

Melody Maker

incorporating "RHYTHM"

Vol. XVII. No. 409

MAY 24, 1941

THREEPENCE

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CHARLIE SPINNELLY PASSES

CHARLIE SPINNELLY, one of the best-known saxophonists in the business, passed on last week at Lyme Regis as a result of the pernicious anaemia from which he had been suffering for some years.

Two months ago he entered Middlesex Hospital, but the doctors considered that he could only expect to live for a year or two at most.

So his brother Fred, another member of the family famous in the jazz business, took him down to Lyme Regis in Dorset, where their mother was staying. For a time Charlie improved, but this was only temporary, and he gradually sank and died.

The Spinnellys were in the jazz business right at the beginning, and it was



Fred who taught the Duke of Windsor to play the drums. Charlie, if not considered in later years a great stylist, was noted for his golden saxophone tone, and right up to leaving London he was recording regularly with Victor Silvester, imparting a distinctive note to that combination which contributed much to its success. Although he had twenty years' experience in the business, Charlie was only 36 when he died, but in his time he had played with practically every big leader of note in the country.

He leaves a wife and two children, to whom the sympathies of his numerous friends in the business will be extended.

BERT READ: A Rumour Quashed

IT is with the utmost pleasure that we are able to refute some extraordinary rumours which have been current in the profession during the last few days concerning Quartermaster - Sergeant Bert Read, the former Ambrose and Henry Hall pianist, now in the Royal Fusiliers.

The "M.M." has ascertained definitely that Bert is convalescing in hospital after a short illness, but will soon be perfectly fit and ready to resume his Army duties.

E.N.S.A. RECORDED CONCERTS for OVERSEAS

A STEP to bring greater entertainment to troops serving overseas is now being discussed by E.N.S.A.

The scheme is for records of E.N.S.A. troop concerts in this country to be sent abroad so that they may be broadcast from there to overseas forces.

It is understood that the scheme is being submitted to the Musicians' Union for their approval in so far as it affects dance musicians taking part in these concerts.

Blue Rockets Airing

ON the air again on June 9 (Forces) will be the Blue Rockets Dance Band, the fifteen-piece R.A.O.C. star outfit that created such a sensation on its first broadcast last January.

Ex-Lew Stone trombonist Eric Tann leads, and is responsible for the arrangements, with ex-Jacksonite Lee Street conducting.

BIX FILM MYSTERY

U.S. Fans Demand Its Release :
But Where Is It ?

FIFTH COLUMN !

How, in these days of acute paper shortage, can we give even more value to our readers and advertisers ?

That is the problem which has been exercising the mighty brains of the "Melody Maker" staff lately—and, from next week's issue onwards, the tangible result of our heavy thinking will become apparent.

We have added another column to our pages, and the fifth column will enable us to get in more text, more adverts, more pictures and better display.

This brilliant feat, accomplished with the aid of mirrors plus a modicum of legerdemain, should make the paper look brighter, and help us to crowd in a lot more stuff.

Anyway, seriously, we hope you'll like it.

THE EDITOR.

JACK PAYNE AIRS TO GERMANY !

MORE than 2,000 letters every week! That is the response which Jack Payne's multifarious activities are attracting from the public.

And it is not the only indication of the immense entertainment value of the Jack Payne organisation these days, for, in addition, Jack is doing a number of overseas broadcasts which are first-class propaganda for this country.

His "Moods Modernistic" programme, for example, has been broadcast two or three times to Germany and twice to America, and the transatlantic airings have been so successful that requests have been received for a continuance.

As for the German reception—well, according to the B.B.C. quite a lot of people in Germany have managed to let the Corporation know that they would also like to hear more!

Gloria Brent is now singing with the band, but there have been no changes in the personnel of the orchestra. On his last "Moods Modernistic" programme, Jack actually used 29 players. Bob Busby looks after the arrangements for this presentation and Stanley Andrews is responsible for the rest.

For "Have You Any Memories," "Out of the Hat," and his other radio shows, special scripts written by Jack himself are used, and since every Sunday the band gives concerts and special dances for munition workers are a weekly occurrence, the Payne organisation is busy from early morning till late at night seven days every week.

HAWAIIANS ON STAGE

THE success of Felix Mendelssohn's Hawaiian Serenaders has led to their being lined up for variety.

Anglo-American Artists, responsible for these bookings, expect to release an impressive tour-list in the near future, and it is very much hoped that Felix may be occasionally released from the Army to make personal appearances.

Sam Firman Dies

SAM FIRMAN—brother of John, Recording Manager of Feldman's, and of Bert, the well-known bandleader—died last week after an illness of several months' duration, and was buried at Streatham Hill Cemetery.

Sam was the eldest of the family, and played violin in brother Bert's band. He had also acted as leader at some time or another in most of the West End theatres.

He leaves a wife and son, to whom will go the condolences of Sam's many friends in the profession.

WHEN Dorothy Baker's thinly veiled biography of Bix Beiderbecke, "Young Man With a Horn," was published in America and created a sensation, the picture moguls in Hollywood immediately sat up and took notice, and began bidding for the film rights.

Soon it was announced that Burgess Meredith, a young actor who had made a big hit in "Winterset," would play the part of Rick Martin.

NOBODY KNOWS

Admirers of the incomparable artistry of the Davenport, Iowa, youth whose intricate simplicity on the trumpet might be said to have laid the foundation for all jazz improvisation were thrilled that a film based on a sincere appreciation of his abilities was at last to be made.

Then, after a further report that the book was to be dramatised and presented on Broadway, nothing was heard for a long time.

In fact, nothing was heard of it until this week, when we received a report from America that a film was actually made by a Hollywood studio, but was shelved for reasons which were not stated.

Now admirers of Bix all over America are demanding that the film should be taken off the shelves and shown! The London offices of Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, who were reported to have bought the story in the first place, have no record of it, and Paramount definitely say that their "Second Chorus," which has just been released, was based on an original idea.

Similarly, the London offices of other film companies are unable to throw any light upon the film—who made it, or why it was shelved. Yet the fact remains that it definitely appears to have been made, and it is just as definite that a petition is being canvassed for by Beiderbecke fans to force the studio distributors to release the picture.

CENSOR BAN ?

Was the Will Hays' office responsible for the shelving of the film? Was it considered that the implication that Bix died from over-indulgence in drink and narcotics would be bad propaganda for American youth?

Whatever did happen, if the story of Bix Beiderbecke was made into a film we join his admirers in America in demanding that we have the opportunity to see it.

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M.M. 24/5/41

ROY ELDRIDGE JOINS KRUPA

RUMOURS that had been circulating for almost six months have at last been confirmed when Roy Eldridge opened with Gene Krupa's Orchestra at New York's Pennsylvania Hotel.

The famous coloured trumpet player will be featured as a speciality in arrangements written around him, somewhat on the lines of Cootie Williams with Goodman.

The tie-up is a logical one, as Krupa and Eldridge are old friends, and recorded together on Gene's first Victor session in 1936; lately Gene had been using Roy on record dates, and was also playing some of the Eldridge riff tunes.

"Little Jazz" has been leading a small band of his own in Chicago recently, but obtained a release from his contract with Joe Glaser so that he could make the Krupa alliance.

Last year a similar deal between Eldridge and Charlie Barnet fell through at the last moment, because Glaser wanted Roy to continue fronting a band of his own.

And this week comes the news that Benny Carter, for reasons which are hard to fathom, turned down a generous offer from Barnet to join the band as arranger and featured sax and trumpet soloist. Benny, whose own band is still out of work literally 80 per cent. of the time, still fondly cherishes the idea of getting a break on his own.

After Carter's negative reply, Charlie Barnet, needing some kind of featured attraction for the band, hired the Quintones, vocal group, who made quite a name for themselves on Vocalion records.

L. G. F.

Notts Leader's R.A.F. Distinction

CONGRATULATIONS to well-known ex-Nottingham band leader, Cliff Harris, upon attaining the proud distinction of being the first of our numerous dance men in the Services to secure promotion from the ranks.

Prior to the war, Pilot-Officer Harris, R.A.F., as he is now entitled to be designated, had a very successful band which specialised in semi-residential work in the most select of Nottingham's residential hotels.

The band was also well-known in the contesting field, obtaining the honour of playing in the "M.M." All-Britain at Trentham Gardens, Staffs.

Cliff's keenness as a musician was always shared by his interest in aviation, and he was one of the first members of the local R.A.F. Auxiliary, from whence he transferred to the R.A.F. Volunteer Reserve at the outbreak of war.

GEENTY IN THE R.A.F.

RADIO Telephonist Operator Harry Geenty, R.A.F. Remember him with Charlie Kunz, accompanist with Dolly Hylton, and as a broadcaster in "Flippant Fingers"?

But Harry is not spending all his time radio telephoning, for he has already arranged shows at the Midland camp, at which he is stationed, and his pianistic ability is in high demand there.

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ARTIE SHAW GOES STRAIGHT

AFTER his recently expressed disgust with all things jazz, and his subsequent excursions into jazz orchestras on Berlioz lines, Artie Shaw is now studying conducting with Dr. Hans Burns in New York, and it is reported that he may conduct a concert of serious music at the Lewisohn Stadium in New York during the summer.

It was at the Lewisohn Stadium that a concert of Gershwin's music was given annually, but the indications are that Shaw's programme, if and when he conducts it, will be of established classics.

MANTOVANI IS UNFIT

LOOKING fitter than we have ever seen him, Mantovani is feeling very disgruntled these days because he has been turned down by the Army authorities on medical grounds. Actually, he is extremely busy broadcasting and playing stage dates in the London area.

Living in a district which has been the constant recipient of attention from the Luftwaffe, "Monty" is not inclined to tour and leave his family, and he is finding his many engagements in Town as much as he can cope with just now.

HARRY LEADER'S BREAK

SO good has been the business since Harry Leader went to Hammer-smith Palais that the management, with commendable foresight, have now signed him up on a six months' contract, together with a raise in salary all round for the musicians under his baton.

Harry, who, as previously reported, is now recording for Regal Zonophone, undoubtedly had a hard task ahead of him when he followed the Romany Band into this well-known dance hall. But box-office takings have proved that the Leader personality has been equal to the task, and the fact that such an offer of permanency has been made is ample proof of his popularity amongst patrons.

RHYTHM CLUB NEWS

No. 1. Splendid turn-out on May 18, when Eddie Malden (piano), leading his group of Norman Waring (trumpet), Ted Snood (tenor and clarinet), David Cohen (guitar), and Peter Verney (drums), were voted tops on the hot band contest. Trumpeter Norman Waring was voted best instrumentalist of the afternoon. At the next meeting, on May 24, the Club presents Norman Burns, Ambrose singer Doreen Villiers, and a star Jam band which includes York de Sousa (piano), Carl Barriteau (clarinet), and Leslie Hutchinson (trumpet). Also a record recital by Eric Preston on Bud Freeman. On May 28, at 7.15 p.m., there will be a Jam Session and record recitals. Club meets at the "Bag o' Nails," 9, Kingly Street, W.1.

No. 9. A "Bring Your Own Discs" programme at the third meeting of the Erdington (Birmingham) Rhythm Club on May 16 resulted in several interesting and conflicting opinions from members, of whom Fred Pearson, especially with his support of Sidney Bechet, seems chiefly to have caused disagreement. The meeting closed with a Jam Session. The Club meets every Friday at 7.30 p.m. at the Church House, Erdington High Street.

No. 150. At the meeting of the Iford Rhythm Club on May 13, Ken Outhick gave a recital of rare discs, and the Club Jam Group gave a Jam Session. The Jack Swridge String Quintet, featuring Jack Swridge (bass), Sud Tucker (violin), Bert Weedon and Johnny Crowe (guitars), and Ken Franklin (clarinet), also provided a session. On May 23 there will be recitals by Wally Moffat and Doug Mead.

No. 151. On May 31, the Dewsbury Rhythm Club meets to hear Francis Love give his recital on the Casa Loma Orchestra, the white combination that helped to model a new jazz form. Last Thursday, Secretary Vernon Thornes gave the Part 1 of "The Future of Jazz."

N.W.3.—Next meeting of the N.W.3 Group is on May 23 at the "King of Bohemia," Hampstead High Street, when "Blues for Ed" will be presented by the secretary, Eric Preston, in memory of former 144 and Services Club pianist, Ed. Oxford, a most important member of the Club in its young days, who was killed on active service. Guest recitalist will be Rex Harris, and the Pinesbury Park Jam Group will supply the live jazz. There will also be a record auction and Jam Session. The position of honorary president of the Club has been accepted by Stephane Grappoly.

AMATEURS PICKED FOR RADIO RHYTHM CLUB

THE Radio Rhythm Club's Amateurs' Night, details of which were announced in these columns recently, has now been definitely fixed for Wednesday, June 11 next.

The broadcast will take place from 10 to 10.35 p.m. in the Forces programme.

Following are the names of the six "turns" who were chosen by Harry Parry at a recent audition to take part in the airing (writes "Detector"):

Miss J. BRAUGHAN (vocalist), 320, Mortlake Road, Ilford, Essex.

J. CREWE (Instrumental Trio of two guitars and clarinet), 24, Colchester Avenue, Manor Park, London, E.12.

M. FOOTER (accordion), 67, Frederick Street, Caledonian Road, Barnsbury, London, N.7.

Pte. D. L. HILL (Instrumental Trio of tenor sax, piano, drums), c/o Mrs. Brookes, 7, Castle Street, Hereford.

DENNIS NAHUM (Instrumental Trio of piano, guitar, drums), The Firs, Wilmslow, Cheshire; and

M. STOKES (Instrumental Duo of violin, guitar), 26, Harvey Road, Leytonstone, London, E.11.

SWING INVADES DEWSBURY

SWING came to Dewsbury on May 8, when Bob Jackson, brilliant clarinetist and alto man of the Music Salon, Wakefield, took his three Swing Stars along for a dance in the Ambulance Hall to provide funds for the Dewsbury Rhythm Club.

The affair was organised by V. M. Thornes, Secretary of the Club, and there was at first some doubt on the part of the officials as to the response likely to develop from an audience primarily interested in brass bands. And this doubt seemed confirmed when it was seen that, for the first few numbers, few couples took the floor.

But their reluctance to dance was very quickly discovered to be due solely to the fact that the audience was otherwise interested.

This swing stuff was holding them spellbound until, despite themselves, they found themselves lured on to the floor by the rhythm of the first out-and-out swing programme they had been given.

At the end of the evening, terrific applause greeted the Secretary's announcement that in response to numerous requests, the Rhythm Club had decided to hold a similar dance in the near future with the same band.

COVENTRY ENTERPRISE

THE bigger the blitz, the bigger the effort to "carry on." That seems to be the rule these days, and is certainly borne out by Coventry, the manager of whose Casino Dance Hall has had the place rebuilt and installed a band that is playing to record audiences.

Tony Mangan, ex-Henry Hall and Jack Payne trombonist, whose hopes of forming a factory dance band have of necessity had to be abandoned, informs the MELODY MAKER that he is, nevertheless, able to sit in with the Casino lads, each one of whom has a factory job in the daytime.

Leader is trumpet-player Archie How, for several years on the Continent with well-known bands and more recently with Jean Sadler at the Palace Hotel, Torquay.

With him are George Puddifoot (piano); Cyril Bedford (drums); Graham Dunn (bass); Jack Farrell (guitar and vocals); Arthur Turner and Ian Walker (1st and 2nd altos); Johnny Gray (tenor); and Gordon Wood (2nd trumpet).

Despite the fact that these boys have had a full day's work behind them by the time they mount the stand, they are never too tired to play at night, and, sirens or no sirens, the dancers are giving them that kind of encouragement that builds bands that can really swing.

GEORGE BELL, well-known Black-hall (West Hartlepool) guitarist and vocalist, has been killed while serving with the R.A.F. in Scotland.

He was 34, and leaves a widow and one child, to whom our deep sympathy is extended.

Prior to joining the R.A.F., he was a member of the Bing Boys Dance Band, a local combination.

FORTHCOMING CONTESTS

ALL-CHESHIRE DANCE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP

FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1941

at the

PARR HALL, WARRINGTON

Dancing 8 p.m.—1 a.m.

Tickets 2s. 6d.

Organiser: Lewis Buckley, 107, Broadway, Royton, Oldham, Lancs (Phone: Oldham MAIn 1431), from whom Entry Forms are now available.

Watch for further announcements regarding projected GRAND NORTH BRITAIN FINAL which it is hoped to present in June or July.

GONELLA GETS GOING AT GLASGOW

THE first week of Nat Gonella's appearance at the Playhouse gave plenty of indications that business is going to be good, blitzes permitting, of course.

Nat and the boys were in fine form with snappy arrangements which gave the brass plenty of scope, while Stella Moya and Ray Dexter got big hands for their vocals.

There was a temporary suspension of dancing for the "concerted" number, *The Man Who Comes To Our House*, all the fans crowding round the stand while the boys rang the changes on the various dialects.

The twin double basses attracted plenty of attention, but the idea certainly is a good one from the rhythm section's point of view, in a hall like the Playhouse.

The next Scottish band to go on the air will be Louis Freeman, who has fixed up a date in the "Music While You Work" series, on the afternoon of May 29. Louis will also provide the band attraction at a Sunday concert in the Alhambra, May 25.

BERKELEY CHANGES

Changes are afoot at Bobbie Jones' Berkeley Ballroom, where, as stated, the hall will shortly go on a full-time schedule. Charlie Stewart, who was recently in charge of the band, has now left, and the leadership has now been assumed by Alf Johnstone (first alto).

Alf has not previously been "up-standing," but he should be the right man for the job, as he is a great favourite with the Berkeley crowds, not only for his vocals, but for his occasional breezy comping of the Sunday concerts.

Subsequent to his leaving the band at Dennistoun Palais, where he played under Ben Reynolds, Lester Penman, well-known Glasgow drummer, returned to his old job at the Gordon Ballroom, where he is now in charge of a five-piece, including himself on drums, David Whitehead (piano); Willie Tyrrel (trumpet); Willie Kirkpatrick (alto); and Solly Banks (tenor).

The Gordon was one of the first of the smaller halls to adopt the strict M.U. standard of wages, and set a good example in these parts.

The concert which was to be played by the Playhouse boys for the troops was cancelled owing to the objections of the padre. Most of us thought that a more broad-minded attitude concerning Sunday entertainment was about these days, considering that there is rarely any suspension of hostilities on that particular day of the week.

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GOOD EFFORT WASTED

WHILE there is some passably good jazz among the records I have to deal with this week, there is one which, if it can be called jazz at all, is jazz in its very worst form.

Ordinarily I would have preferred to forget its existence, but as, if what has happened to it in America can be taken as an indication of what will happen to it here, it is likely to have a big sale, it's just as well that it should be exposed once and for all for what it really is.

I refer to:

GLENN MILLER AND HIS ORCHESTRA.

*Anvil Chorus (From "Il Trovatore") (Verdi, Arr. Miller) (Parts I and II) (Am. Victor OA.058172 and 3) (Recorded December 13, 1940).

(H.M.V. B.D.5671, 3s. 8d.)

Miller (tmb.), with Hal McIntyre, Gordon Bencke, Wilbur Schwartz, Ernie Caceres, Al Klink (reeds); John Best, R. D. McMickle, S. May, Ray Anthony (tpts.); Jim Priddy, Hank D'Annunzio (tmb.); J. C. McGregor (pno.); Jack Lathrop (gtr.); Herman Alpert (bass); Maurice Purtill (drums).

BEFORE going further, let me make clear that nothing I may say later reflects on the competence of the performance *per se* or the technical skill of the arranger. This band of Mr. Miller's is an outfit of far more than average musicianliness. Equally, the arrangement is without doubt most ingenious. In fact, quite a smart piece of orchestrating cleverness.

The deplorable thing is that so much good effort should have been wasted on something which has no real worth.

As you will, of course, have realised, this disc is merely a jazz version of what, if it is not the world's greatest masterpiece, is at least accepted as a fair example of classical music.

And therein lies the tragedy.

Jazzed classics never have had, and probably never will have, any merit either as jazz or as music of any other sort.

Why?

It is very much more than just a matter of prejudice.

Jazz and "straight" music both have characters, born of their origins and traditions, of their own, and they just can't be applied to each other without destroying them.

That is the main reason, but there are dozens of others arising out of it.

Firstly, there are the associations which all music has. To endeavour to transport music from its true sphere into one in which it has no place is inevitably to destroy those associations.

Secondly, no one with any taste is interested in seeing tricks played with art, no matter how superficially clever they may be, so such tricks must inevitably be the sort of things which will appeal only to, shall we say for the sake of politeness, the less artistic mentalities.

Thirdly, jazz ought to, and can, stand on its own legs without having to beg, borrow or steal from other branches of music.

Fourthly, . . . But this can go on for ever, so we will leave it at that—



BOB CROSBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA.

*Big Noise From Winnetka (Film: "Let's Make Music") (Haggart, Bauduc) (V. by Bob Crosby and The Bobolinks) (Am. Decca DLA. 2292) (Recorded December 23, 1940).

*Sunset Trail (Frazzini, Roberts, Briggs) (V. by Bob Crosby) (Am. Decca DLA.2347) (Recorded January, 1941).

(Decca F.7836, 2s. 5½d.)

2292—Arthur Rando, Matty Matlock (altos); Eddie Miller, Gil Rodin (tens.); Hank D'Amico (clart.); Max Herman, Al King, Muggsy Spanier (tpts.); Elmer Smithers, Floyd O'Brien (tmb.); Jess Stacy (pno.); Nappy Lamare (gtr.); Bob Haggart (bass); Ray Bauduc (drums).

MANY of you will remember *Big Noise from Winnetka* as the bass and drums duet record by Bob Haggart and Ray Bauduc, which was the "novelty" (on Decca F7005) of the first Bob Crosby Showcase Album released just over two years ago.

Here we find the tune dressed up for the full band, complete with lyrics presumably as a show piece for Bob Crosby's film "Let's Make Music."

Well, whatever you people who have only heard the duet record may think, this opus has a melody that works quite well on band, and if the record is anything but the band's best, at least it isn't a disgrace to it.

The singing doesn't mean much, and there's too much of it for my liking, but the band plays up to form, and you'll probably find the intro, and coda, by Ray Bauduc's drums, and Bob Haggart whistling, similar to their efforts in their aforementioned duet, original and effective.

The coupling is just another sentimental commercial melody number, appropriately played.



JIMMY DORSEY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

***Blue (Handman, Clarke, Leslie) (V. by Bob Eberle and Helen O'Connell) (Am. Decca 67643) (Recorded Dec. 10, 1939).

***Hep-Tee Hootie (Juke Box Jive) (Livingstone, Palmer) (V. by Helen O'Connell) (Am. Decca 67934) (Recorded July 17, 1940.) (Brunswick 03136—3s. 8d.).

67934—Dorsey (alto, clar.) with Sam Rubinowitch (alto, baritone); Charles Frazier, Herb Mayner (tenors); Jimmy Campbell, Nate Kazebier, Shorty Solomon (tpts.); Nat Lobovsky, Sonny Lee, Don Matteson (tmb.); Joe Lipman (pno.); Guy Smith (gtr.); Jack Ryan (bass); Buddy Schutz (drums).

THESE may be typical American white-band-style performances, but of their kind they're good. I liked the arrangement of the old favourite *Blue*. And no one can say this band hasn't technique.



TEDDY POWELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA

***Jamaica Jam (Norman, Powell) (Am. Decca 66736) (Recorded October 6, 1939).

***Ridin' the Subways (Coniff, Powell) (Am. Decca 67138) (Recorded February 1, 1940.) (Brunswick 03155, 3s. 8d.)

66736—Powell directing; Geo. Koenig, Gus Bivona (altos); Don Lodice, Pete Mondello (tenors); Geo. Esposito, Irving Goodman, Jerry Neary (tpts.); Sam Genuso, Pete Skinner (tmb.); Milton Raskin (pno.); Ben Heller (gtr.); Felix Giebbie (bass); Charles "Red" French (drums).

67138—Powell directing; Bivona, Musky Ruffo (altos); Lodice, Mondello (tenors); Esposito, Neary, Joe Bauer (tpts.); John Grassi, Skinner (tmb.); Raskin (pno.); Tom Morganelli (gtr.); Giebbie (bass); French (drums).

TEDDY POWELL you may remember as the composer of, among other numbers, *Boots and Saddle*. He was also the guitarist, arranger and deputy director of Abe Lyman's Band when it came to England some ten years ago.

Powell formed his own band in the summer of 1939 and made a hit with it at New York's Famous Door Club.

While the solos in these records may on the whole be more conspicuous for their quantity than quality, the band plays typical contemporary swing compositions with a healthy, rhythmical style and boasts a rhythm section that really rides, especially in *Jamaica Jam*.

But for a really musicianly ensemble that also knows how to swing I suggest you hear:—



GEORGE SHEARING (Piano solos)

***Missouri Scrambler (Osborne, Bit-tick, Rogers) (Decca DR.5416) (Recorded March 3, 1941).

***Overnight Hop (Nichols, Mayted) (Decca DR.5418) (Recorded March 3, 1941.) (Decca F.7832—2s. 5½d.).

MOST of you will know Geo. Shearing's playing well enough by now for it to be necessary for me to say little more of these sides than that for the most part they follow his usual style.

Both numbers are medium tempo solos, conspicuous mainly for the easy rhythmical way in which Shearing sails over the ground with a nice appreciation of what's what in jazz and how to say it through the medium of the keyboard.

And if all that doesn't sound quite as enthusiastic as it might, it's because for all the efficiency with which friend George works out his fanciful em-

EDGAR JACKSON Reviews The New Swing Discs



broidery he hasn't said anything that is unusual for him any more than he has said it in a usual way.

* * *

Finally, to those of you who are interested in the trend of American music other than jazz, I recommend *Ballad For Americans*, by Paul Latouche and Earl Robinson, sung on the four sides of H.M.V. B.9160 and B.9161 (3s. 8d. each), by Paul Robeson with the American People's Chorus directed by Earl Robinson, accompanied by the Victor Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Nathaniel Shilkret.

This work, which deals with the freedom which the teachings of liberty have brought to the cosmopolitan race which is to-day America, has a certain political and propagandist significance, but you can afford to forget that and enjoy the music for its own sake.

It is light in character and not without originality or musical appeal.

Incidentally, Bing Crosby also has recorded it on Brunswick 03151 and 03152, but it hasn't worked out at all well. Bing's voice and treatment both lack the virile quality so necessary for a stirring piece of this sort and so successfully portrayed by Robeson.

In fact, by attempting something quite outside his scope, the famous Bing has for once managed to achieve a complete flop.



GLENN MILLER

New "M.M." Features

In response to a great number of requests we are able to announce that a new series of arranging hints will begin next week, contributed by a very well-known orchestrator. It has been decided also to include brief analyses of famous piano styles actually taken from records by the famous swing piano exponents.

TED LEWIS PROGRAMME ON THE AIR

TOP-HATTED old-timer, Ted Lewis, is to be the subject of a programme for the Forces on May 30 at 3.10 p.m., when thirty minutes will be devoted to the life-story of the man who bade us all *Good-night* from Radio Normandy.

Ted, who made his first record, entitled *O*, just after the last war, established himself in this country with his version of *She's Funny that Way*. Script is by G. F. Gray Clarke.

Although there is nothing official through, there is every indication that Rochester Casino will be free from official use by the first week in June, and that the public will soon be able to frequent this well-known ballroom again.

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Our Weekly Record Competitions

WHAT IS JAZZ?

Fem. Contest Winner Supplies Brilliant Answer to Musical Teasers

WHEN, in our weekly Gramophone Competition G.2, announced in the MELODY MAKER of April 26 last, we invited readers to:

Give short definitions of the terms:
(a) Ragtime; (b) Swing; and
(c) Jazz, which will explain the difference between them,

we didn't think we were asking anything easy.

As "Mike" said, the question is one which has occupied the finest brains of the jazz world (his own included!) for

many years, without anyone ever having provided a satisfactory answer.

Nevertheless, it is one of those oft-asked questions to which these competitions are designed to provide answers which can be accepted as "standard," and out of the many replies we have received the following gets about as near to solving the problem as would seem possible without writing a book on the subject.

It comes from Miss Joan Ferguson, of 52, Park Road, London, W.4, to whom

the prize of five shillings cash has been sent.

RAGTIME

A type of light, "popular" music originated in America during the 1890's, and mostly in the form of songs used in, and typical of, the music-halls of the period.

Relying to a great extent on the prolific use of simple syncopation, it derived much of its patently rhythmic character from the "popular" music of the American Negroes.

Often in its early days it was described as Coon music, due to the fact that Negroes were among its more fecundate writers and exponents.

JAZZ

Without going into finer distinctions Jazz must be divided into two distinct classes—True Jazz and "Commercial" Jazz.

True Jazz is a natural evolutionary sequel to the Negro spirituals, plantation and other songs (of which the Blues is a typical example), and other American folk musical forms.

It has been developed from these more primitive musical modes, firstly (during the commencement of the present century) by the coloured musicians of the New Orleans street parade, other ceremonial and Mississippi pleasure-boat bands, and more latterly (since about 1917) by the coloured and more understanding white musicians of Chicago, New York, and other large Eastern American cities, whither Jazz had been imported as a "novelty."

Among its more obvious characteristics are (a) the rigid maintenance throughout each of the various movements, and even the whole, of the piece being performed of the selected tempo; (b) the invariable employment of common-time measures; and (c) again the prolific use of syncopation over a clearly denoted and always obvious (either by its presence or implication) fundamental beat.

But, in addition, True Jazz has, in fact, is, a peculiar, subtle, but easily recognisable "dialect," "vernacular" or idiom (call it which you will) which can be described, briefly, only as what has adequately come to be termed the Jazz "language."

Superficially, this "language" is a matter of phraseology, accentuation and other devices of musical expression, coupled with tone colours not usually accepted as "legitimate" to the instruments employed; but fundamentally it would seem to be the natural logical outcome of all that the Negro has been trying to express musically for years.

TRUE JAZZ

While True Jazz may be written, extemporised or a mixture of both, much of the best of it is extemporised, mainly, one gathers, because so far its most creative protagonists have been instrumentalists and vocalists who have found their greatest inspiration during actual performance.

Composition in Jazz is as yet a secondary feature. Often the "popular" songs of the moment are used as harmonic foundations on which soloists, and even whole bands, will extemporise. Even in the performance of the more genuine and meritorious Jazz compositions, or pre-scored typical Jazz arrangements of such compositions, and the aforementioned "popular" songs, improvisation will play a big part.

Essentially, the worth of what he may have to "say" and the extent of his ability to "say" it poetically in the Jazz "language" is the gauge by which a Jazz soloist's standing is measured. But it goes further than that. It can, and often does, become the dominating factor in the merit of the music of the whole group with which the soloist may be playing.

The word Jazz by itself was originally used to describe just this music.

But because it came to be applied to the many "commercial" (and mostly bastard) off-shoots of it, the great majority of which are designed

purely to appeal to the masses, and gain nothing in sincerity, charm or authenticity in the designing, the word True is now placed in front of Jazz by the more enlightened devotees for the sake of differentiation; though by the masses the term Jazz is used to imply both "commercial" Jazz and True Jazz, the difference between which they still seem hardly to realise.

SWING

A "catch-penny" term, as loosely as it is freely used, covering the more recent developments (over the last five years) in True Jazz and the more noticeably rhythmic of its aforementioned "commercial" off-shoots.

Used, as it now is, chiefly as a substantive, the term Swing, as applied to Jazz, seems to have been inspired by the Negro jazz musicians' colloquial ejaculation of incitement to other musicians with whom they may be playing, to "Swing it!"

THIS WEEK'S COMPETITION

Now for this week's competition. It is based on a request from a reader in Lincolnshire, who says:

WHICH DO YOU CONSIDER THE TWELVE BEST GUITAR SOLOS (CHORUSES) ON RECORDS TODAY ON SALE IN THIS COUNTRY?

Please give titles of tunes, names of bands in which soloists are featured, makes and catalogue numbers of records, also names of the guitarists taking the solos.

A prize of 5s. cash will be sent to the reader whose choices correspond most closely to those of the majority.

Entries must be marked G.6 in the top left-hand corner of the envelope, and addressed to the MELODY MAKER, 93, Long Acre, London, W.C.2, to reach us not later than Monday, June 9 next.

Name of winner and list of records selected by the majority will be published in the MELODY MAKER for June 21 next.

Incidentally, this seems to be a question which might well be applied to other instruments, and we hope to devote future competitions to it.

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★ DRUM DOPE—38 ★

DRUMMERS very often get carried away by their enthusiasm into attempting things which they can't do. I was reminded of this at a dance I attended recently, where my attention was drawn to the drummer by the remark of an onlooker, "What DOES that man up at the back think he's doing?"

"That man" was, of course, the drummer. And what he thought he was doing was, no doubt, swinging it.

But he was getting no further towards this than bouncing up and down in his chair and playing mighty hoop cracks on the second and fourth beats of each bar.

No doubt he was getting a "ride" and thought he was out-Krupping Krupa. But the effect was just plain noise.

The moral here is that this chap doubtless had a sense of rhythm, but just didn't know how to put it on a producing basis—how to communicate it to others.

Are you one of these? Ask yourself candidly.

If you are, the answer is (a) to listen to some really good drumming on records or in the flesh, and (b) to develop enough technique to put into operation the ideas that are buzzing round in your head.

So, next time the band is playing a good swing number and you feel that you are really going to town, listen to yourself carefully and think whether you are giving rhythm or just getting it.

It's a vital difference.

★ DANCE BAND DON'TS—29 ★

DON'T LOOK SO MISERABLE
ON THE JOB.

SOME bands don't seem to have grasped the essential idea that their business is to preside at a joyous function. To watch them, one would think that they were all bankrupt undertakers.

For goodness sake, try to remember that you are doing the job because you want to, because there is some money at the end of it; nobody asked you to be a gigster anyway. If it is so depressing as it looks, for heaven's sake try rabbit breeding or something more to your taste.

On the other hand, don't be glassily gay—no funny hats, or bobbing up and down in your chairs just to show everybody how much pep and rhythm you have. There is a fine happy medium, where you behave like rational ordinary human beings who are enjoying the job in hand.

If you come up to the mike for a solo, come up with a smile; if you get a hand for it, give another smile and a slight bow—and look lively about getting round the platform—not as if you were an old, old man going to bed for the last time.

All this may seem platitudinous, but you'd be surprised how many bands seem to need some such advice.

Many a good band has lost dates because it looks mournful, and many an indifferent band has got lots of work because it (or, at any rate, its leader) looked cheerful and had a bright smile for the dancers.

REMEMBER: A smile this season is worth a full date book next season.

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NAT "KING" COLE IS A MERRY YOUNG SOUL

by **PETER TANNER**

TO most readers, the name of Nathaniel Cole will probably be unfamiliar; but not for long, for this young coloured artist has been for some time due for a rating in any representative list of coloured pianists.

Some MELODY MAKER readers possibly will have purchased the recent recording of *Blue*, played by Lionel Hampton and supported by the King Cole Trio and a drummer; and, as all three artists are comparatively unknown over here, a short account of their work may perhaps be of interest to record collectors and jazz fans generally.

Nat Cole's Trio, consisting of Oscar Moore on the guitar, Wesley Prince on the bass and Nat himself piano and vocals have, in the last few years, achieved a certain amount of notice in and around Hollywood.

It was, in fact, here that they were officially discovered last year by Lionel Hampton, who promptly incorporated them into his new band.

However, to begin a bit further back, twenty-seven years back to be precise.

WAR-BABY

Nat Cole was born in 1914, in Montgomery, the capital city of Alabama, in the heart of the south. He comes from musical parents and by the time he was four years old he had taught himself to pick out scales and simple tunes on the piano.

Two years later, the Cole family moved to Chicago and Nat began to receive instruction, which continued right through his school days; while most of his spare time was spent in tireless practice and in listening to the coloured pianists of the day, mostly from outside South Side honky-tonks.

By the time Nat was fifteen, he had organised his own band composed of five friends at school. This five-piece did so well that Nat gave up all his carefully prepared plans for a business career and turned professional, touring with the band and getting short contracts at road-houses and theatres throughout Illinois and Indiana.

By 1933, the band had grown to a fifteen-piece outfit and included no less a celebrity than Earl Hines in its personnel; while Nat would stand out in front and conduct or occasionally take a duet with Hines.

HINES' INFLUENCE

From that time on Earl Hines became Nat's idol, and he freely admits the tremendous influence that Hines' playing has had on his own particular style.

Even to-day Nat is at his happiest when playing through his own arrangements of such Hines classics as *Fifty-seven Varieties* or *Rosetta*.

This band played, among other places, at Chicago's Savoy Ballroom, immortal to the memory of Louis Armstrong's great band of the middle twenties. Here the Nat Cole band made a feature of such numbers as *Bubbling Over*, *Blue*, and *Rhythm Sunday*.

After a couple of years in Chicago, Hines left to form his own band, and Nat took the remainder of the orchestra into a musical show called "Shuffle Along."

The show was not a great success, and it played to half-empty second-rate theatres all along the west coast, until

finally, it did its last shuffle in Long Beach, California.

This was in 1936, and already five or six members of the orchestra had quit. Nat, undismayed, managed to get the band a job at the Ubania Club in Los Angeles for a couple of months.

However, more and more trouble broke out in its ranks, and one by one his musicians left him, until, at the end, he was left literally sitting by himself at the piano. Somewhat naturally the management were getting very fed up and so they fired Nat.

After that, Nat played solos during the band intermissions at the Beverley Country Club, rather relieved to be rid of all the responsibilities and headaches of bandleading.

Having a certain amount of spare time in the evenings on account of the club closing early, Nat used to go down town to the Paradise Club on Los Angeles' Main Street.

This used to be, and still is, I imagine, one of the favourite rendezvous of all coloured and white musicians who happened to be in town, and the joint has seen some pretty swell jam sessions in its time.

Anyway, here Nat met a bass player named Wesley Prince, who had been playing in Louis Armstrong's west coast band, which, in reality, was just Les Hites' band taken over for Louis' tour.

This band, which was known as the Sebastian New Cotton Club Orchestra, included Lawrence Brown and Lionel Hampton in its personnel, and made a number of recordings for the old Okeh label.

Nat and Wesley would often sit in together with the resident band and they soon found that they had an instinctive musical understanding of each other's style.

SHORT-NOTICE AUDITION

One night, the manager of the Swann Inn in Los Angeles, hearing Nat play, asked him to his table and offered him a job, adding that he would like Nat to get together a small band, a trio preferably. Nat promised he would do this, and, further, that he would have them auditioned at the Swann within twenty-four hours.

After the manager had departed Nat realised that he was in a spot. He only knew one musician likely to be available, and that was Wesley Prince. It was with a certain amount of trepidation and a great faith in fate that Nat went along to the Paradise that night.

Luckily things turned out all right for him, for Wesley Prince knew a young Texan guitar player who was free and who he thought would fit in with the two of them. His name was Oscar Moore, and he had played for several years in various Californian coloured combinations.

Nat approved Wesley's choice, and the three of them practised stock numbers all night and duly auditioned the following day.

They got the job and stayed at the Swann Inn for six months, moving, in 1937, to the Fox Hills Café on Pico, right opposite the Twentieth Century Fox Studios. Here, they attracted quite a bit of attention and did some broadcasting and a screen test which never came to anything.

From the Fox Hills Café, they moved to the Circle Club and to Kelly's, just off Hollywood Boulevard. Here again



BILLY PLONKIE: "I want you two to convoy me through this number. If I get sunk, you must come to my rescue, an' if we all start sinking, we'll have to scuttle ourselves."

they did very well and attracted a certain amount of attention, though this was more on account of a subtle arrangement of mirrors over the bandstand and piano rather than for the high quality of the music.

Still, the local jazz enthusiasts used to come in quite a bit, and Dave Hyltne, of *Down Beat*, and other critics were often to be seen there.

In 1939, they were making transcriptions and broadcasting for NBC, and also found time to make some recordings both for Ammor and also for an enterprising music publishing company.

DISTINCTIVE STYLE

On some of these the vocal is sung by Bonnie Lake, younger sister of screen star Ann Sothern. But Bonnie never seems to fit in with the trio and those sides where Nat himself sings are much the better.

The style of the trio is quite distinctive, and though it would be invidious to make comparisons, they do bear a slight resemblance to the Three Peppers.

The chief merit of the little group is, of course, Nat's piano work, but the single string work of Oscar Moore and subtle fill-ins of Wesley Prince are well worth digging.

It was while the Trio were playing at Kelly's that they were discovered by

Lionel Hampton, who was at the time on tour with Benny Goodman. Lionel decided to incorporate them into his new band and whisked them off to a Los Angeles recording date almost at once.

Nat is as charming a person to meet as his playing is to listen to. He is cultured and informative on most subjects and takes a boyish delight in discussing anything to do with music, incessantly referring to his two jazz idols, Teddy Wilson and Earl Hines.

Nat "King" Cole is going to be in the news a lot soon, if this writer is any judge, so watch out for his name and his playing which, if not sensational, is always musically satisfying.

JACK WHITE, R.A.F.

DANCERS at a hotel dance in the North were pleasantly surprised last Friday night (May 16) to find Jack White leading the band. Jack, in Air Force blue, was leading on sax and backed by five other R.A.F. boys.

Added novelty was when Jack's own "Collegians," from the Astoria, London, came on the air, for Jack tuned in the radio and, to the delight of the dancers, took up his clarinet and played his signature tune, with the radio accompanying him.

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"I Like To Riff" Nat Cole Trio (Varsity 8340)

(Made in Hollywood for Ammor and re-pressed on Varsity label.)

"I'd Be Lost Without You" Lionel Hampton's Orchestra (Victor 26751)

"Jivin' With Jarvis" Lionel Hampton's Orchestra (Victor 26729)

"Dough-De-Me" Lionel Hampton's Orchestra (Victor 26696)

"Central Avenue Breakdown" Lionel Hampton's Orchestra (Victor 26652)

"Blue" Lionel Hampton's Orchestra (H.M.V. B 9137)

BRAND'S

by
PAT BRAND

ESSENCE

IT appals me sometimes to think how far this MELODY MAKER of ours is going to travel round the world. Starting confirmation of the way it gets around reaches me in a letter from drummer ALASTAIR F. CRIPPS, now a signaller in the South African Army.

Alastair was for some years a semi-pro., taking part in many a "M.M." contest; and then, in 1933, turned pro., remaining so for three years before returning to South Africa and his old job of radio, during the whole of which time he was a regular reader of ours.

Joining up last year with the S.A. Army, he was no longer able to get the paper, and since then he has travelled right through South Africa, North and South Rhodesia, Tanganyika, Kenya, and, at the time of writing, has just fetched up in Abyssinia.

Abyssinia, he points out, is for the most part a country of thorn-bush and desert. A week before writing, his unit left a place they had captured to take up a new position in enemy territory. Most of the time they were off the "road" and plunging through virgin bush. At last they stopped for a moment and were told to "take a walk round."

Since Alastair had taken a couple of pills the previous night (and since, also, a lorry jolts around quite a lot in such country), the respite was more than welcome to him. He spotted a huge ant-heap in the distance, and made for it with all speed.

"Evidently," he says, "musicians have a one-track mind, for there in the shade of the ant-hill, completely unharmed except for a piece torn from the back page, lay a copy of the MELODY MAKER dated November 16, 1940."

Alastair says he was so overjoyed that he forgot all about his personal troubles and settled down to read and enjoy the old rag.

He added that, after this amazing experience, he was quite prepared, when marching into Addis Ababa to find Haile Selassie reading a current issue of the "M.M."!

Yes, as I said last week, "the show goes on," despite far greater handicaps and heartbreaks than have ever menaced our profession before.

Pianist LES WHARTON, whose job at the Locarno, Streatham Hill, comes to an end on Monday when Colin Malloy's Band terminates its contract there, found himself unable to get home during the night of what is now known in London as "The Wednesday Blitz."

He stayed at the Locarno and



Airing with Jack Jackson and recording with Harry Leader is JULIE DAWN, just back from her long tour with Harry Roy.

returned home in the morning to find the whole place burned right out. Six incendiaries had fallen on the house, and all the heroic efforts of Les's landlady, her daughter and daughter-in-law had failed to check the flames.

Les, of course, lost everything in the blaze, and received only £10 compensation, which, as he points out, is just about enough to buy a new dress suit. And it's the second time he's been bombed out.

But this doesn't mean that he's discouraged. In fact, exempt from military service, this fine keyman is looking round for another job that will keep him in town!

Also determined not to give in is another Les—bassist and vocalist LES SKINNER, in fact—who turned up with his six-piece on Sunday last to find their date, and, alas! most of their instruments, all their music, and the amplifier bombed and burnt.

Les, who has a Government job by day, lost both his basses, but has been lucky enough to borrow one; and the boys have done the same, and are now determined, rather than emulate the Dying Swan, to follow the example of

the Phoenix and rise refreshed from out of the flames.

They are sticking together and going on with their gigs—Les Bartlett on piano, Bert Randall on drums, Maurice Burling on sax and clarinet, Harold Wyse on trumpet and taking vocals, and Freddy Greenslade (late of Ken Johnson) on trombone—and, despite the analogies above, it is certain that such determination will not get them the bird!

Les, incidentally, is inquiring about pianist HARRY PACKHAM, who came to see me whilst on leave the other day from dashing out in a fast launch into the Channel and amidst the mine-fields to rescue English and enemy airmen.

Harry told me that, so far from giving up hope, his former partner, Jack Collyer, has bought himself a new piano, and is merely waiting for the day when Harry and he can resume their internationally famous partnership.

And Harry told me also that the stories you have been reading about Nazi airmen spitting in the faces of their rescuers and flinging the proffered rum and cigarettes back at them are absolutely true.

For he himself has been "gallantly" treated in this manner.

Corporal in the R.A.S.C., in training for a commission, bassist J. C. SHAW tells me that quite a few musicians pass through his O.C.T.U.

Recent notabilities have been Bill Currie, that stalwart of the Harry Roy outfit; Norman Evans, from Radio Normandy; and John Lloyd, of Chappell's.

These, like the others, have readily given their services to the shows that Shaw and the rest of the ten-piece co-operative band put on every two weeks or so.

It is no doubt the success of these shows and dances that has inspired the authorities to come to his aid in the matter of orchestrations. For several months he's been having to scrounge music where and how he can, but now he finds himself able to dispose of all the old, painfully acquired collection, and offers it to me to pass on to less fortunate Service bands if I will pay the postage.

This I will willingly do. But it places me in an awkward spot. For which, out of all the bands that write to me, am I to choose?

Putting myself for an instant in the place of so many Service musicians, I lose no time in deciding to award the parcel, post free, to the band that is situated furthest from the nearest cinema and/or pub.

So drop me a line. In the unlikely event of a tie, the parcel will be divided.

It looks as though the Romany Band will have to enter the lists with most other present-day outfits in their search for a male vocalist.

For KEN BEAUMONT is leaving them at the end of this month—which either means that Polish tenor Jan Zalski will have to learn up current hits, or that Beryl Davis and Diane between them will have to work overtime in the vocal department, unless a substitute is found despite call-ups and dispersals.

Not but what quite a few of the lads in the Forces will not mind at all having this extra dose of the feminine Romanies.

By which I intend no reflection on Ken who, invalided out of the War Reserve Police, severely blitzed when the band appeared recently in Manchester, and exempt from military service, is singing as well as ever—as I heard for myself when I went down to Shepherd's Bush the other week.

In fact, it's pretty certain you'll be having quite an earful of him on the radio even after he leaves the Rabin outfit.

By the way, a programme of his entitled "20th-Century Troubadours," featuring records of guitarist-vocalists, is to be heard on Home and Forces wavelengths on Monday next.

Ken was to have given the recital himself, but his touring commitments preclude it and his understudy is not yet decided upon.



VIC OLIVER

"HI, GANG!" AIR-SHOW FINISHES AFTER A YEAR'S RUN OF FUN



BEN LYON

"HI, GANG!" the record-breaking Daniels-Lyon-Oliver radio show, went out in a blaze of glory on Sunday night. It was the 52nd performance and it is not too much to say that, during one of the most momentous years in British history, this show has done more than its share to help the public laugh and carry on through some pretty grim moments.

The audience that gathered to see the final show was so star-spangled that anyone compiling a "Who's Who" of stage, screen and radio celebrities would have been in his element.

SINCERITY

They were all there, and several of them came to the microphone—Diana Wynyard, Patricia Burke, Sarah Churchill, Valerie Hobson, Jean Colin, Margaretta Scott, Geraldine Wood, Flanagan and Allen, C. B. Cochran, Nellie Wallace, Robertson Hare, Alfred Drayton and Bruce Belfrage.

Most of them made cracks



BEBE DANIELS

over the mike in the good old "Hi, Gang!" friendly-insult manner, but beneath all the fun there was a note of real regret at the end of the show, plus a most sincere admiration for three American artistes who have not only stayed here and "seen it through" with us, but have "leased-and-lent" their great talents as a spontaneous gesture of friendship to this country.

And it was typical of the whole spirit of the show that, in their farewells, Bebe Daniels (gallantly overcoming the handicap of a very bad cold), Ben Lyon and Vic Oliver didn't forget to thank the people who had helped them put the programme over—

Harry Pepper and Douglas Lawrence, the producers; Jay Wilbur and the boys of his Band; Sam Browne; the Greene Sisters; accompanist Matt Heft; and Jack Miles, balance and control "ace" who does noble work but never gets any publicity for it.

The studio in which the show was held was crammed to capacity—so much so that latecomers of the calibre of Ambrose found it impossible to squeeze in.

Autograph-hunters from the Forces had a night out when it was all over, and then a crowd of over 200 invited guests went along to a cocktail party thrown at the Dorchester.

Gags had been made at the show that "wine would flow like glue" at the party. The gag was good but the wine that flowed in abundance was much better. . . . It was a grand occasion, thoroughly enjoyed by all.

"Hi, Gang!" will return to the air in September. We'll be listening. . . .

R. S.

CLASSICS OF JAZZ

No. 25.—"Mean Dog Blues" and "Corn Fed"; by Red Nichols and his Five Pennies (Brunswick 01805)

by Bill Elliott

THE people who write me asking for a Nichols' record in this series are not only emphatic, but they are dogmatic as well. Nearly every letter informs me of the one Five Pennies record I must use and, of course, every choice is different.

Still, as the Editor so wisely said the other week: "You pays your money and you takes your choice."

According to the letters I have received, my choice lies between *Dinah*, *Indiana*, *Ida*, *Washboard Blues*, *The Sheik*, and many others. We Elliotts are a contrary race, however, so that is why the coupling you see above is this week's "Classic."

GOOD NICHOLS

I have chosen it because it is good Nichols and very representative of the music they played in the Golden Age period. Also the six players concerned did great pioneer work in the jazz world of those early days.

The Nichols group had something to say and they said it. Simply and completely. Yet, when you had played the disc, you nearly always said: "That's grand stuff," and played it again and again.

Mean Dog Blues is not a record for jitterbugs, as it's neither fast nor noisy.

The Five Pennies were not famous for anything like that: their routine was a succession of solos, some ensemble that breathed perfect mutual understanding and then the coda.

In this case, the order is Nichols - Rollini - Lang - Mole - Nichols-Schutt-Ensemble, but what those boys said in a chorus or so is just nobody's business.

Things to note are—Rollini, with his huge bass-sax, play-

PERSONNEL:

Red Nichols (trumpet); Miff Mole (trombone); Jimmy Dorsey (clarinet); Ed Lang (guitar); Adrian Rollini (bass sax); Arthur Schutt (piano); Vic Berton (drums).

ing lovely agile, flexible phrases that were the very spirit of pure jazz. Lang playing guitar as only he could—the kind of guitar that provided an unrivalled swing for the rest of the band and had you waiting anxiously for the moment when his own solo spot would come. Miff Mole's trombone, with his easy phrasing and rounded tone.

Miff is one of the greatest technicians in jazz, but he could ride out with the best of them.

Nichols' trumpet may have owed something to hearing Bix, and perhaps Red did play more from the heart than the head. Still, his feeling for jazz could not be doubted, and his horn sent many hundreds in the "good ole days," and I, for one, still get a kick out of hearing him now.

As for Jimmy Dorsey, Arthur Schutt and Vic Berton—well, we could talk about them all for hours, and go on playing their records longer. They were jazz in the days when when dance music was struggling to find its feet.

They were pioneer white players who learnt from the early coloured bands and, by learning, brought into jazz a polish and technique it had never previously known.

SOLO HONOURS

One could go on a long time like this and if I start to talk about *Corn Fed*, I shall only digress again.

Sufficient if I say that Rollini and Nichols share the solo honours, Adrian playing at his very best both solo and as part of the rhythm section,

and Red in a chorus that shows some of the greatest ideas and phrases that ever flowed from his fertile brain.

Also note here Berton's use of mechanically tuned timpani—a pleasant noise.

Next week, we'll talk about Joe Venuti and the *Blue Four*, then Bix and then Ellington. I'm quite enjoying this bunch of Classics. It's another excuse for playing my old records.

WHO'S WHO IN JAZZ

STEWART, REX: C trumpet; b. Philadelphia c. 1905. Started playing on river boats with Ollie Blackwell; played trumpet and saxophone with the Ten Musical Spillers in a revue which went on tour and took him to N.Y. Joined Newark band under Bobby Brown; then with Elmer Snowden, 1924-25; with band of collegians under Horace Henderson at Wilberforce University, late 1925; with Fletcher Henderson on and off, 1926-28; Alex Jackson, 1930; McKinney's Cotton Pickers, '31; with Fletcher again, '32-33; led own band, '33; Luis Russell, '34; joined Duke Ellington, 1935, with him since then. Developed new style of trumpet playing with trick valve work exemplified in his original solo, *Boy Meets Horn*. Recorded under own name with pick-up groups (mostly Duke's men) on Variety and Vocalion, 1936-39, also on H.R.S. 12-inch discs, 1940; signed to record for Bluebird 1941. Good examples of work with Ellington: *Showboat Shuffle*, *Trumpet In Spades*, *Subtle Lament*, *Kissin' My Baby Good - night*. With Fletcher: *Chinatown*, *Singing The Blues*. Often compared with Bix and said to have style resembling white cornet players.

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"Mike": A Tune for Geraldo

AS I write, I have just heard a gentleman giving a gramophone recital on the air; he told us that *Solitude* was "a serious contribution to modern music." This assertion was followed by a recording of Duke's tune by Paul Robeson, in which the singer's diction was, alas! so good that every one of the trite words put to a trite tune was audible.

The author of this programme may have been trying to be a friend to jazz; he succeeded in giving it one of the worst advertisements I have heard for a long time. In his opinion, however, *Solitude* was destined to become a modern classic.

He may well be right, of course; I will not dispute his claim. But I do dispute that *Solitude* is in any way a "serious contribution to modern music." If modern music is in such a bad way that a commonplace, unoriginal number like *Solitude* is able to contribute to it, then heaven help modern music.

Solitude has certainly become a popular tune; it has become popular because Duke Ellington had just become a more or less popular figure when he wrote it. The tune got a good plug because bandleaders had grown to be snobbish about Duke.

"BROADMINDED" LEADERS

To play Duke's music was a proof of their broadmindedness, of their awareness of Modern Trends, etc., etc.

If these same bandleaders had been snobbish and broadminded several years before, then Duke's most enchanting tune would have become a popular "classic."

But unfortunately *Mood Indigo* was written when Duke was considered taboo. That sort of "nigger stuff" was crude, uncommercial, too much above the heads of the public who had never heard it to know whether it was or not, anyway.

Probably in a few years' time *Mood Indigo* will be discovered; if it is, then I have little doubt that it will become a classic, and *Solitude* can be relegated to the limbo of third-rate pieces written by first-rate composers.

What a pity, though, that Duke and one or two others were not considered worthy of being heard, or their music worth while playing in public.

Tunes like *Mood Indigo*, *Drop Me Off at Harlem* and *Blues in My Heart* have all the simplicity and direct melodic appeal which make for popularity.

Accordingly, I suggest that one or two of the more enterprising bandleaders get together with their arrangers and think this thing over. Geraldo, for

instance, would make an exquisite job of *Blues in My Heart*.

This is not a "swing" number; it is a very lovely melody which deserves to be played musically. The fact that it was written some years ago is nothing to worry about; nor is the fact that on the few occasions it was broadcast in this country then the tune was rendered meaningless by being played as though it were a quick step.

WELL, GERALDO!

So what about it, Gerry? The repertoire of good tunes which can be drawn on is enormous (never mind who wrote them nor if the gramophone catalogues call them "swing"). I have mentioned only three of the best, known only to those who possess recordings of them.

Why should not a wider public get to hear of them? A popular band would at once dispel any misgivings or prejudices, and public listening would be the richer for it.

There is so much that is good in jazz which deserves to be played, not merely listened to on gramophone records, and it is in this that I consider the Ideal Rhythm Club should act.

My Ideal Rhythm Club, as I suggested last week, would be a most luxurious affair. One of the luxuries I should want would be a huge library of gramophone records, not for members to take

home, but for them to listen to on headphones so that their fellow-members were not disturbed.

Whether they still exist in Paris. I do not know; but years ago, when I was a small boy in Paris, there were places along the boulevards where you put 20 centimes in a slot and listened to the latest records on earphones. It was a peculiar vice, to which I was much addicted. Nobody knew the tunes you were listening to, and some of them, to say the least, were a little "risky."

The advantage of this system in a Rhythm Club would be that public argument would be avoided. Public argument and discussion is all very well in its place, but there are times when one prefers to listen to a particular record without being disturbed.

IDEALISM

On such occasions one can play through any chosen passages *ad nauseam* without worrying anybody else at all. I know one may do this at home just as easily, but with a good library collected out of club subscriptions one's choice of records would inevitably be wider.

All this, however, is mere idealism, and would be an extremely costly whim to gratify.

There are more practical points in the running of a Rhythm Club which I will discuss another time.

TRUMPET TIPS—No. 40

STORY WITH A POINT FOR TRUMPET PLAYERS.

A YOUNG lad was being instructed by a cricket coach. "Don't hold your bat like that, it's wrong," said the coach. "But I've seen X" (the famous M.C.C. star) "doing it that way," protested the lad. "Yes, maybe," replied the coach, "but he learned it the right way first—you've got to be master of the rules before you can break them."

Similarly, how many would-be trumpet aces adopt the famous Nat Gonella "crooked embouchure"? And then, when told that they are wrong, protest that Nat does it?

The story of how Nat came to do it has been told quite often, in his own book and elsewhere.

It dates back to the time when, with a split lip, he just couldn't lay off because it meant losing the job, so he just shifted his embouchure round to the side and carried on the best he could, eventually becoming so used to it that he stayed that way.

But the essence of the story is that he learned, and was already a master of, the right way first, and therefore could afford to take liberties, especially under *force majeure*.

When YOU have a perfect embouchure, can reach your top Ds with ease, play five-hour gigs without tiredness, and can do a smear from bottom to top of your instrument, then you can have a go at the Gonella embouchure.

But I'll bet you don't. For, by the time you've reached that stage, you'll also know that the best thing to do is to keep your embouchure as it is. Nat knew that, but just couldn't help himself.

So the golden rule is, no funny business with embouchures. Start the orthodox way and stick to it.

Arthur Rosebery is now working in the Liverpool area for E.N.S.A. and giving concerts to the local munition workers.

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" YOURS SINCERELY "

ERIC WINSTONE

answers his correspondents

PERHAPS, after all, to anyone like myself who has never outgrown the youthful pleasure of letter opening, the best part of being a columnist lies in the large personal mail it is my good fortune to receive week after week at the offices of the MELODY MAKER.

So far, it has always been my practice to answer each letter personally, but recently I must confess that this has been impossible owing to what is generally referred to on page six as "pressure of work."

In this case, however, there is some foundation for the statement and the accumulating pile of unanswered correspondence that at the moment covers my desk is a perpetual weight on my already much overloaded conscience.

I have decided, therefore, that this week the postman shall emulate my extinguished colleague on the aforementioned page six and knock not once but several times.

And if space and the Editor allows maybe I shall be able to start work next Monday morning with an unlitte red desk for the first time in weeks.

Readers . . . the page is yours.

First let me deal with an interesting letter that I received recently from H. P. McNULTY, of 3, Edgely Avenue, Manchester, who writes:

In the world of music to-day no other instrument has gained so much prominence of late years as the accordion. In the hands of the competent player it is a joy to listeners and musicians alike. Gone are the days when the instrument was treated with snobbish indignity.

To-day the accordionist is in a class by himself, and a certain draw, as any theatrical agent will readily testify.

The B.B.C. has been quick to see the value of the accordion as a form of entertainment. But the B.B.C. should not stop there. As one of the millions of licence-holders I suggest that there should be a daily feature of an accordion band.

Thanks for writing H. P. McNulty, and I only hope that if the B.B.C. ever adopts your suggestion I shall be given the job of putting it into practice.

Now for a request from an Oscar Rabin fan, D. S. PITCHER, of 19, Chapel Street, Rugby, who writes:

Would you kindly get me the autographs of Oscar Rabin and his band? Could you also let me have a photograph of yourself? Being an Oscar Rabin fan, I listened to your last broadcast over the air, and would like to congratulate you on an excellent performance.

Many thanks for the kind words D. S. Pitcher. I still can't fathom out how being a fan of friend Oscar should make you listen to my own broadcasts, but nevertheless the photograph is on its way.

The autograph question is rather more difficult. As you know, the band is touring and their address changes from week to week. Why not wait until they are in your neighbourhood and then call at the theatre and get the boys' signatures first hand?

There is something much more satisfactory about an autograph if you actually meet the person in question.

My sympathy and your sympathy to reader VIRGINIA FOODLEFITCH, of Long Acre, who writes in understandable perplexity:

I would like to point out a printer's error that appeared in last week's paper.

I refer to the story about a Sapper who apparently spent a considerable amount of time on page six looking for an "unexploited

blonde." Surely this should have read "un-exploited bomb." Or should it?

You're quite right, Virginia. I can't understand how it got into print. The mistake I mean . . . not page six.

And now here is another serious letter from MISS ROSA LOADER, of 39, Fore Street, Newquay, Cornwall, that should be of interest to pupils in search of tuition.

Could you let me know the name of the publisher who does the number you played on your last broadcast called "Old English Memories"?

Did you know I have started an accordion centre down here in Cornwall? Am teaching both privately and in classes.

Thanks for the letter, Rosa. The publisher is Bradbury Wood, of Charing Cross Road. Glad to hear you have started teaching in Cornwall, and trust intending pupils will have by now made a note of the address.

Glad to receive hatchet-burying epistle from critic FRANK HAWKINS, of 4, Aspland Road, Norwich, who sends following news concerning accordion activities in that part of the world.

Having arrived in Norwich, I thought it a good idea to make contact immediately with one or two people. My craving for news superseded that of the desire for lunch, so I spent a very useful hour—for you, of course.

Within this amount of time I discovered BILLY WILSON, of the Norwich Accordion Club. This is one club that has kept going throughout the present conflict, and although at the commencement of the war Billy had over 80 members, he can still muster more than 40 even to-day.

Since October 1, 1939, the club band has been busy with troop concerts, and have played to some units as many as four and five times, producing a different programme at each appearance. From the 10th to the 15th February the band played on the stage of the Theatre Royal, and on Thursday next they will be playing their 201st concert for the troops with their own complete concert party.

Thanks for the news, Frank. Write again soon.

Here is a query that I know is occupying the minds of many accordionists at the present time. It comes from JACK ARNOLD, of 7, Lampmead Road, Lee, S.E.12.

I have a Dallape accordion that is in need of a few minor repairs. Unfortunately, as you probably know, it is not possible for me to take it back to the firm who used to deal in this make of instrument, and I am wondering where I could take it in Town to have the necessary adjustments made. There are several reeds to be replaced and one of the couplers needs attention. Can you help me?

I quite agree with Jack that repairs to accordions these days are difficult to obtain. At the risk of being told, I have shares in the firms concerned I can only suggest either Messrs. Francis Day and Hunter, in Charing Cross Road, Messrs. Boosey and Hawkes, in Regent Street, or Messrs. Scarths, also in Charing Cross Road, all of which I believe still execute repairs whenever possible.

If there are any other firms in or out of Town where accordion repairs can still be obtained, I would be glad to know, as this question of renovation is likely to become quite a serious problem for accordionists in the near future.

One word of advice—don't try and do it yourself, even if you did successfully mend the grandfather clock.

Swing fan CECIL EWAR, of 49, Kimberley Avenue, Essex, has a grouch as regards published material for accordionists.

Have just started reading the MELODY MAKER and your page, and would be grateful if you would help me with a problem. I am a keen swing fan on the accordion and listen to all your broadcasts, but can never find any books or music explaining how to play hot like you do. How do you know what extra notes to put in besides the ones that are actually in the melody?

Well, Cecil, I am afraid you are asking the age-old question that always crops up in rhythm clubs and such places all over the country. In fact, you are asking what is swing? And I'm

darned if I'm going to put my chin out by trying to tell you.

You do not say how long you have been a reader, but some time ago there were a series of articles on this page titled "In the Groove." Mind you, I'm not saying they will make you swing, but at least they'll do nothing to stop you, so why not get a few back copies and see what you make of them.

And now for yet another extravagant bouquet of praise from satisfied reader DONALD DUCKWORTH, of very much Upper Tooting:

I think your page is terrible. In fairness to you, however, I must admit that I think "Detector" is even worse. "Mike" is apparently suffering from delusions. And "Brand's Essence" should, in my opinion, have never been taken out of the bottle. Nevertheless, I still think your small ads are simply wonderful. Carry on the good work.

Many thanks, DONALD, for your charming letter. Apart from the first sentence your epistle must, of course, be taken as fair criticism by my colleagues. I should imagine your favourite weekly must be *Exchange And Mart*.

More repair trouble comes from accordionist D. D. DEAN, of "The Garth," Frederick Road, Wednesfield, who waxes thus:

I am a regular reader of the MELODY MAKER and have followed your page with great interest. I have some trouble with the bass reeds of my accordion and hope you will be able to give me some information. The war holding the reeds in position seems to have contracted and several of the reeds have fallen out. Most of the others are loose.

Could you please tell me if I can purchase this war and reset the reeds myself?

Well, D. D. DEAN, you can certainly purchase the wax, but whether or not you can succeed in resetting the reeds yourself depends on how much you know about such matters.

Personally, although I don't know how you are placed for accordion repairs in your part of the world, I should take the instrument along to your local dealer and get him to arrange for the work to be done by an experienced repairer.

Trying to repair your instrument yourself without the proper equipment is foolish and, in spite of the popular song, not even fun.

Hallo. Here's a postcard that obviously must have lost its way:

I am just nineteen and considered very attractive. I have blue eyes, blonde hair, and a good figure in a bathing costume. Am game for anything, go anywhere and like reporters. My friends call me "Hotstuff." Would you like my picture for your ducky little page?

P.S.—I also play the trombone.

Madame, I fear you have made a mistake. Page Six is through the other door.

Lively imagination of accordionist BEN NORRIS, of 190, Wick Road, South Hackney, is responsible for the following interesting but, I am afraid, not always practicable suggestions:

Do you think it possible for the playing mechanism of a Hammond organ to be fitted inside an accordion to play treble only? It could take up the space occupied by the basses and the amplifying apparatus could be fitted similar to that in an electric guitar.

Also do you think an accordion without a bass keyboard would be better for improvising? When playing swing I find it much easier to get a correct bellows action without using the bass keyboard.

Well, BEN, your first question or suggestion reminds me of the old trouble of getting a quart into a pint pot. Personally, I couldn't get a Hammond organ into my dining-room, let alone into my accordion. Still, it's an idea at that, and maybe when they make accordions the size of Hammond organs something might be done about it.

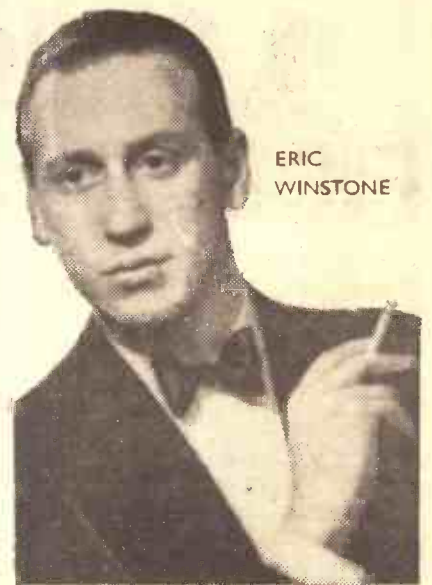
Regarding the second suggestion, why worry? If you prefer an accordion without a bass keyboard, just keep your left hand in your pocket when you play a chorus and, presto, you've got what you want.

Wish everything could be obtained so easily.

Still they come. JOHN DESBOROUGH, of 25, Rusper Road, Becontree, Essex, writes:

I am writing to you hoping to gain some idea of arranging a dance band or a swing band together. I would be grateful if you would enlighten me on my ambition.

Well, JOHN, many thanks for your



ERIC WINSTONE

letter. I think you had better start with a straight dance band and let the swing outfit come later.

First thing to do is to get in touch with a pianist, drummer, saxophonist and, if possible, a trumpet player, all of whom should be sufficiently keen enough to rehearse, and then start getting together in the evenings until you are fairly proficient at playing from band parts. You can then start thinking about the next and, I presume, most important question of how to get gigs.

If you will let me know a little more about yourself—what instrument you play and how far advanced are your other players—I may be able to help you more in the future.

And in conclusion here is a communication from fem-musician ANN TRENTBRIDGE, of 11, The Ridgeway, Wimbledon, who certainly looks upon her accordion from an unusual angle.

I thought I would write and let you know that I have been playing the accordion now for over two years, and, apart from the pleasure, have definitely found it an aid to keeping slim.

Before the war I used to attend a Health and Beauty class, but find that the exercise of extending the bellows of the instrument has been of great help to me in keeping fit.

I wonder whether any other of your readers agree with me?

Which, of course, only proves that exercise to a man is a habit; but to a woman it's just a matter of form.

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"DETECTOR"

Reviews

War Time Radio

SOMEbody recently said that the B.B.C. had a perfect genius for getting off on the wrong foot. This is certainly true about broadcast jazz.

Over the whole twenty years of its existence the B.B.C. has never shown any real understanding of the subject. Moreover, its narrow, unenlightened outlook has usually had a repressive influence on the few really knowledgeable outside enthusiasts who have from time to time managed to get to the microphone.

But, in spite of all this, occasionally something really brilliant manages to get past the B.B.C. officials and on to the air.

An instance of this was Denis Preston's "Wanted—A Swing Fiddler" in the Forces programme at 10 p.m. last Wednesday week (May 14).

This praise is certainly not the result of any personal friendship I have for Mr. Preston.

I have never met him. I don't even know who he is. I should probably dislike him if I did. I never have liked sarcastic people, especially those whose sarcasm takes the form of a tone of voice not unlike that of a certain personage known as Haw-Haw.

But even this instinctive antagonism I immediately, if unfairly, conceived against Mr. Preston couldn't prevent me from realising that here we had someone who not only had a deep insight into jazz, but the courage of his convictions and a flair for putting them over that was as convincing as it was cruel.

BITING BUT TRUE

Here, for once, was no yes man, talking pretty-pretty platitudes for the sake of convention and tact.

The way Mr. Preston tore the acknowledged stars of swing fiddling—Joe Venuti, Stephane Grappelly, Stuff Smith and Eddie South—to shreds was as biting as it was, I was forced to admit, all too true.

Of Venuti he said: "Such delightful fiddling. By its very grace, disarming. But Venuti never was a swing violinist. His extempore playing was without the spontaneity, the rich phrase-shaping we've come to expect from hot soloists."

"Surely it wasn't extemporisation in the truest sense? Wasn't it just a formula? Apt little phrases fitted with rare discrimination into the whole pattern of music. Almost, in fact, cliché."

You see the genius of it, besides its truth? Every compliment not only almost a back-handed one, but turned almost into an insult by the way it was "turned" at the end.

And, as though that weren't enough, Mr. Preston proved his point by such devices as following Venuti's *Wild Dog* (Parlophone R520) with Szigeti's performance of the *Presto* movement from Bach's *Sonata in G Minor* (Columbia LX128), just to show that Venuti "gave us nothing which hadn't been told two hundred and fifty years ago. Nothing new in the technique of fiddling, nothing new in swing."

Then of Grappelly: "... And even

though Grappelly did 'swing' Venuti off the war, he sadly neglected all the wonderful possibilities of the violin, the range of lovely tone colours, the dynamic power of the bowing arm.

"True, he possessed a most exciting vibrato—a natural 'hot' tone; but his melodic invention was unexciting: the sameness of colour soon palled."

And Grappelly's playing in *I Got Rhythm* (Decca F.5780), *Night and Day* (Decca F.6616) and *China Boy* (Decca F.5824) was followed by Temi-anka's record of Wieniawski's *Scherzo Tarantelle* (Parlophone E.11304) just to show how very true this criticism is.

What an inspiring difference from the polite, inane mutual admiration society blurb written by one Geoffrey Hood for the "Story of the Quintette of the Hot Club of France," broadcast last Sunday.

Passing over Stuff Smith as a trickster, of whose sincerity he was never quite certain, Mr. Preston came to Eddie South.

"Perhaps the best swing violinist so far," said our recitalist, with which remark, incidentally, I thoroughly agree.

EDDIE SOUTH

But even Eddie South didn't satisfy Mr. P. He went on:

"In spite of a persistent and often unpleasant glissando, with his grip and dynamic power, South plays jazz in a confidently violinistic way. He makes a good noise."

But jazz is still wanting, according to Preston. "A violinist who is a violinist, as Armstrong is a trumpet player: a violinist who's a swing musician as Hawkins, Hines and Buster Bailey are swing musicians."

"Someone with the technique of a concert violinist. Imagine for a moment, Art Tatum playing Chopin, Teddy Wilson playing Debussy, or Beiderbecke playing Handel (not, if you please, Goodman playing Mozart, although he did manage to get around the notes!). Someone with the spirit of swing music within him, as it is within Armstrong, Barney Bigard, Jack Teagarden. Someone who is going to enrich the vocabulary of his instrument and give us a new way of saying things in jazz."

I have devoted the whole of this week's space to this one broadcast not so much because of its own individual worth, or even because it illustrated almost a new technique in record recital construction, but because it set a new standard in jazz criticism over the air.

So far, it has been mostly a matter of idle compliments by people who either do not know their subject, or who are quite incapable of expressing themselves, or both.

It is high time these well-meaning but quite inadequate folk were replaced by some who, by their knowledge and understanding, have something to say and are not afraid to say it, and moreover are not prevented from saying it by the atmosphere of restraint and restriction which has for far too long been a part of the B.B.C.'s policy in jazz.

CALL-UPS GIVE NOTTS LEADERS HEADACHES

IN common with most organisations in these hectic times, Nottingham's residential outfits would seem to be in the throes of perpetual reorganisation, and one pities the lot of our harassed M.D.s in their struggle to find musicians of any description; let alone to endeavour to keep up the standard imposed by our very discriminating managements.

In fact, so frequent have been the recent departures, and so scarce the material upon which to draw, that one marvels at the fact that the bands have been able to keep going at all.

Nottingham, however, is fortunate in the knowledge that, in Les Thorpe and Rube Sunshine, it has two hard-working and enthusiastic M.D.s, and it speaks volumes for the ability of both these men that never, in its long and successful dance history, have its record dance crowds been served by two better outfits.

The most recent departures from Les Thorpe's Band at the Palais de Danse are Doug. Holland (piano), Les Collins (bass), Les Ernest (alto), and Julie Rogers, the well-known Ivy Benson "fem." pianist.

THORPE FOR THE DURATION

The first two mentioned boys have been called to the Services, and have joined the R.A.S.C. and the R.A.F. respectively.

Thorpe's line-up at present reads: Jock McQueen (piano) (a Nottingham boy who has been working with E.N.S.A.), Billy Joyce (drums), "Cod" Hill (bass) (late Billy Merrin), Ted Bonser (alto) (returns to the fold after a short season with Rube Sunshine), Ted Carter and Ronnie Stubbs (tenors), George Bulmer and Johnny Clay (trumpets) (the last-named also an old Merrin man).

Les Thorpe, who, of course, leads on alto, is, at the moment, feeling very happy in the thought that he has just signed a contract with the management of the Palais "for the duration."

At the Victoria Ballroom Rube Sunshine is finding the task of keeping up the strength no less difficult. During the past month his band has been completely reorganised, and the present line-up reads: Bernard Fenton (piano), Harold Burley (drums) (late Teddy Joyce), Billy New (bass), Walter Stott (alto) (late Bram Martin), Arthur Smith (alto) (late Tommy James, Leicester Palais), Rudd Wardle and Arthur Hill (tenors), Jack Parfitt (trumpet and vocals) (late Henry Hall), Al Winnett (trumpet), Len Barsby (trombone), and Doreen Conn, who dispenses both glamour and vocals.

Sunshine, who has just put in a four-piece band at the Victoria Station Hotel, led by Les Copestake on fiddle and piano, with Dulcie Clark ("fem." pianist), Jim Bentley (drums), and Jimmy Ellis (saxes), is still looking for a good lead-alto, whilst Les Thorpe, who specialises in the use of two pianos, is frantic for another pianist.

Will anyone interested please contact them as soon as possible.

No. 22. The next meeting of the Notts Rhythm Club will be on May 29, when Harry Hudson and his Band will give a Jam Session, and on May 5 Harry Hudson will give a recital on "The Sax in Jazz."

LADIES AT BIRMINGHAM Midland News

CALL-UP problems and the requisitioning of local halls by the authorities seem to have put Brummagem's dancing in the doldrums.

Gloria Gaye and her Glamour Girls' Band have just finished a six weeks' season at the Grand Casino and have been followed by Dorothy Holbrook's Harmony Hussars, famous femme crew.

Larry Kirsch, late manager of the Grand Casino, is now Band Supervisor for Mecca. The Grand Casino is now the only regular dance-hall left in Brum, with two regular sessions daily.

Tony's has been burnt out and the West End G.B. house has been requisitioned by the local authorities. Wally Dewar is now at Sherry's, Brighton.

Another Brum hall taken over by the Government is the Monument Road Palais-de-danse, letting out Billy Collis's Band, while the only theatres left to carry on are the Hippodrome, Alexander and Royal.

Johnny Rosen, Jan Ralfini and Herman Darewski have played Sunday concerts at local cinemas.

Drummer Bob Ramsden, one of the few local skin-beaters not in the Marines, is resident at the Church Hall, Hodgehill Common, and with him are Frank Brampton (piano) and Harry Dunsford (alto and clarinet), two blind boys who are basket-makers by trade.

Most of the Birmingham café combinations have been reduced, but Jan Berenska's Quintet and the Tookey Trio remain at Lewis's.

MEDWAY NEWS

WHEN a Medway dancer thinks of the Pavilion Ballroom, Gillingham, he thinks of Tommy Hewson's Band, for this sparkling combination is now in its seventh year at that venue.

No better compliment can be paid to any outfit than to state, as in this case, that never has business been so brisk as at present.

Like every other leader, Tommy has lost men through the call-up, viz., Wally Rees (Royal Marines), Tommy Bainbridge (now in the Middle East), Les Whittell (A.F.S.), and, lately, Les Reeves to the Navy.

However, Tommy always manages to pull one out of the bag, and this has just been instanced by his replacement of trumpeter Les Reeves. When I recorded this departure some weeks back I hinted that Tommy was about to spring a surprise. And he has, by filling the vacant trumpet chair with an accordionist!

"Owing to the scarcity of good trumpet players in the district," says Tommy, "I decided to remould the style of the band by including Peter Sachree on accordion. This lad has a good rhythmic sense and should prove an asset to the band."

Medway dancers have heartily endorsed this statement, and proved once again Tommy's knack of gauging his public's taste.

Another interesting newcomer is Jock Patterson, sax, clarinet and violin, who has been leading his own band in South Africa, from whence he has frequently broadcast. The other lads are "Andy Wilson" (drums, trombone, arranger), and Arthur Cameron (tenor, guitar), while Tommy remains the most popular pianist in Medway.

Incidentally, any musicians, Service or civvy, who happen to visit this district are always welcome to "sit in" with the lads at the Pavilion.

N. H. F.

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Continued from
page 11.

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All-Yorks Contest: Colossal Success

MOST entertainment promoters would be delighted to find the house sold out four days before the show was due on.

But Organiser Lewis Buckley wasn't so happy about it when he found this to be the position regarding the "M.M." 1941 All-Yorks Dance Band Championship, which took place at the Municipal Halls, Keighley, last Friday (May 16).

You see, the five hundred tickets, which were all the authorities' A.R.P. regulations allowed for the main hall, had all been snatched up by the good folk of Keighley. What was to happen to the many supporters of bands coming from further afield? To turn them away would have meant little short of a riot at the doors.

Buckley went in for a spot of quick thinking, the outcome of which was that he booked up also the smaller hall in the same building.

With the two halls his permissible capacity was thus increased to about 750, and because our checking watches were tactfully set to stop at that figure, we must be content to say that that was the number of guests who had paid for admission.

Well, there once again you have the proof of the astonishing popularity of "M.M." dance band contests with the public. It was yet another case of House Full boards almost before the doors opened.

In spite of the difficulties of the times no fewer than ten bands appeared for adjudication and played up to a standard that was almost ahead of that of pre-war days.

Particularly pleasing was the fact that two of the competing combinations were Service units who appeared in uniform.

One was the dance band of the 11th Battalion York and Lancaster Regiment, known as the "Tigers." (They were placed third.)

The other was the "Stardusters" from the 39th A.A. Brigade R.A.

Although these boys were suffering from such disadvantages as a drummer with a poisoned hand and a long, rushed journey, from which they were obviously tired, they put up a very good show, and with a little attention to points they will have learnt from their experience in this, their first contest, they ought not to find it difficult to get placed, should they be able to enter for another championship.

Judging with Edgar Jackson was that popular leader from the Central Pier, Morecambe, Richard Valery, now in the R.A.F.

Among the guests was Joe Loss, whose band was playing the week in Keighley. His visit was a most welcome one, especially, it seemed, to an army of autograph hunters.

Melody Maker

Incorporating "RHYTHM"
MAY 24, 1941 Vol. XVII. No. 409

WINNERS.
NEW FLORIDA BAND (BURY).
(Three saxes, trumpet, piano, bass, drums.)

All coms.: J. Gregson, 11, Rhiwlas Drive, Bury.

Individualists' awards for: Alto, tenor, clarinet, trumpet, piano, bass. Hon. mention for drums.

If ever there were a case of a band having profited from experience and these friendly and, we always hope, helpful criticisms of contest performances, this New Florida Band is it.

Playing the same arrangements as it used at Rochdale on March 28 last, it not only managed to maintain all its good points, but to correct every fault which caused it to be beaten into second place at the Lancashire event.

There was no trace of the previously slightly faulty intonation in the sax team, and the tendency to be rather studied, which had robbed the playing of some of its ease, relaxation and rhythmic flow, was replaced by a healthy confidence and attack which, always under control, gave the band fine opportunities to show its good musicianship and most praiseworthy understanding of dance style.

Added to which may be mentioned the taste exhibited by the musicians, individually and collectively.

SECOND.
AIREDALE PLAYERS (KEIGHLEY).

(Three saxes, two trumpets, piano, guitar, bass, drums.)

All coms.: J. Hall, 6, Snape Street, Kelghley.

Individualists' award for drums. Hon. mention for trumpet. Special award for best Keighley band.

Playing the slow fox-trot *Solitude*, the waltz *Gipsy Moon*, and the quick-step *Southern Fried*, this band showed itself at its best in the first and last mentioned titles.

It was in these "rhythmic" dances that its good attack, sense of phrasing, healthy beat, and generally high standard of musicianship showed to best advantage.

In the waltz it was somewhat handicapped by the choice of what is a rather old and not too good arrangement, but even more noticeable was its failure to exhibit the same danceable lift, impression of solidity and interpretative ability.

Here, too, the rather excessive vibrato of the tenor sax, and his failure to blend too well with the rest of the team, was most noticeable, though it was also a fault in the other numbers.

A better standard of bass playing would help the band, and the lead alto could afford to improve his tone.

This would make him a more convincing lead, to the improvement of the sax team generally.

THIRD.
"TIGERS" BAND OF THE 11th BATTN., YORK AND LANCASTER REGT.

(Three saxes, two trumpets, piano, bass, drums.)

All coms.: Band President, 11th Battn., The York and Lancaster Regt., c/o G.P.O., Filey, Yorks.

Individualists' award for violin. Hon. mention for bass.

Choosing Ellington's *Lazy Rhythm* for its slow fox-trot, this Service band, which appeared in its blue Service uniforms, showed an excellent sense of interpretation in a number which calls for a very high standard of interpretative ability.

It is true that the whole thing was a little unnecessarily restrained in the *ppp* passages, causing an absence of lift, but generally the performance was musically and the number given the right character.

The faults which the band displayed were more matters of dance style than musicianship. The vibrato of both the brass and saxes was too fast for jazz, giving a slightly corny flavour to the phrasing.

Also, the saxes could afford to watch their intonation, and to play with less restraint, especially as the two trumpets, who worked well together, were able to produce such good biting tone and attack.

What this band needs mostly now, however, is to study the more subtle differences between dance and "straight" style.

Slight tendency to corniness was as much a drawback to most of its solos as it was to the ensemble, even though the presence of a swell drummer, whose cymbal and rim-shoot rhythms were most effective, helped enormously not only to hold the whole band together but to provide necessary lift.

Trophy for the best "small" band, and hon. mention for tenor, trumpet, piano, bass and drums, were secured by Mike Key and his Pennsylvanians, from Halifax.

A busking group, with a trumpet player whose "Armstrong-trumpet" in *West End Blues* was most commendable, and a tenor saxophonist with a very good idea of hot style and the right hot tone, this band only needs to achieve a better sense of ensemble and refine its music a little to secure a much higher placing. It already has plenty of imagination, and works on the right lines.

Dave Watson's Rhythm Aces, of Keighley, received an hon. mention for violin.

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