Bushkin is a brilliant youth.

This disc is one of a new series made for the Commodore under the supervision of Bernie Hanighen, a talented song-writer and man - about - jazz who produced many of the best Teddy Wilson, Billie Holiday and Norvo-Bailey recordings when he was in charge at the Brunswick - Vocalion headquarters in New York.

Apart from the Lion sides, which are on 520, there is another new combination on 516 (ten-inch) and 1502 (twelve), whereon Chu Berry and his "Little Jazz" Ensemble get going on *Forty-Six West Fifty-Two* (alias *Sweet Georgia Brown*); *Sitting In* (alias *Tiger Rag*), *Body And Soul* and *Star Dust* (under their own names, oddly enough). This group has Chu leading on tenor, Roy "Little Jazz" Eldridge on trumpet, Clyde Hart on piano, Danny Barker on guitar, Big Sidney Catlett on drums, and a white boy, the one and only Artie Shapiro, on bass.

When Players Behave Sloppily

The ten-incher is by far the better of these two. Chu plays some fine tenor and Eldridge keeps within more or less reasonable bounds. But on the twelve-incher everyone goes haywire. What is it that *Star Dust* does to so many coloured tenor players, destroying their sense of good taste and swing? And why do they wax similarly sloppy over *Body and Soul*?

Lastly, there are four new sides by the Freeman-Stacy-Wettling trio, not much different from all the previous ones except that the ease and relaxation of style are even more apparent. It is too bad that some of the best moments on both these discs and Chu's—and even the Lion's—are brought to an anti-climax by a drum solo. The public demand for drum displays seems now to have eaten into

the musicians' mentalities so that they will allow or even suggest these solos as a means of filling up wax. Since drums have no melodic content, what on earth has this to do with real jazz?

The Freeman sides are called *Blue Room* and *Exactly Like You*, on 513, and 514 consists of *Three Little Words* backed by the best side of the four, a swell medium tempo blues amusingly named *Swingin' Without Mezz*.

For particulars, write Commodore Music Shop, 46, W. 52nd St., New York City.

Details Of "Mezz-Panassié" Sessions

Mention of Mezz reminds me of a letter I've had from him giving details of the series of sessions supervised by himself and Panassié during the latter's visit to N.Y. Since these will or should certainly come out over here, the details are worth preserving.

Under the name Milton "Mezz" Mezzrow and His Orchestra they made *Revolutionary Blues*, *Gettin' Together*, and *Comin' On With The Come On* (Parts I and II). The last, says Mezz, "was made slow, and then without stopping we made the other side by picking up the tempo. This is the first time this has ever been tried."

The Mezzrow-Ladnier Quintet (Ladnier, trumpet; Mezz, clarinet; Teddy Bunn, guitar; Manzie Johnson, drums; Pops Foster, bass) did *Royal Garden*; *If You See Me Comin'*; *Everybody Loves My Baby*; *Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None Of My Jellyroll* (a classic title). The first four men were again heard on *Weary Blues*, *Jada*, *Really The Blues* and *When You And I Were Young, Maggie*, with Mezz on tenor and clarinet, Pops Bechet on soprano and clarinet, Cliff Jackson on piano, Elmer James on bass.

Odds Against Appearance Here!

Lastly, under Frankie Newton's name, these six were done: *Minor Jive*, *Rompin' At Victor*, *Who, The Blues My Baby Gave To Me*, *The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise*, *Rosetta*. Newton on trumpet, Pete Brown on alto, Mezz clarinet, James Johnson piano, Albert Casey guitar, Cozy on drums and Kirby on bass.

Mezz, who composed most of the new titles, is the only white musician in the whole four sessions.

I'll lay six to four that the whole eighteen sides will not appear in this country; but in the meantime, can we have just one or two to get along with, please?

LEONARD G. FEATHER.

Melody Maker
18th March - 1939.

"Swing," March 1939

Sid Phillips

Called Britain's Raymond Scott,
he is the first English Composer
seriously to impress the swing world

by Leonard G. Feather

IT is not often that a British swing composer can hear his works performed by all the leading American orchestras. It is even less frequent for an American recording company to give a British writer a free hand to record any of his own compositions specially for release in America. These strokes of good fortune, however, have fallen to Sidney Phillips, who seems likely to be the first arranger from this country to make a strong impression in the American swing world.

Since the break between Raymond Scott and his manager, Phillips has been appointed a sort of unofficial successor in the business of creating slightly screwy compositions with slightly screwy titles. There are two schools of thought about his work. One claims that he is doing more for the advancement of swing than many famous American stars. The other claims that his work lacks inspiration, is full of trite riffs, and could be produced by anybody possessed of a thorough musical training.

In any case there can be no doubt about Sidney Phillips' musical equipment. Born thirty-two years ago in London, he was at one time contemplating the medical profession as a career, but, during his school days, he developed a strong interest in music of all kinds and became fairly proficient on fiddle, saxophone, clarinet, and piano. His family was altogether very musical, and in the outfit known as Sid Phillips and his Melodians, which won a prize at an amateur dance band contest many years ago, his brother Ralph played banjo and guitar, and another brother, Harry, was on trumpet and violin. A younger brother, Wolf Phillips, is currently coming into prominence as a trombonist.

The Melodians toured Germany, Italy, Belgium and Holland, and Sid recalls that of all the European countries he has visited he found that the Netherlands had the most enthusiastic and numerous jazz fans. During his wanderings Sid visited the leading conservatories in all the big capitals in

order to polish up his knowledge of harmony and orchestration. Three years of study in Naples were the reward when he gained the coveted Prix de Rome.

Gradually he became known in Great Britain as an arranger and composer. Starting in 1930 with Ambrose's orchestra, for whom his first arrangements were *Japanese Dream* and *The Peanut Vendor*, he soon started doing original compositions, of which the first was a straightforward chorus number called *Streamline Strut*, released on American Decca 500. Later came the impressionistic *B'Wanga*; *Night Ride*, *Escapada* (a musical picture of a Mexican elopement), *Cotton Pickers' Congregation*, *A Message From Mars*, *Tarantula*, and *Champagne Cocktail*, most of which you will find in the American Decca lists under Ambrose's name, as well as a recording by another English band, Eddie Carroll and his Swingphonic Orchestra, of *Night Ride* and Sid's *Blue Danube Swing*.

It was after Irving Mills visited England in 1937 and met Sid Phillips that the first special recordings were made by an all-star English pick-up band for release solely in America. The first sides were *Comin' Thro*

The Rye, and *Annie Laurie*, which appeared on the Vocalion label.

On January 10, 1938, Sid arrived in New York to realize for the first time an ambition of long standing—the waxing of a session under his own direction featuring an all-star American band in his own compositions. Bud Freeman, Harry James, and other famous stars got together for Sid's recordings of *An Amazon Goes A'Wooing*, *Champagne Cocktail*, and *Dinner and Dance*. Sid appeared as a guest artist on the Saturday Night Swing Session, conducting his own compositions. On his return home he worked with Jack Hylton for awhile before rejoining Ambrose. He has now given up active sax playing and devotes his time entirely to writing.

A couple of months ago a new series of British recordings was made for release on American Brunswick. Since most of these will be out on the lists shortly I am appending the personnel details. *Plain Jane*, *Swing Band*, *Music for You*, and *Wedding of the Sophisticated Dutch Doll* featured Max Goldberg, Archie Craig and Tommy McQuater on trumpets (hot solos by McQuater); Paul Fenoulhet, Tony Thorpe and George Chisholm on trombones (hot solos by Chisholm); Harry Hayes and Joe Crossman on altos; Billy Amstell and Joe Jeanette on tenors; Bert Barnes, piano; Ivor Mairants, guitar; Maurice Burman, drums, and George Gibbs, bass. Four other sides, *Voodoo*, *Coronation Scot*, *Hullabaloo*, and *Blue Romance* had the same band except that the brass consisted of McQuater, Goldberg and Paul Fenoulhet on trumpets, and Lew Davis, Ted Heath and George Chisholm on trombones. Another side was made with a smaller combination—*Mr. Renard's Nightmare*—but this experiment in Sid's own opinion was not altogether successful.

Later this year it is quite likely that Phillips will be paying America another visit. In the meantime these records should provide plenty of food for discussion amongst American swing fans.



• Sid Phillips

Melody Maker, March 25th 1935.

POLO RECORD SUGGESTS PARIS IS PLACE FOR "JAM"

Danny Polo and his Swing Stars
"Doing The Gorgonzola" (with
Garland Wilson).

"Montparnasse Jump" (with
Una Mae Carlisle).
(***Decca F6989.)

DANNY POLO has come back, and as one of these titles explains, he has come back with a jump.

It's not surprising that he was able to assemble an even better jam group in Paris than in London. But several things about the disc do come as a surprise. For instance, Oscar Aleman.

As "Detector" rightly pointed out the other week after Willie Lewis's broadcast, Aleman is a really sensational hot guitarist. He plays an all-metal instrument; his tone, phrasing, swing and attack are so grand that if anyone ever mentions Django Reinhardt to me again I shall stare coldly. Even in his brief solos here you can tell that Aleman has more swing than any other guitarist here or on the Continent.

Doing The Gorgonzola consists of a rather fascinating phrase played in unison for the first chorus and coda; the rest is jam, with a solid rhythm section including Garland Wilson making his first record with a jam band. The other side, a fastish twelve-bar blues, has Una Mae playing some pleasantly characteristic stuff. Incidentally, when Fats hears this passage I'm sure he'll scratch his head and say "Now when did I make that record?"

Original-styled Tenor Player

Apart from these three, all the participants are now with Ventura's band. Combelle's tenor is about the most original-styled in Europe, with genuine strong hot tenor tone. Philippe Brun plays a simple little muted chorus in the blues. Jerry Mengo is a solid drummer and Vola's bass come through excellently.

As for Danny himself, he seems to be playing more clarinet than ever. The first chorus of *Jump*, in which he's accompanied solely by guitar, and the two later solos, display all his best qualities. The first six bars of his last chorus are a gem of spontaneous melody.

It's a pity this side tails off with two rather ordinary choruses of riffing, for the excitement has been building up all the way through.

Personally, I'm still getting a great kick out of this disc—and tell me whether I'm not right about Aleman.

Of special interest to students of:

Members of the Danny Polo Paris swing session—
(left to right) Philippe Brun, Louis Vola, Garland Wilson, Danny Polo, Oscar Aleman, Alix Combelle (behind), Una Mae Carlisle, and Jerry Mengo.



clarinet (Danny Polo); tenor (Alix Combelle); piano (Una Mae Carlisle, Garland Wilson); guitar (Oscar Aleman).

Chick Webb and his Orchestra.

"Got A Pebble In My shoe."

"Who Ya Hunchin'."

(*Brunswick 02723.)

Presenting the Decline and Fall of William Webb, Esq. This band has now reached a stage where one feels that everything it plays has the express object of pleasing those audiences that have been roped in by the attraction of Ella's personality and are not otherwise interested in jazz.

Band Going To Pieces

The arrangements and the performances have lost that looseness, i.e., that swing of the best Webb days. They are packed with clichés and self-conscious effects. The rhythm section has declined. The sax section has what the divorce courts call incompatibility of temperament.

If you don't believe me, play this record after one of the old Webb's like *Get Together* or *When Dreams Come True* or *I Can't Dance* from the 1934 Columbia class, or the Brunswick *Blue Minor*, *That Rhythm Man*, or even the early Fitzgerald period *I'll Chase The Blues Away* and *A Little Bit Later On*.

All you get in the new disc is a good trumpet solo on both sides plus a lot of arranging that means nothing. *Got A Pebble In My Shoe* is such an irritating and childish piece of affectation that it embarrasses me to play it. It is directed at the twelve-year-old mind. The other side, composed by Fitzgerald, but without any vocal, is merely unattractive.

Though still clinging to my affection for Ella's original *Tisket*, I have realised now what the result of all

this commercial success has been. It's an old and regrettable story.

After hearing this record I said, Thank Heaven for Basie.

Jimmie Lunceford and his
Orchestra.

"Coquette."

"My Last Affair."

(*Brunswick 02721.)

Going from the basement to the penthouse, we forget Webb and listen to a couple of Lunceford performances. Now can you see what's

wrong with Webb! Even with Dan Grissom's vocal on both sides, this record is tolerable because of the fantastic work of the sections and ensemble.

What an erratic band this is—the best and worst in the world! If it weren't for Grissom this would be at least a three-star proposition.

Of special interest to students of: sax section; brass section; rhythm section; arranging (Sy Oliver).

Willie Smith (Piano Solos).

"Passionette."

"Morning Air."

(*Brunswick 02722.)

Amuse Your Friends At Easter. Have a jolly party seeing who can trace the family history of the largest number of phrases played by the Lion in these two solos. If you possess the discs of Mezzrow, the Lion and His Cubs, and Milt Herth, you'll find there is hardly a bar in these solos that hasn't been played somewhere else before. The Lion plays with a crooked bat, but for all his disregard of the rules I find his clichés occasionally very taking.

Passionette is very different from the orchestral arrangement played by Teddy Hill on Vocalion. *Morning Air* is a new title to me.

This record is more a matter of your own taste than any other record of the month; there can be no arbitrary conclusion whether it is good or bad. Maybe it's corny as hell and maybe it's still good!

Coleman Hawkins Trio.

"I Know That You Know."

"Swingin' In The Groove."

(*Vocalion S.222.)

(Note.—This is an April release.)

Even with this non-swing background, Hawk has a magnetic, hypnotic quantity of swing, in the first side at least. Four of the five choruses are his brilliant own; the other is Freddy Johnson's lame, almost crippled, piano.

Hawkins Loses Himself

Swingin' In The Groove is taken at a tempo which would make four notes in a bar hard enough to swing; Hawkins plays eight in a bar most of the way and the result, though breathtaking in many respects, sometimes loses itself (notably in the middles of the last two choruses) and even causes Hawk to squeak once. There is also a drum chorus on this side. But some of Hawk's symmetrical patterns, formed of striking phrases, make this side almost a success in spite of itself.

Of special interest to students of: tenor sax.

SHADES OF GILBERT AND SULLIVAN!

Feather Forecast and News

THIS is going from bad to worse. A few weeks ago the "M.M." news pages mentioned that someone had produced an all-coloured swing version of "The Mikado."

This scheme, devised by the Works Progress Administration, which has given employment to so many out-of-work actors, was put into action with such success that it was recently announced as being transferred from Chicago to New York.

But now, to cap it all, there has come a different version entitled "The Hot Mikado," also in production in New York, with sixty-year-old Bill "Bo-jangles" Robinson as its star, and featuring a big swing band under the direction of Willie Butler, whom you may have seen when he was over here

four or five years ago with the "Blackbirds."

New York is thus confronted with the spectacle of two swing "Mikado's," one Government-backed and the other a private enterprise, each accusing the other of unfair practice, plagiarism, and heavens knows what else!

According to one Chicago newspaper this musical heresy "must be what the public wants, for on the last few nights in Chicago extra police had to be called out to handle the crowds bent on hearing *The Flowers That Bloom In The Spring* one more time.

"More than two hundred thousand saw the Chicago show. . . . Some have been found who saw the show a dozen or more times."

Words fail me.

* * *

New American Gramophone Co.

America has another new record company. Rather in the manner of Jack Kapp, who left Brunswick some years ago, taking their best artists with him, to form the American Decca Company, it is now the talk of New York that Eli Oberstein has left Victor, taking with him Larry Clinton and others to start a thirty-five cent and seventy-five cent record catalogue of his own.

* * *

There is no European tie-up for these records and it seems improbable that any of them will be released here for some time. For the present, Mr. Oberstein is busy enough on a reported deal with a syndicate controlling a hundred and fifty thousand coin-operated record machines, which should provide an assured outlet of at least a million records a month; so why should he worry about our couple of thousand?

* * *

Once again it is insistently reported that Lionel Hampton is leaving the Goodman Orchestra on the expiry of his contract in September, and will organise an all-coloured band. Last year Lionel earned twenty-three thousand dollars with Benny and nine thousand dollars on the side (total approximately £6,400, or £128 per week). Which is by no means peanuts.

* * *

Anyway, I heard Lionel in the Quartet on last week's broadcast (which you can still get from W2XE every Wednesday, 10.30 p.m. British time), but Wilson has already left, and the Quartet featured Stacy on piano and Buddy Schutz on drums.

* * *

Music From Famous Door

And on Tuesday at 9.15 I heard some wonderful music from the Famous Door by Charlie Barnet's Orchestra, playing Ellington and Basie numbers and yet sounding entirely original. Barnet himself is playing wonderful alto.

* * *

Artie Shaw is going into the famous Palomar Ballroom in Los Angeles on April 19, which means of course that several picture companies are after him, including Warner Brothers, who would like to make a full-length feature film entitled "The Building of a Band." . . . John Kirby and his Boys have returned to the Onyx, where Mildred Bailey is at present doing a solo act. . . . Poor, unlucky, "Lucky" Millinder is bankrupt. . . . Harlem has had its first great day at the New York Exhibition with the opening of the World's Fair Savoy Ballroom, which is the largest all-coloured concession to become a part of the great event.

Hot Records Reviewed

by "ROPHONE"

AVALANCHE OF "NEW" BOOGIE WOOGIE STYLE



Ferne, the only girl instrumentalist with Fred Waring's Pennsylvanians. Obtained her job with Fred by sending him a recording of her fiddle arrangement of "Sophisticated Lady"

Mead Lux Lewis, Pete Johnson, Albert Ammons (Three Pianos). "Boogie, Woogie Prayer" (Parts I and II).

(***Parlophone R.2649.)

Meade Lux Lewis.

"Solitude."

"Melancholy."

(**Blue Note 12-inch No. 1.)

Albert Ammons.

"Boogie, Woogie Blues."

"Boogie, Woogie Stomp."

(*Blue Note 12-inch No. 2.)

Honey Hill.

"Boogie, Woogie."

"Set 'Em."

(*Vocalion S.223.)

THE avalanche of boogie woogie discs underlines the sudden fashion for a form of music that was going on just as effectively for years before the critics took it up. The Parlophone disc above is only the first of a whole series of such waxings sponsored by John Hammond.

It should be a b.-w. to end all b.-w's, what with three famous exponents all playing together; but you ain't heard nothin' yet.

Deadly Monotonous Repetition

At least 95 per cent. of those who hear discs such as the above will find them deadly monotonous. So they are, as regards harmonic bases, rhythm, and repetition of phrases; but it is a calculated, deliberate monotony, and the description is not necessarily derogatory, for monotony rightly handled has an important place in music.

And to my ears, when I'm in the mood, Messrs. Lewis-Johnson-Ammons make a wonderful noise, though they could have done more with the cross-rhythms.

The Blue Note discs were sent me from New York; they are the first of a new series issued with very pretentious, high-flown leaflets and obviously hoping to sell on snob appeal.

Half-guinea Record

Since the Ammons disc, though very fine, is not greatly superior to the great Ammons discs available in this country, I can hardly recommend this one as an investment, for what with postage, package and duty, it will set you back slightly under half a guinea!

Much the same applies to Lewis' twelve-incher, though this is not boogie-woogie music, and also not connected with two other tunes of the same titles. Both sides are slow blues brilliantly played; but as with the

your money is bad recording and surface scratch.

As for *Honey Hill*, this is boogie-woogie at its crudest, technically and imaginatively. Just a dull reflection of other people's ideas. Believe it or not, there's a b.-w. by an English pianist coming out soon which can knock spots off this.

Of special interest to students of: piano (R. 2649).

So Many Fine Cheap Discs

Bob Howard and His Boys

"Sweet Emalina My Gal."

"On Revival Day."

(**Vocalion S.224.)

I'm being very frugal in my marking of three-bob discs this month because, as I'll show next week, there are so many fine cheap discs in the new issues. But by Bob Howard's standards this is a good coupling; even his own singing is bearable, and there is Billy Kyle at his gleaming best, and Teddy's guitar again taking the bun.

Kyle In, Wilson Out

I am slowly grasping the fact that Kyle has rather taken the place of Wilson in my affections. He has me feeling that this is the way Teddy W. ought to play. Of course, when I hear a good Wilson disc I shall change my

mind again; but you know the feeling.

Of special interest to students of: piano (Billy Kyle); guitar (Teddy Bunn).

Gene Krupa and His Orchestra.

"Apurksody" (***)

"Ta-ra-ra-boom-de-ay" (**)

(Columbia DB5057.)

Either Gene Krupa had a much better band for this California session or I'm in a good mood. This seems to me a better performance altogether than the previous release made in New York and Chicago with probably rather different line-ups.

Getting "Clever" With Titles

Chappie Willet wrote *Apurksody* as Gene's signature tune—the title, you will note, is just Rhapsody with Krupa spelt backwards in place of the Rhap. It has the rare quality of unusual form and departure from the sticky chorus routine. The brass section handles its work honourably, the tenor soloist well enough, but the eight bars of muted trumpet are a bad blemish.

Gene's cymbal effects and other bits and pieces are, for him, quite restrained and fit well into the scheme.

Willet has produced something here which belongs in the class of *Chant Of The Weed*. I'd like to hear it done by a really outstanding band.

The late-Victorian scat song on the reverse makes a good enough swing arrangement, with a touch of neat humour, better sax work, and two trumpet solos, the first as good as the second is loud.

Of special interest to students of: drums; arranging.

Jimmie Lunceford and His Orchestra.

"Tain't What You Do."

"Cheatin' On Me."

(***Parlophone R2647.)

Now perhaps you will know why I keep insisting that this band is one of the world's aces. Now perhaps you'll know why their original tune *Tain't What You Do* is panicking audiences throughout the States and is the star request item of their repertoire.

Now perhaps you'll find out that the trombonist James Young is also a grand singer, and that the Lunceford vocal trio is as one man with three voices; perfect blend, every delightful rhythmic inflection perfectly timed, not a note forced, guitar accompaniment ideal.

Real Swing Ensemble

Now perhaps you'll see that the Lunceford ensemble in a real swing arrangement, as the last chorus of *Tain't*, makes even Basie seem slightly slushy. Now perhaps Parlophone, having presented Jimmie with such an auspicious debut on his new label, will give us regular doses of this brand of Lunceford every month.

Now perhaps you'll buy this record.

Of special interest to students of: alto (Willie Smith); ensemble.

Alec Wilder Octet.

"Neurotic Goldfish."

"A Débutante's Diary."

(*Parlophone R2648.)

Pseudo Reginald Foresythe, five years late.

Melody Maker.
April 18th 1935.



Members of her family call Emily Vass "Jittahbug" (their own spelling?) because she prefers swing songs to the soothing harmonies the Vass family is famous for over N.B.C.

"**A**DOLF HITLER'S an A killer, but not a killer-diller. ickie and a tin-ear, too. He may weep crocodile tears, but He's a screwball, a bit he's no alligator." wacky, but he's full of Schmaltz. This slightly contentious

Melody Maker. April 1st. 1939.

Feather Forecast and News

CATERING FOR THE "JITTERBUG"

statement is just one of a hundred fantastic quotations I could make from the first issue of a new American magazine which has come to hand. The publication is called "Jitterbug," and I'm sure it is everything its title implies, if not more.

Nothing could show more graphically what sort of mentality has to be catered for by the American band-leaders than this sixty-page selection of fan fodder. It is dressed up just like the film fan magazines, with pages of pictures showing a film star or girl singer clutching a musical instrument, a feeble chestnut providing the caption.

The Hitler excerpt comes from a double-page spread headed "outstanding ickies." Other victims include Franklin D. Roosevelt ("He can 'give' or he can 'send,' but he never blows his top nor riffs it out"), Herbert Hoover ("No hep-cat—he never jives out over the radio, but sticks strictly to the old corn), and Charles Lindbergh ("Can handle a joy-stick as an expert, but with a gob-stick he's strictly a fur-benny").

Phony Glossary

The whole affair is set in this pseudo-musicians' language, and inevitably there is a phony glossary of jazz jargon in which I learn that "BELLY FIDDLE" means guitar, "ALLIAGTORS" (sic) are fans, "GUBUCKET" (sic) means rough swing, "HOT LICK" means hot chorus and "THERMOMETER" means oboe.

Pictures of Benny Goodman riding a scooter; white and coloured jitterbug dancers in revolting postures; the Ritz Brothers (what have they to do

with it all?) and the full quota of nude showgirls crowd the pages; then there is a section called jitterbug-house (good) of which the following samples give a fair idea of the standard of humour:—

"Jitterbugs are born with drums in their ears."

"The Russians must be jitterbugs, because they know their steppes."

"A swing fan has a bee in his bonnet and jitterbugs in his brain."

"Jitterbugs are always hopping for the best."

"A lounge lizard will never grow up to be an alligator."

"An accordion isn't old just because it's wrinkled."

Sort of People

I'm telling you all this just to show the sort of people who pay the money that has produced the swing music mania in the States. True, I've shown evidence before, but this latest manifestation beats the band.

And for goodness sake don't write to ask me where you can get this—er—magazine. I wouldn't know.

* * *

What's happened to Edgar Hayes? We don't get any more records of this once excellent band, we don't seem to read of any activities in the States, and altogether a promising ensemble seems to have faded out.

This thought was prompted by some news I read about Hazel Scott, an eighteen-year-old gal, who, they say, plays a load of piano and sings in seven languages. She has a band of her own in which I notice several of the names previously included in the line-up which Edgar Hayes toured Scandinavia. Gus McClung, Bernard Flood and Edward Anderson, trumpets; John Horton, trombone; Andrew Jackson, guitar; all these sound familiar.

Another Mixed Band

Hurrah for another mixed band! The latest adventurer to line up a mixed combination is Bud Freeman, who has not been heard from very much since he left Goodman. The venue is not particularly propitious, being a 51st Street night club known as Kelly's Stables, which has tried other bands without success; but Bud has got himself a six-piece combination including some good coloured talent, plus Arthur Schutt, of all folks, on piano.

Schutt and Bud, together with Henry Allen, Eddie Condon and Big Sidney Catlett, provided an amazing mixed quintet for a big newspaper club party in New York. That sounds like an expensive combination, but these boys did it for £12 the evening.

There's enthusiasm for you!



BRITAIN'S BEST?

A lot of controversy is likely to arise about this title but many think it justified

by LEONARD FEATHER

RECENTLY it occurred to me that the vast proportion of personality articles in these pages concern themselves with American stars, known to you only through records. The reason must be that so few British stars have any personality—musically, or otherwise.

One illustrious exception to the rule is the man whom I have slowly come to regard as Britain's greatest swing musician. The story of George Chisholm makes an interesting case history for the dossier marked "How A Swing Man Is Made."

When did the first spark of jazz genius ignite in the Chisholm mind? Was it there already on March 29, 1915, or was he born without any musical inheritance? With an engineer father and a mother who was strictly a home musician, the Glasgow child can scarcely have had much contact with music until, in his 10th year, he started piano lessons with a private tutor.

The little musical experience George's father had as a side-line was generally connected rather with the straight side of the business. During his youth George now and then played the piano on gigs in the band, for which his father was the drummer.

There were three children in the family; the younger brother, now 14 years old, is "coming along nicely on piano," says George, "but my other brother has no idea of music at all. He's a football player."

Leaving school at the age of 14, George went to work in a Glasgow office and was never more heartily bored before or since. Then Chisholm Senior started something by buying a trumpet, ostensibly for George's young brother, but after hearing a few Armstrong records it was George himself who started getting pleasure out of sitting beside the gramophone with the trumpet to his lips, following Louis's phrases and finding an elusive fascination in them, very different from the popular music on which the average Glaswegian is brought up.

During a six months' engagement (straight and dance!) on second piano with an Edinburgh restaurant orchestra, George worked his way in on trumpet, but found himself slightly dizzy trying to sort out the B flat pitch of the instrument and the concert pitch of the piano. So he resolved to get another concert-pitch instrument—and that's how George Chisholm

him at the Nest, and when Benny was getting together a band to take to Scheveningen George was a logical choice. That was a great treat, that long Dutch summer; there were 11 men and 8 nationalities in the band—white and coloured—and the music was swell. Under the leadership and enthusiastic patronage of Benny, George's talent and experience burgeoned rapidly. He has happy memories of Benny as a musician, a leader, and a man.

Home again in the autumn of 1937, George found himself a forgotten man, except for the record fans, who, alas! do not book gigs; and Archer Street looked a pretty dismal street again. Not until Eddie Carroll's promising band opened at the Piccadilly Theatre, in December, did George find a steady job; and then after four weeks this unfortunate combination broke up.

By now, though, word had passed round pretty generally that George was no ordinary British musician. His technique had made vast strides, and he had even tackled an arrangement. (*Dinah*, which appeared under Carroll's name on Parlophone.) Ambrose needed a trombone player, and one night George auditioned with the band on the job at the Café de Paris.

He joined Ambrose almost immediately, pleased his leader immensely both with his sound musicianship and his quiet, shy personality; he has had at least one rise bringing him to his recent £18-per-week level.

Nearly all the time then George

had to play commercial music, backgrounds to vocals and material generally unrelated to the jazz Armstrong and Teagarden taught him; but neither in his musical credo nor in his bashfulness did he change one whit. He will never have a swelled head; he isn't made that way.

George's Scots accent is very marked, though that of the charming Mrs. Chisholm is even more pronounced. He lives in a Hampstead flat; smokes a pipe, drinks occasionally, and likes to sit listening to records and to jam in night clubs. He is so fond of his music that he flew from the middle of his honeymoon in Jersey to get to Fats Waller's recording session here in August. His wife appreciates his playing, understands jazz and can sing Armstrong choruses off note for note.

He has the gift of perfect pitch-sense which so greatly baffles and impresses the layman—he can tell you at once what key you are whistling in. He took three weeks to write his first arrangement for Ambrose (*I Never Knew*), but experience will soon enable him to translate his ideas more quickly to paper.

After the Ambrose break-up he got together with some kindred spirits and formed the Heralds of Swing, whose story is too well known to need recapitulation here.

His own recording session for Decca marked the crowning ambition of his career—he got just the men he wanted and recorded just the material he wanted. His old buddy McQuater was there, and

(trombone player) was born at the late age of 18.

A 1s. tutor from Boosey and Hawkes, and a few days' study of the seven positions, combined with careful attention to all Teagarden's available recordings, completed George's trombone education. He still has difficulty in making people believe that he never had a lesson in his life.

Back in Glasgow, he began to do gigs on trombone, and soon found himself booked by Louis Freeman into the Playhouse Ballroom, where his team-mate was Tommy McQuater, shortly to be discovered by Jack Payne.

Five pounds a week at the Playhouse seemed a grand living to George, but the 10s. rise offered him when Teddy Joyce came to town was just enough temptation with the added thrill of a first visit to London, and under Joyce's wing he came down to town for a few weeks' work with Joyce, only to find himself shortly afterwards in Archer Street, without friends, work, or hope.

"I really had a hell of a time," mused George. "Soon I ran back home." Then there was a second short spell with Joyce, and after another uneventful period at home he ventured South yet again, in January, 1937. Again the same experience; unemployment, misery and no prospects.

This was the month when Benny Carter was lining up the band for his *Melody Maker* concert, and in this connection I should like to reveal a hitherto undivulged story. Benny was desperately in need of

a trombonist for the concert and we hunted high and low without success. Buddy Featherstonhaugh mentioned that he knew of a boy, whom he believed to be in Glasgow, a kid named George Chisholm, who was really swell.

Nobody had ever heard the name; my answer was "You Scottish boys always recommend one another" or some such mildly derisive remark; Benny took very little notice and eventually a hastily found straight man filled the post. If only we'd known that not only was George right there in London, but in a few months he was to be a permanent member of Benny's band!

Soon afterwards, clutching at a straw, George went to the Nest Club, which is an underground small room full of smoke, the bandstand being suitable for an orchestra of midgets. "I had three months there," he relates, "and it was a terrible strain on my health and nerves; all the same, it was a wonderful experience, in a way, of a phase of musical life, and the lessons it taught me were very valuable. I had had just about enough when I left, but I wouldn't have missed it for worlds."

During this period George made his first record (unless four commercial sides with Teddy Joyce can be called records). It was a diabolical thing, which George blushes at now, but it crystallised his style at that time; the utmost simplicity of melodic line and phrasing, conforming with the limitations of his technique.

Benny and I had by now heard

Benny Winestone (another fellow-Glaswegian), who lived in the same apartment house with George during many of the most miserable London months and has always been one of his best friends.

What is the secret of George's uncanny instinct for improvisation? His fellow-musicians have been at a loss to describe it. "He is just a phenomenon," Gerry Moore once said to me, "there is nothing else like him in this country."

There is no answer, no solution. You just have to accept George Chisholm as one of those fortunate things that have happened to British jazz, and you have to join me in hoping that he will continue to grace our small coterie of real swing men as long as there is any swing music in this benighted country.



GEORGE CHISHOLM DISCOGRAPHY

- 1934.—*Four sides with Teddy Joyce (no solos).*
- Mar., 1937.—GERRY MOORE and HIS CHICAGO BRETHERN. *Honey-suckle Rose; Lady Be Good (Decca F.6347).*
- April, 1937.—DUNCAN WHYTE and HIS ORCHESTRA. *Pennies from Heaven (celeste by Chisholm); Hot and Anxious (Parlo. R.2338).*
- Aug., 1937.—BENNY CARTER and HIS ORCHESTRA. *Somebody Loves Me; Blues In My Heart (Vocalion S.104); Mighty Like The Blues; I Ain't Got Nobody (Vocalion S.110);*

- Lazy Afternoon; My Buddy (Vocalion S.118); Pardon Me, Pretty Baby; Skip It (Vocalion S.126).*

- Jan., 1938.—EDDIE CARROLL and HIS SWINGPHONIC ORCHESTRA. *Night Ride; Blues Danub; Swing (Parlo. R.2464); Dinah (arranged by Chisholm); If I Had You (Parlo. R.2473); Midnight at the Onyx; Song of Volga Boatmen (Parlo. R.2491).*

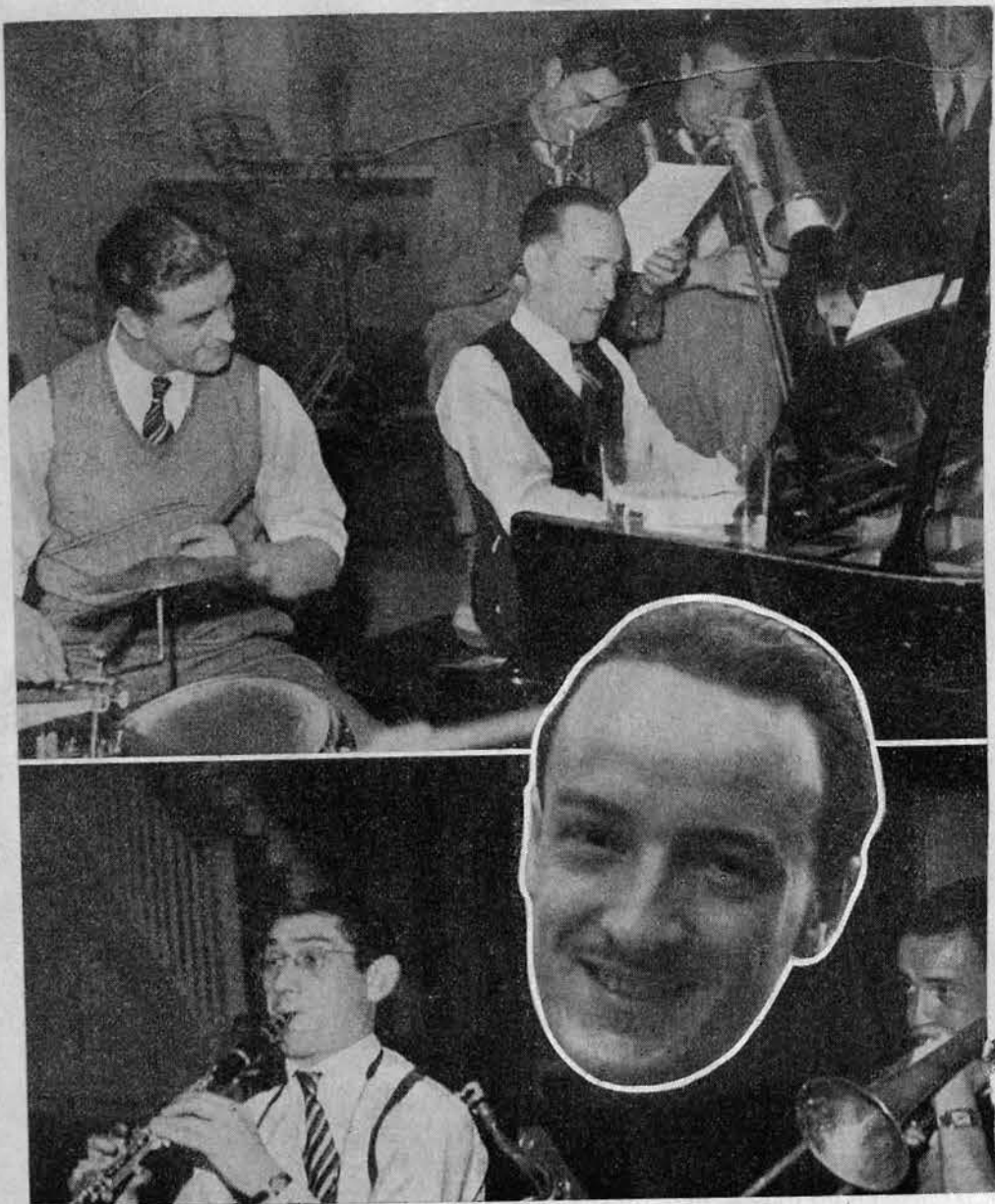
- Jan., 1938.—DANNY POLO and HIS SWING STARS. *Don't Try Your Five On Me; Mozartov (Decca F.6604); Jazz Me Blues; If You Were The Only Girl in The World (Decca F.6615).*

- Aug., 1938.—"FATS" WALLER and HIS CONTINENTAL RHYTHM. *A-Ticket-A-Ticket (HMV. BD. 5398). (Not on other side) Flat Foot Floogee; Pent Up In a Penthouse (HMV. BD., 5399); Don't Try Your Five On Me; Ain't Misbehavin' (HMV. BD. 5415).*

- Oct., 1938.—GEORGE CHISHOLM and HIS FIVE FIVE (With Tommy McQuater, Benny Winestone, Eddie Macauley, Tiny Winters, Dudley Barber). *Let's Go; Archer Street Drag (Decca F.6867); Rosetta; You'll Always Be Mine (Decca F.7015). No Smoking; Penalty £5 (Alan Ferguson added) (Decca F.6939).*

Rhythm April.

Rhythm - April.



GEORGE CHISHOLM

caught "jamming" by "Rhythm's" cameraman. Above, he is with Dudley Barber (drums), Tommy McQuater (trumpet), Eddie Macauley (piano), and Leonard Feather. Below, he is with Benny Winestone. Centre, he is just by himself.

Radio Times . March 31st. 1939.

VAN PHILLIPS on his New Programmes

'Time to Laugh', a dance-band comedy series, starts on Tuesday night

TUESDAY night at 9.15 will be a critical moment in my own career. After all these years as a band-leader and arranger I shall be on the air for the first time as a script-writer and actor.



Van Phillips

Quite frankly, after listening to some of the dance-band presentation programmes presented by Ben Frankel, Phil Cardew, and Louis Levy, I felt that the art of dance-band presentation had been brought to such a pitch that it would not be worth while trying to improve on it, and it would be best for me to enter new fields.

Generally speaking, 'Time to Laugh' will be sixty per cent. script and forty per cent. music. The scripts will present six characters, two of whom have never played real speaking parts before—Cyril Grantham and myself. We shall both be 'in character' as crooner and band-leader respectively; in fact, only one of the six artists will bear what might be called a *nom-de-script*, namely George Adam.

Adam is new to broadcasting. He is a Gloucestershire personality, for whom I have chosen

material, character, and name especially and exclusively for this series. He will tell anecdotes about friends and relatives in his home county.

Jimmy Hayter (the same James Hayter known to stage and screen as a fine character actor) will be playing the rôle of himself. The feminine element will be entirely in the capable hands of Vera Lennox.

To establish my own position in the programme I shall lead a group of twenty musicians similar to that employed in my previous BBC series, 'Van Phillips and his Two Orchestras'. The vocal trio with the band, to be known as the Men About Town, will consist of three soloists already well known individually on the air: Chips Chippendall, Ronnie Odell, and Cyril Grantham.

In the scripts I have tried to introduce an element of sophistication which is perhaps a little unusual in many shows of this kind; at all events, I have steered away from the out-and-out slapstick comedy for which the pioneer dance-musician comedians had a weakness. Nobody will actually relate gags or jokes, which will rather be incorporated in the dialogue.

The music and the humorous situations in these programmes will all be my own responsibility. I trust you will appreciate that I am stepping out of my normal character, and that you will be indulgent with my first efforts as a 'funny man'. In fact, I can only add the concluding hope that you, too, may find Tuesday evening will be 'Time to Laugh'.

Radio Times. March 31st.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

JAZZ enthusiasts will be reflecting regretfully this week that the popular Wednesday night 'Swing Time' feature has only two more weeks to go. Though the normal listening audience at this hour is very limited, many sets have been kept going from 11.30 to midnight for these specialised recitals and commentaries.

Alan Frank, a noted music critic and contributor to these pages, will provide a topic for argument in this week's programme, entitled 'But is it Jazz?' This will deal with two types of border-line cases: the jazz musicians who dabble in adaptations of the classics, illustrated by such curiosities as a Bach concerto played by two swing violinists; and the standard composers, including Lambert, Weill, and Ravel, in works reflecting the influence of the jazz idiom.

* * * *

Billy Cotton and his unchanging, ever-popular orchestra will be on the air twice during the coming week—Monday evening and Saturday afternoon. Strange to note that when he first started in regular music-hall work eight years ago, Cotton was at the Alhambra Theatre and Giro's. Today there is no Alhambra, and Giro's has closed, but Cotton carries on.

* * * *

Sid Millward and his Nitwits are back on the air, using a smaller combination than the regular group that plays at the Café Anglais. Alan Kane, who used to be Ambrose's 'Alan Marsh', is now singing and playing drums in this band.

DON'T CALL THEM CROONERS

6—Gwen Jones

Born Tonypany, 1920. Left there for London when nine years old. Had her first job through Oscar Rabin, who placed her with a band under his control. Auditioned for Eddie Carroll last August, and has been singing with him at Chez Henri.

Q.—Who is your favourite singer? A.—Bing Crosby, Ella Fitzgerald, Frances Langford.

Q.—What are your favourite songs? A.—'Deep in a Dream', and 'In the Middle of a Kiss'.

Q.—Which is your favourite band? A.—Count Basie's.

Q.—Do you play any instrument? A.—I have been studying piano at the Guildhall School of Music, but until recently I couldn't read a note.

Q.—Do you come from a musical family? A.—My mother has a good voice; I have a cousin of the same name who won Eisteddfod prizes for several years as a soloist, and a young sister working at the Home Office who has a fine voice, but I can't persuade her to sing professionally.

Q.—What would you rather do if not sing? A.—Be a nurse. At one time I was interested in nursing and studied for it at school.

* * * *

Jack Jackson and his orchestra are leaving the Dorchester after all these years on April 1. Maurice Winnick will lead the new permanent band there on his return from the Riviera.



Gwen Jones

Radio Times. April 7th. 1939.

SIGNATURE TUNE

Weekly news and gossip about radio personalities in the dance-band world

By Leonard G. Feather

THE industrious and versatile Eddie Pola has lined up a short series of programmes, the first of this kind he has done for the BBC, entitled 'Crazy Quilt'.

As you will hear in the first show, which will be on the air on Tuesday and Thursday, there is a careful blend of musical and general entertainment in the quilt; one of the features, 'Quizzing the Experts', will submit noted critics to a merciless catechism.

Phyllis Robins's varied talent as singer and comedienne, the vocal work of 'Three of a Kind' (consisting of three girls all well known individually as soloists), and the scripts of Pola himself should all contribute towards achieving the type of public appeal the dance-band shows are earning nowadays as semi-Variety programmes.

At the last moment I hear that 'Crazy Quilt' will introduce the Heralds of Swing, a new all-star orchestra about which there is a great deal to be said. I hope to say it next week.

* * * *

If you happen to switch on a minute after seven on Thursday evening and hear the familiar Mexican musical impression 'Escapada', do not be misled into expecting an Ambrose broadcast. This number, written by Sid Phillips and featured by Ambrose, has been adopted as the signature tune for Phillips's first broadcast with a band of his own.

The manner in which this orchestra has reached broadcasting status is probably without precedent. Sid Phillips, during a visit to America, recorded a number of his own compositions with a selected band of New York musicians. The success of the records led to further sessions with an English band after his return home, but these, like the American records, were made solely for release in the U.S. Thus for almost every listener this broadcast will be the first opportunity of hearing the group, which has been reassembled as nearly as possible in its original form.

The programme will include four popular tunes, all the other items being originals by Phillips, including such recent ones as 'Blue Romance', 'Burmese Ballet', 'Early Morning Blues', and 'Plain Jane'.

This quiet-mannered little jazz personality hopes to visit America again within a few months. In the meantime he is still writing busily for Ambrose and others. On Thursday he will reveal the story behind 'Amoresque', a Phillips composition used by Jack Harris as his signature tune.

* * * *

Talking of Harris, his return to the London Casino on its reopening means that you will hear his new band from there very shortly, the first date being Friday. Many stars of jazz have been roped in for this group, among them Harry Karr, Laurie Bookin, and Billy Amstell on saxophones; Max Goldberg, trumpet; Eric Breeze, of Band-Waggon fame, on trombone; Jack Penn, the Canadian pianist-arranger, and Bill Sniderman, violinist and arranger.

Hugo Rignold and his Orchestra also return to the Casino this week.

Another important change in the West End has taken place at the May Fair, where, after a long innings, Michael Flöme and his Orchestra have left, to be replaced by a small unit known as 'Henry Hall's Music-Makers'. This name, which must revive memories for listeners, now denotes a group sponsored by Hall but directed by his sax-playing giant, Burton Gillis.

VAD ÄR DET FÖR FEL MED ENGELSK DANSMUSIK?

För ett stort antal kontinentala musiker och jazzentusiaster är England det ledande landet i Europa, när det gäller dansmusik. Utan tvivel har England frambragt flera internationellt berömda orkestrar än något annat land i Europa. Men om vi gör en jämförelse med standarden i Amerika, befinna vi oss ännu på ett mycket elementärt stadium, både när det gäller musiken och publikens uppskattning av den.

Brittiska swingskivor är mycket få till antalet (såvida man inte inkluderar de kommersiella skivorna av typen Nat Gonella och Joe Daniels), och förståelsen för våra få genuina hitsolisterna är så liten, att de måste ta jobb i kommersiella orkestrar, som inte utnyttja deras talanger till fullo.

Detta är ingalunda någon ny situation; det hände regelbundet i Amerika ända tills swingflugan omintet-



Evelyn Dall, "blond bombshell of rhythm" hos Ambrose.

gjorde systemet. Det händer fortfarande i Frankrike och andra länder. Men inget land lider så mycket av detta som England, ty vi ha äntligen fått fram några förstklassiga musiker, och därför är det så mycket mer



Leonard G. Feather, känd engelsk kritiker och kompositör, debuterar i Estrad med en syrlig artikel om den här så beundrade engelska dansmusiken.

tråkigt, att vi inte kan finna lämpliga engagemang åt dem.

Vilka äro de principiella orsakerna till denna situation? Varför är de flesta av de engelska dansskivorna, som ni svenska entusiaster i allmänhet få höra, av så ringa betydelse?

En mycket viktig orsak, som inte tycks ha observerats ens av skiventusiasterna, är, att hälften av Englands celebra orkestrar dirigeras av andra klass violinister.

Jag har ingenting emot violinen på dess rätta plats inom jazzen; inte alls, ingen är mer entusiastisk än jag över Eddie South, Stuff Smith och Joe Venuti. Men tyvärr, i detta land ha vi inga Eddie Souths. Våra dirigenter spela violin framför en orkester, därför att det ser trevligt ut och charmerar damerna. Eller vi kanske skall vända på steken: de utvaldes som ledare, därför att de spelade violin.

Denna löjliga kvarleva från den lätta musikens och wienervalsens era är totalt på fel plats i jazzen. Violinen har gång på gång bevisats ingenting ha med en modern dansorkester att göra, och en ensam violin framför en orkester är nästan ännu värre; den har ingen riktig stämma i arrangemangen utom att dubbla melodilinjen, vilket skänker orkestern en "corny" tonfärg.

Bortsett från detta, så betyder det faktum, att dessa orkesterledare mer eller mindre spela "straight" violin, automatiskt, att de ha fel mentalitet, jag menar en mentalitet, som aldrig inspirerar musiker att skapa en god jazzorkester. I de flesta fall är deras attityd gentemot jazzen precis lik den musiktyp de spela: flabbig, hållningslös och oambitiös, och de är villiga att ge publiken, vad den vill ha, istället för att lära den att vilja ha någonting nytt och bättre.

Se på denna lista av de mest berömda ledarna i detta land och lägg märke till hur få av dem äro stora musiker på samma sätt som Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, Tommy Dorsey, Count Basie, Duke Ellington.

Ambrose, Jack Harris, Joe Loss, Brian Lawrance, Bram Martin, Bert Firman, Maurice Winnick, Michael Flome etc. — alla äro icke-jazzviolinister. Sidney Lipton, Hugo Rignold — bättre, men inga verkliga jazzviolinister. Jack Hylton, Henry Hall, Jack Payne, Jack Jackson — spela i allmänhet inget instrument alls. Harry Roy — en "corny" klarinettist.

Man kunde fortsätta denna lista i oändlighet utan att finna en enda verkligt framstående musiker, som leder en orkester. För närvarande kan jag bara komma på två fall, som äro litet bättre än de vanliga: Sid Millward, en över medelmåttan begåvad brittisk klarinettist, som har en liten orkester på Café Anglais, och Fela Sowande, en afrikansk pianist, troligen okänd av er, som nyligen öppnade med Adeleide Hall på hennes nya rendez-vous i London, Florida. Båda komma närmare begreppet hotmusiker än någon av de mer berömda brittiska orkesterledarna, som uppräknats här ovan.

Är det då underligt, att vi aldrig kan komma någonstans, då musiker i klass med George Chisholm, Tommy McQuater och några få andra verkligt framstående hotmusiker måste spela under sådana ledare?

Vid ett tillfälle trodde jag det fanns hopp om att kunna förbättra



George Chisholm, av många ansedd som Englands bästa hotsolist.

denna situation. Viss om att det fanns rum för åtminstone en verklig swingorkester i detta land, försökte jag framföra en idé till ett flertal impressarios, att vi skulle starta en orkester under ledning av Danny Polo,

vilkens inspelningar med ett utmärkt jam-band ådrogo sig så smickrande omnämmanden. Men, fastän dessa impressarios i några fall voro intresserade av idén, funno de det omöjligt att kunna övertyga restaurangdirektörer och klubbägare, att det kunde finnas pengar att göra på en "Brittisk Benny Goodman-orkester". Tydligtvis är det mot reglerna, att en brittisk orkesterledare vet någonting om jazz!

Sedan dess har Danny Polo, som är amerikansk medborgare, ingått i Ray Venturas orkester i Paris och kommer näppeligen att återvända till England, så detta underbara tillfälle återkommer ej. Ingen av de bästa swingmusikerna, som finnas här nu, ha tillräcklig individuell personlighet eller uppträdande att kunna stå framför en orkester, så för ögonblicket måste de fortsätta att sitta bakom ledaren och i skuggan av violinen, denna violin, som gnisslar fram dessa miserabla, kommersiella melodier, som publiken fortfarande så varmt älskar.

Och nu kan ni kanske förstå, varför folk frågar, vad det är för fel med brittisk jazz!

Visste du???

att en kommitté av kompositörer och förläggare nyligen spelade Raymond Scotts inspelning av "The Penguin" på New Yorks akvarium för en flock pingviner för att se, vilken effekt kompositionen gjorde på de arktiska fåglarna? Visste Du, att Estrad aldrig hört något så svagsint förut?

att den amerikanske orkesterledaren Hal Kemp har fått ett erbjudande att dirigera Chicago Symfoniorkester på tre konserter i sommar? Han är den förste "jazzbandit", som fått ett så hedrande uppdrag, men så är också symfonisk musik hans livs stora intresse och han har en gedigen musikutbildning bakom sig.

att trumslagaren Gene Krupas moder är svenska? Och visste du vidare, att Gene alltid öppnar dörrar med vänster hand och lär sig skriva med vänster hand? Inte på grund av vidskepelse utan för att träna upp handen? Visste du vidare, att han spelar piano en timme varje morgon — mellan 3—4?

att Paul Whiteman definierar swing så här: swing är civiliserad jazz med en hednisk, rytmisk puls som grund? Jasså, på det viset!

att Jack Hylton en gång fick 35.000 kronor (1.750 pund) för ett ströbass en julafton i den franske bilkungen Citroens hem?

att Nat Gonella en gång fick kr. 3.50 för ett ströbass? Det var på hans första professionella angagemang.

att Jack Harris, den engelske orkesterledaren och nattklubsägaren, nyligen slog en av sina gäster på Ciro's Club knockout på estraden, därför att gästen ville leka litet med taktippen? Att vara restaurangman kräver allsidig utbildning, det är tydligt.

Estrad.

WHAT'S WRONG WITH BRITISH JAZZ?

By Leonard G. Feather

To a large number of Continental musicians and jazz enthusiasts, England is the principal European centre of dance music. Certainly England has produced more internationally famous bands than any other European country. Yet compared with the state of affairs in America we are still at a very elementary stage, both in the music and in the public appreciation of it.

British swing records are very few in number (unless one includes commercial records of the Nat Gonella-Joe Daniels type) and the appreciation of our few genuine hot solo men is so small that they are obliged to take jobs in commercial bands which do not employ their talents to the fullest advantage.

This is by no means a new situation; it happened regularly in America until the swing wave partly put an end to it. It is still happening in France and other countries. But no country is suffering more from it than England, because we at last have developed some first class musicians, and this makes it all the more regrettable that we cannot find anything suitable to do with them.

What are the main reasons for this trouble? Why are most of the English dance records which you Swedish fans hear generally of such minor importance?

A very important reason, which does not seem to have been noticed by the fans themselves, is that half England's debelrated bands are run directed by second-rate violinists.

I have nothing against the violin in its proper place in jazz; indeed, nobody is more enthusiastic than myself about the work of Eddie South, Stuff Smith and Joe Venuti. But alas, we in this country have not any Eddie Souths. Our band-leaders are men who play the violin in front of a band because it looks nice and charms the ladies. Or possibly it is the other way round: they were selected to become band-leaders because they played the violin.

This ridiculous survival of the era of light music and Viennese waltzes is totally out of place in jazz. The violin has frequently been proved out of place in a dance band altogether, and a single violin in front of a band

agents in some cases were interested in the idea, they found it impossible to convince restaurant managers or club owners that there was anything commercial about a British Benny Goodman orchestra. Apparently it is against the rules for a British band-leader to know anything about jazz!

Since then Danny Polo, who is an American subject, has joined Ray Ventura's Orchestra in Paris and seems unlikely ever to return to England, so that this wonderful opportunity is lost forever. None of the best swing men now working here has a strong enough individual personality and appearance to stand in front of a band, so for the present they will continue to sit behind the leader, in the shadow of the fiddle that is grinding out those miserable commercial melodies which the public continues to love so dearly.

And now perhaps you can understand why people ask what is wrong with British jazz!

Esthad. Nr. 4.

George Chisholm & His Jive Five
No smoking
Penalty £ 5 (Decca F. 6939)

Sammansättningen står på etiketten, och den initierade ser genast, att det är det skotska inslaget i Londonbilden, som medverkar. Duktiga dansmusiker allesammans. Det låter litet Teagarden, när Chisholm spelar, och det gör han rätt flitigt. I den första sidan avbryts han bara av Winestone på klarinett. I baksidan får vi också höra pianisten Macualey och en "fråge- och svarsduell" mellan Chisholm och McQuater. Den senare är Europas bästa hottrumpetare ... påstår Disco, som hört ungefär 1 % av dem. Kompet kan man anmärka på. Det är mekaniskt för det mesta.

Leonard Feather and Ye Olde English
Swynge Band
Colonel Bogey March
Widdicombe Fair (Decca F. 6897)

Att döma av orkesternamnet är det väl fortfarande gamla engelska visor, som Feather inspelar med sin lilla goda ensemble. Det är bra engelsk swingmusik. Bäste solist är trumpetaren Wilkins (från Ken Johnsons negerorkester), som i Widdicombe Fair sjunger någonting om Louis Armstrong, Fats Waller, Tommy Dorsey m. fl.

Sunday Night Swing Club, 2nd April, 1939.

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PROGRAMME

ENGLAND STARTS FIRST REAL ★ ★

All-British SWING BAND

By Leonard G. Feather

IT'S happened at last. The event which has been overdue for about three years, the launching of an all-star British band capable of performing a musical revolution in Great Britain, has been realized with the formation of the "Heralds of Swing."

This band is a co-operative group built on the lines with which the Casa Loma gang did some similar pioneering in the States. Its ten present members include five of the corner men from Ambrose's band which broke up six months ago. The idea was conceived by some of the boys who realized that the trouble with British bands was the short-sighted policy of the corny band-leaders. They determined to start a band on the right lines without a leader, in accordance with their own ideas of how jazz should be made.

When Benny Goodman started the first white swing band of its kind he had a tough time convincing managers that this was a commercial proposition. Before he finally made the grade with the public he had some embarrassingly tough breaks. The Heralds of Swing have not ignored the fact that they will be up against the same difficulties; but fortunately they found a manager who is as keen on the idea as they are themselves, and who helped to get them into the Paradise, London's most publicized late night rendezvous.

A big party was staged at which press, radio and phonograph men met and heard the band. Reception was enthusiastic, and there is every chance of your hearing more about the band through radio and recording work.

The personnel at present is not ideal in quantity or quality, but is certainly on the right lines. The brass section consists of Tommy McQuater, trumpet; Archie Craig, cornet, and George Chisholm, trombone. (I see that you can at last hear Chisholm's work on a disc released in America—Fats Waller's *Don't Try Your Jive on Me*, on Bluebird.) The saxes include an ex-Hylton star, Dave Shand, on first alto and clarinet; Norman Maloney, second alto, and Benny Winestone on tenor—he is a Glasgow-born boy who often visited America while playing on the ships, got to know Goodman, Freeman and other stars, and has a particularly un-English clarinet style; and that's meant as a compliment!

In the rhythm section is Bert Barnes, the pianist and arranger who made some of the most valuable contributions to Ambrose's library, sharing the bulk of the arranging work with Sid Phillips. Completing the Heralds of Swing are Sid Colin, guitar and vocals; Georgie Fierstone, drums, and Tiny Winters, another Ambrose star, on bass.

There is plenty of other excitement in London musical circles right now, for Fats Waller is expected back very shortly to open a long tour; Ray Ventura's Collegians, the French kings of jazz, have fixed up another short visit over here; and after all these years Coleman Hawkins, still the world's greatest tenor sax man, has been enabled to come across to England once more after three years wandering around France, Belgium, Holland and Scandinavia.

Hawkins, who of course was the brightest light in Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra for some ten years, came over here first to play with Jack Hylton in 1934. Though his Dutch recordings have been released on Decca in America, the fans in the States have partly forgotten him, which seems a shame since those who still listen to all his work consider him in a class apart from Bud Freeman, Lester Young, Chu Berry or any other tenor man. In fact, Hawkins is quite phenomenal, and I hope that his long-delayed return to America this summer will mean that he'll once again be established as a celebrity in his own country.

His short visit to England is a tie-up with a musical instrument firm for which he is giving a series of so-called demonstrations. This seems to be the only way he could get around the tough labour permit restrictions and find himself any kind of work in this country.

Radio has provided the other interesting musical items this side of the Atlantic. Artie Shaw and his fine band made their debut in a CBS-BBC hook-up, but the show was much too short to leave any impression. Since only one of Artie's innumerable Bluebird recordings has been released in this country, the public here is a long way from appreciating him yet, and Goodman retains a sort of monopoly.

In fact, it is extraordinary how little the European man-in-the-street knows about American bands. Only the few whose recordings happen to be released regularly manage to achieve the sort of reputation that would mean anything if they were able to make a tour of the Continent. Among these, by the way, is the Jimmie Lunceford orchestra, which is expected to start another excursion in Scandinavia on June 1. Several other European countries will be covered during the tour, but once again, inevitably, England is unlucky!



Coleman Hawkins

SWING AND THE ACCORDION



GEORGE SHEARING

LADIES and gentlemen—I was wrong! I've made a mistake and I acknowledge it willingly, though it unfortunately sabotages all the arguments that have been raging in these pages ever since, some two years ago, I explained why it was impossible, or at the very least extremely improbable, to swing on the accordion.

One of my points was that it had never happened yet, and that I should believe it only when I had heard it.

Now it has happened. And oddly enough I have been personally responsible for its

LEONARD FEATHER CHANGES HIS MIND!

IN PREVIOUS ISSUES, LEONARD FEATHER HAS CONSISTENTLY DECLARED THAT THE ACCORDION CANNOT SWING. IN THIS ARTICLE HE ADMITS THAT HE HAS BEEN CONVERTED!

presentation to the world at large. The phenomenon is a British musician—George Shearing; he is nineteen years old, blind since birth, and the greatest swing pianist in Great Britain.

Also the first swing accordionist I have ever heard.

So amazed was I that I persuaded the Decca company to put this phenomenon on record. So enjoyable is the experience of playing with a musician of Shearing's calibre that I actually had the audacity to play the piano accompaniment myself. The result is *Squeezin' the Blues*, which is scheduled for release in Decca's May list. This title indicates a traditional twelve-bar blues, a form of music probably unknown to many accordionists. And here I come back to my argument with another defence.

* * *

Thinking it out

One of the obvious reasons why a George Shearing has not previously arisen is that musicians who become accordion players are generally those who like music in a vague impractical way and want to find some means of expressing themselves without too much technical difficulty. The accordion has thus been taken up by many who have no interest in the more advanced styles of jazz.

Secondly, the great men of swing music having been reared in the tradition of accepted

jazz instrumentation, have associated the accordion with something quite outside their normal sphere of activity. In the same way that Red Norvo met prejudices when he started to play swing music on the xylophone, anyone tampering with the accordion in the same way was liable to accusations of freak musicianship or eccentricity.

George Shearing will undoubtedly have the same trouble. There will be many jazz fans who will not even bother to listen to *Squeezin' the Blues*, certain that it cannot be a real swing record. Many others will listen to it with some impatience without letting the music get under their skin, and will not react to it at first.

As far as I am concerned, I don't propose to discuss whether Shearing is a great master of the accordion *per se*. His technique may be good or bad; certainly there are one or two suspicious notes in the improvisations, but only because they are improvisations, and everyone from Louis Armstrong downwards has been known to let a little clinker drop occasionally.

* * *

Jazz Authorities Approve

But what a treat it is to hear anyone getting as far as improvising in the real jazz idiom at all on this previously impotent box! All my arguments about its incapacity have been overcome by somebody with sufficient feeling for jazz to surmount the obstacles.

Incidentally, I have played the record over to such other well-known jazz authorities and exponents as Coleman Hawkins, Fats Waller, Leonard Hibbs, and Iain Lang. All agree with me about the accordion in general, but all are also united in declaring that Shearing is a most exceptional discovery.

* * *

Why Hadn't I Heard?

Perhaps all this is not news to you; maybe you have heard Shearing many times already, but it strikes me as a singularly cogent point that no contestant of my argument has cited Shearing as a case against me. Evidently he has gone unrecognised in accordion circles, and it has taken me, the arch-enemy of the accordion, to bring him to general notice!

Anyway, now I leave it to you to give George Shearing the break he deserves. Listen to his record, see if you understand the vast difference between this and any use that has previously been made of the accordion in jazz. If you want to hear him in person, drop a line to the Editor.

And, finally, I've run away to America to avoid the brickbats!

Chicago Defender, April.

Leonard Feathers, energetic young English correspondent of the "Melody Maker," London's foremost musical organ, flew over to Paris and arranged a "session" for the Decca Recording company with a well pieced-up orchestra of British and French musicians, in which he featured two of our great stars the invincible Garland Wilson and clever Una Mae Carlisle . . . The works of the combination are splendid . . . Flowers to Mr. Feathers.

The Social Side of Swing

Leonard G. Feather, British correspondent of *Swing*, who is currently on a visit to New York, gives his views on one of the most important problems in swing music.

DURING my previous visits to the States I have always been particularly interested in what might be described as one of the social problems of this music. On my present trip I have been going more closely into the matter and the more I think about it the less I can understand it. I'm referring, as you might have guessed, to the color problem.

For various political and tactical reasons, the jazz press has always been very cautious and reluctant to put the facts of this problem before the American public. I am glad that the policy of *Swing* is broadminded enough to allow me to air my views.

It seems to me that the whole structure and history of jazz has been restricted and altered by the continual discrimination practiced against the Negro race. In the early days, when all forms of jazz were crude and uncontrolled, the Negro musician was regarded as an entertainer with a natural and instinctive talent who could be tolerated on the bandstand but never made any impression on audiences as a human being. To a large extent that attitude still pre-

vails among American audiences.

This same standpoint has been responsible for the fact that every band in the whole of this great country consists either exclusively of white musicians or exclusively of colored men. The fact that a musician may fit the particular style of a band, or that the leader may want to include him in the personnel, is always subjugated to the more important consideration that he must belong to the right racial group. Obviously, this consideration has no direct bearing on the music itself, so that the set-up is artificial.

A few of the more enlightened musicians, realizing this, have made brave efforts to break down the color barrier. Benny Goodman has earned a place in musical history if only because of the precedent he set by signing up Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton. But even this venture had to be a half-way measure; the two colored boys were only introduced as a specialty act and were not permanent members of the full Goodman band.

Similar difficulties have arisen during the appearance of June Richmond and Billie Holiday when they sang with white bands. The attempts to form mixed orchestras (such as Mezz Mezzrow's venture at the Up-roar House and Joe Marsala's at the Hickory House) had to be abandoned. Similarly colored bands playing hotel jobs have encountered patrons who refused to sit in the room and dine to the music of a Negro orchestra; colored bands hardly ever have commercial radio to help them to achieve financial success; and the idea of a white musician working with a colored band would be even more inadmissible.

I believe that the music minded public is slowly realizing the inconsistency and foolishness of these problems, and that the nation-wide interest in swing music of recent years has helped to throw a useful light on them. America is constitutionally a free country where racial prejudice is not natural and must eventually be wiped out. Nevertheless it is quite illuminating to contrast the set-up here with that which exists in European countries.

Do you know where Duke Ellington lived when his band first visited London? The answer is the Dorchester Hotel, which is London's Waldorf-Astoria. Throughout his entire trip he was treated in his professional and personal life with the respect such a great artist deserves. He was invited to a dinner party at the home of Britain's biggest newspaper magnate, who wrote a leading article in his paper the following day paying tribute to Duke as a man as well as a musician.

Benny Carter, who now has a fine band at the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, was in Holland a couple of years ago leading a band at a big hotel. The eleven men in the combination included seven nationalities. White and colored musicians sat side by side and created music which they enjoyed as much as their audiences. Can you imagine this happening in America?

If it happens, it will not be the result of public demand, but of the invaluable work done by a patient minority who have been endeavoring for several years to put an end to the present anomalous state of affairs. I'm thinking particularly of a young man who is not very well known in American jazz circles outside New York, but who has done far more than you realize for the promotion of good swing music and of racial equality. John Hammond, who can



Goodman's Former Quartet of Tough, Wilson, Hampton and Himself

fairly be described as the man behind the Benny Goodman and Count Basie orchestras as well as discoverer of Teddy Wilson, Billie Holiday, the Boogie Woogie pianists and countless other big stars of today, is the sort of person who will spend all his life fighting for a cause he believes to be just.

Since the advent of Hammond and a few others hardly less enthusiastic many of the previously unrecognized colored musicians have been brought to general attention. But after a few weeks looking round New York and drinking in swing music at the rate of slightly under twenty-four hours a day, I still find there are many contradictions and absurdities in the respective positions of the bands. Most of the popularity polls reveal that bands like Larry Clinton's, which produce a definitely "commercial" style of music, are far more popular than the bands from which they got most of their ideas. In particular I am amazed at the lack of recognition afforded to Duke Ellington in his own country. This man, who is today as he has been for ten years the most brilliant composer of unadulterated, authentic jazz as a pure art

form, is merely regarded as one of a score of fairly popular personalities; his records have only a fraction of the sales I imagined, and he has spent a large proportion of his time playing in remote districts; he has not even given a concert at the Carnegie Hall or any such hall of fame. And worse still, those who do like his works admire him most for such numbers as *Solitude*, *Sophisticated Lady* and *Caravan*, which are not orchestral compositions but one-line melodies of no lasting value. Such magnificent and more typical Ellington discs like *Battle of Swing*, *Hip Chic* and *Steppin' Into Swing Society* go by almost unnoticed. I realize that there will be an enormous majority opinion against me on this question of Duke's popular song hits, but if you realize that Duke is principally a composer and arranger, not a song-writer, you will sympathize with this view.

Some day, if and when the present swing mania has died down and the quantity and quality of American jazz have found a more normal level, people will appreciate this music for what it really is—and when that day comes, the colored artist will earn complete recognition for the invaluable contribution he has made to the first individual musical forms America has ever produced.

