

# Melody Maker

INCORPORATING RHYTHM

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## NORTH BRITAIN CONTEST FINAL TO BE STAGED AT ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE

PROVIDED A SUFFICIENT NUMBER OF THE ELIGIBLE BANDS ARE IN A POSITION TO COMPETE, A GRAND NORTH BRITAIN DANCE BAND CHAMPIONSHIP FINAL WILL BE HELD ON THE EVENING OF FRIDAY, JULY 18 NEXT, AT THE PALAIS DE DANSE, ASHTON-UNDER-LYNE, LANCs.

The event, to be held under the auspices of the MELODY MAKER, will be organised and presented by Mr. Lewis Buckley.

This is our reply to all those bands and others who, realising the impossibility of holding the All-Britain Finals in the present war time conditions, have nevertheless asked that some sort of a Final should be arranged as a suitable culmination to the short contesting season it has been possible to present this year.

It has been decided to make the following bands eligible: Those placed first, second, third and fourth in this year's All-Lancashire, All-Yorks and All-Cheshire Championships (last-mentioned due to take place at the Parr Hall, Warrington, on Friday next), the bands placed first, second and third at last year's All-London and Swing Band Championships, and the present holders of the All-Britain Championship.

### QUALIFIED BANDS

Thus, the following bands are already qualified:

- Adelaide Players (Keighley).
- Ayling's (Les) Swingtet (London, N.B.).
- Blake (Cyril) and his Band (Ashton-under-Lyne).
- Hardiker (Jack) and his Boys (Whalley).
- Harrison (Edgar) and his Band (Crewe).
- Hedley (Fred) and his Band (London, S.W.).
- Lawrence (Billy) and his Band (London).
- Marshall (Len) and his Band (Lincoln).
- Masqueraders (West Ham, London, E.15).
- New Florida Band (Bury).
- Riley's (Mike) Pennsylvanians (Halifax).
- Scatter Brains (London, S.E.).
- Tigers' Band of the 11th Bttn. York and Lancaster Regt.

But, as we have stated, whether or not this North Britain Final, as it has been decided to call it, can or cannot take place, depends entirely on whether a sufficient number of the eligible bands will be available.

It is possible that quite a few of them may have broken up, consequently all those in the list are urgently requested to communicate immediately with the MELODY MAKER, stating whether they expect to be able to take part.

### PLEASE LET US KNOW

It is realised that some of those bands which are still intact may have difficulty in ascertaining so long in advance whether all their musicians will be able to obtain leave on the night from their war time duties. But it is essential that they let us have immediately at least some indication of whether they hope to be able to participate in these Finals.

(Please turn to p. 2, col. 5)

## RABIN-DAVIS FORM LIFE BAND PARTNERSHIP

OSCAR RABIN'S BAND is no longer co-operative. Pioneers of the "share-and-share-alike" policy among dance bands in this country, this outfit has now become the subject of a unique contract between the two men responsible for its present enormous success.

Oscar Rabin and Harry Davis, cementing their happy relationship which has lasted for sixteen years, now own the band, and are partners in all its activities.

### LIFE-CONTRACT

The contract between them lasts for life, and, in the event of the death of either Oscar or Harry, all the rights of the deceased partner revert automatically to his family.

Harry is responsible for the musical side of the band, Oscar for the business side, and manager Bernard Rabin puts all their plans into effect.

The band is at the Wood Green Empire this week, where it is continuing to attract the colossal volume of business that has become identified with it wherever it has played around the country.

Next week it goes to the Middlesbrough Empire; and then follows with two weeks' broadcasting.

## "Happy Days" Show Kicks Off On July 1

AS we stated exclusively in the MELODY MAKER last week, all difficulties in the Sarah Churchill-Vic Oliver radio show "Happy Days" have now been ironed out.

The date that we gave, however, has now been altered and the first airing will be on Tuesday, July 1.

The show will be produced by Ronnie Waldman and, of course, Jay Wilbur's Band will be providing the music. A series of six fortnightly programmes is scheduled at the moment.

An interesting item of the new shows will be a musical guessing game when listeners may try to guess which particular instruments are playing a tune, and, each week a well-known vocalist will sing, with his or her identity revealed only at the end of the programme.

# WE DISCOVER A KRUPA—AGED 7!



VICTOR FELDMAN  
Seven-year-old Krupa

## R.A.O.C. Start First Army Rhythm Club

PROBABLY the first Army Rhythm Club has been formed in a certain R.A.O.C. Depot in the Midlands, and its membership already totals nearly 400.

Pte. C. C. Cassell, formerly hon. secretary of the Portsmouth and Southsea Rhythm Club, who is at this station, received permission from the C.O. to obtain a radiogram, and a start was made in a village hall with a handful of enthusiasts.

Attendances increased tremendously, so that the group and its work was recognised on the Welfare curriculum, and the opening of a splendid new canteen provided admirable new premises for the Club, where the first meeting was held last Thursday night.

### STAN ON FRED

For this inaugural opening, an excellent attendance greeted Stanley Nelson, of the "Melody Maker," who travelled up from London and gave a talk on the work and influence on swing music in this country of Fred Elizalde.

It is hoped to follow his most successful visit with talks from other accredited experts.

The former "M.M." Birmingham correspondent, Corpl. Sonny Rose, is at this depot, and, of course, plays with the Station Orchestra. He has also formed a Swingtet, which appeared after Mr. Nelson's talk and created something of a sensation.

Sonny, who plays excellent tenor and clarinet, has with him Pte. Gerry Parker (piano); Pte. Joe Hamon (bass); Pte. Phil Hamon (guitar); and Pte. Len Rispin (drums). Joint secretaries are Pte. Cassells and the civilian manager of the admirably-run canteen, Mr. Tony Baker.

There has been a change in the broadcasting Band of the Week for next week (commencing June 16). Herman Darewski was originally billed, but we now learn that Maurice Winnick and his Band are to supply the radio music throughout the week.

THIS IS THE MOST INCREDIBLE STORY WE HAVE EVER PUBLISHED IN THE "MELODY MAKER." IT CONCERNS THE DISCOVERY OF A DRUM WIZARD—SO SMALL THAT HE IS UNABLE TO SIT DOWN AT HIS KIT; SO TINY THAT HE CAN HARDLY HOLD THE STICKS; SO YOUNG THAT HE CANNOT READ—BUT SO BRILLIANT A DRUMMER THAT EXPERTS WHO HAVE HEARD HIM STATE POSITIVELY THAT HE IS THE MOST NATURAL THING THAT HAS EVER HAPPENED IN BRITISH DANCE MUSIC.

He is Victor Feldman, just turned seven, and he lives in Edgware, London, N.W.

It is to Max Bacon that credit must go for the discovery of this child. He was told about the kiddie's capabilities and, with the polite scepticism that one reserves for child prodigies, agreed to hear him.

### A "NATURAL"

Then he phoned the MELODY MAKER in a state of the greatest excitement, and told us that something quite unbelievable had happened in the dance business—a seven-year-old child, who had never been taught to play drums, and was too young really to appreciate what it was all about, was, nevertheless, a "natural."

Max raved so much about young Victor that the hardened staff of the MELODY MAKER were sufficiently impressed to go and hear the child prodigy.

Well, all that Max said was right—and then some.

This kid's drumming would be grand stuff if executed by an intelligent adult. To think that a child can execute such

The "Melody Maker" has arranged with the No. 1 Rhythm Club that Victor Feldman and his brothers form the attraction at their meeting on Sunday week, June 22. This is held at the Bag o' Nails, Kingly Street, off Regent Street, W.1, and starts at 3 p.m. The seven-year-old Krupa will be introduced by the Editor of "Melody Maker."

natural rhythm with such incredible confidence and attack is quite staggering.

Victor comes from a musical family. He has two brothers—Robert, aged seventeen, who plays sax and clarinet, and Monty, aged sixteen, who plays accordion.

### BROTHERS' HELP

These boys form a swing trio, and it is through the influence and patience of his brothers that young Victor has developed so amazingly. The three of them study the latest records and memorise the parts—Robert taking the clarinet stuff; Monty doing the brass figures and Victor supplying the rhythm—and what a rhythm!

Once they have worked out an arrangement, Victor never forgets it. Somehow, in that child brain of his, the rhythm seems to form a language which he can speak at will, and it doesn't matter how complicated the drum stuff may be, he never misses.

It is in the jam sessions, however, that the genius of this child becomes most apparent. Once he sets a tempo it never

(Please turn to p. 2, col. 1)

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This picture (by Stanley Nelson) gives you an idea of the size of Victor Feldman, seen here with his brothers, Robert (right) and Monty.

## 7-YEAR-OLD KRUPA

(Continued from Page 1)

alters, and, when his brother whispers "Stop chorus," he goes to town with a vengeance for the exact number of bars that are required.

His manipulation of the sticks is extraordinary. Rimshots, cymbal work, double tempo—all these are executed with confidence and dexterity, and we were not surprised to learn that Victor has stopped the show when he appeared at charity concerts.

Max Bacon and Maurice Burman have both heard him, and rave about him. So do all the other experts before whom he has played.

It is impossible to say how far the child will go, but we chronicle with pleasure the appearance of a genius in the rhythm world.

## Lancs. Pianist Killed

MANY musicians and fans in Bolton and Farnworth will be deeply sorry to hear of the sudden death of Billie Vickers, who met his death in a flying crash last week.

Billie Vickers was very well known in Farnworth and district as a very clever pianist, and he had played as a semi-pro with many local combinations. As a solo turn, too, he was always a popular visitor to local clubs.

Prior to joining the R.A.F., he was a clerk employed by the Farnworth Borough Council.

Sincere sympathy is extended to his mother in her tragic loss.

## Stan Atkins Airing to America

STAN ATKINS first began broadcasting in 1937, and his early dates were over the Empire wavelength.

Since then, of course, he has frequently appeared on both Home and Forces programmes, and on June 23, at 5 a.m., he takes his Embassy Rooms (Welling) Band on the air for a programme which will be relayed to North America.

Unfortunately, Tommy Douglas, the 2nd alto player with the Band, who is the only one of Stan's originals left, has received his calling-up papers, so alto and clarinet players who are exempt and would like one of the best palis jobs in the South should get in touch with Stan at the Embassy Rooms.

Business remains terrific at this venue, with Manager Len Elms running amateur talent competitions every Monday and the Swing Quartet a show piece of an excellent all-round combination.

The Band is regularly playing Sunday gigs at Kolster Brande's every three weeks, and supplied the accompaniment for the well-known act of Forsythe, Seamon and Farrell last Sunday at this engagement. Stan also has a novel radio idea for the Swing Quartet which should intrigue the fans.

## MAX GOLDBERG—BANDLEADER

THE interest of Wembley residents was certainly aroused when around the town double-crowns were seen advertising the appearance of "Max Goldberg and his All-Star Band" at a "100 per cent. Swing Ball" there this week.

Further inquiries revealed that Max plans a series of dances with a band which includes Billy Munn and Tony Thorpe on piano and trombone respectively, with Max himself leading on trumpet.

Max feels that a really good band of famous West End players should prove a great attraction in the suburbs, and his venture will probably prove to be a great success.

## CHANCE FOR PIANIST IN R.A.F.

ANY pianist joining the R.A.F. can link up with Cpl. Jack Hart, who is leading a swell R.A.F. combination somewhere in England.

Formerly well-known West End bandleader, Jack is thoroughly happy in his new life, and included in the combination are: Alfie Banks and Jack Mutch (altos), Louis Wilkins (tenor), Alf Horton (tpt.), Monty Castledine (drums), A. H. Moore (bass).

They're all A/Cs except the bassist and another of the trumpets, who is a Sgt. Observer, and the vocals are taken by A/C Gordon.

## Rabin Band Romance

A couple of weeks ago, it was mentioned by a colleague that Diane, sweet-singer with Oscar Rabin's Band, may have a matrimonial announcement to make ere long (writes Jerry Dawson).

Well, fans, this has materialised, and the engagement is announced of Diane and—no, you'll never guess—none other than Oscar Rabin's 20-year-old son, and manager of the band, Bernard Rabin.

I have known these two for a long time now, and, in congratulating them both, I would also like to wish them both all the luck in the world.

## Arranging Axioms

ONE of the problems novice arrangers seem to suffer from more than most others is what the Americans call "voicing," which is another way of describing the distribution of the parts.

Now I remember reading once in an article by Toots Camarata, the great American arranger, that he didn't believe in giving formulae for this purpose because just where the harmony and melody had come from and where they were going to should decide. With this statement there is no possible disagreement.

But Toots was postulating harmonic knowledge when he wrote that, and so many dance-band arrangers just haven't got it, so that some foolproof guides really are necessary.

I have had a letter from Reader Philip Bates, of Morpeth, Northumberland, who wants an alternative to interminably having trumpet melody with tenor doubling in octaves and the two altos and 2nd trumpet filling in the harmony.

Apart being tough on the 1st trumpet player, this is also pretty monotonous. Actually, the fact that two trumpets and three saxes are available to Mr. Bates is unfortunate, since a trombone in place of one of the trumpets might be more satisfying.

### COMBINATIONS

However, there are plenty of combinations available, e.g., trumpet-lead, 1st alto-harmony above, 2nd alto and tenor harmony below. Another would be 1st trumpet taking the melody with the 2nd trumpet in duet form, and saxes playing figures. Then saxes unison with brass figures.

Do the saxes double clarinet? If they do, there is host of additional possibilities, such as trumpet (melody) with clarinet harmony above and tenor below. Clarinet (melody) with clarinet playing harmony above and two trumpets below. Experiment yourself, Mr. Bates, and don't be afraid of the result!

If you feel that the lead trumpet is being overplayed, mark down the tenor more softly. Then what about tenor on melody if he so wants to be heard?

Use the piano on melody with sax organ and so on. You'll never be an arranger until you experiment.

Other readers who are in doubt about voicing might take heed of these remarks, but the infallible way is to score back ensemble passages in the stock arrangements you have and compare the methods used.

The two short examples I have included this week show two methods of voicing.

### ARRANGER AID

A handy "Arranger Aid" which has just been issued by Laffeur's at the modest price of 3s. has just come before me, and since it comprises a complete chord chart, with ranges of all the instruments tabulated and how to voice them in various combinations from three saxes and four brass up to six brass and five saxes, it should be a great boon to would-be arrangers.

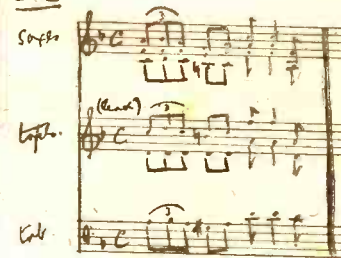
Also there are brief examples of the styles of such bands as Glenn Miller's, Jimmy Lunceford's, Benny Goodman's and Bob Crosby's, and an immediate insight into how such combinations achieve their effects will be illuminating. The book is endorsed by Fletcher Henderson, who aptly calls it "a handy tool to keep at my side when working."

## GIRL SINGER WANTED

SOS Billy Thorburn, just completing his fifteenth month of the non-stop run of his show "Sssh, Keep It Dark," and still going strong, urgently needs a girl vocalist.

He is appearing this week at the Bedford, Camden Town, where girls should contact him. Next week (commencing Monday, June 16) he is at Woolwich.

Ex.1



Ex.2



## NORTH BRITAIN FINAL

(Continued from Page 1.)

Everything possible is being done to make everything as easy as possible for all bands wishing to compete.

Although bands will, of course, have to pay their own travelling expenses, they will not be required to pay any entrance fee to the contest.

In all other respects the Championship will be conducted as though it were an Area Championship, with the usual bannerette of honour, diplomas, and handsome prizes.

Special attention is drawn to the new war time rule (No. 7) introduced last season, which reads: "To ensure that no band shall be at a disadvantage on account of any one or more of its members having become temporarily or permanently unavailable owing to the said member(s) having undertaken any form of National Service, deputies may be introduced up to within half an hour of the start of any contest, provided that it can be proved to the satisfaction of the judges that any such deputies are replacing regular members of the band whose absence is due solely to such National Service."

### CHESHIRE CONTEST

Further details will be published in due course.

Meanwhile, don't forget the

### ALL-CHESHIRE CHAMPIONSHIP

to be held

NEXT FRIDAY, JUNE 20

at the

PARR HALL, WARRINGTON.

Doors open at 8 p.m., and dancing will continue until 1 a.m. to the competing bands and a specially engaged house band.

Ten bands are already entered. Two more can be accepted. Service bands are especially welcome. Entry forms are obtainable from Lewis Buckley, 107, Broadway, Royton, Oldham, Lancs. (Phone: Oldham, MAIn, 1431.)

Tickets, if bought in advance (obtainable from Messrs. Dawson's, 65, Sankey Street, Warrington), cost 2s. 6d. each. At the doors the price will be 3s.

There will, of course, be the usual buffets. Edgar Jackson and Richard Valery will be the judges.

No band which has not won a contest this season is prevented from competing in this All-Cheshire Championship by virtue of having qualified for the aforementioned North Britain final.

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So many readers have asked for a picture of trumpet-ace ROY ELDRIDGE, now with Gene Krupa, that here it is.



# TWO ALARMING SHOCKS!

characteristics which are quite out of keeping with the tenets which its origins and traditions have given to jazz.

At least, so I always thought. But after having heard Tatum's version of Dvorak's *Humoreske*, I am wondering just how much longer such theories will hold water.

Of course, the performance displays Tatum's phenomenal technique, but it isn't that which has impressed me. I am familiar enough with it to be able to admire it without forgetting that, at the best, techniques are merely means to an end, and means, no matter how brilliant they may be, are seldom worth all the palaver they invoke. The end—in music, the artistic merit—is all that matters.

## DELICACY

To say that Tatum has achieved a worthy end is to put it mildly. The delicacy with which he has embroidered Dvorak's work is excelled only by the way he has retained all the meaning and charm of the piece.

The first movements he plays straight, with just a little touch of decoration here and there, so, in spite of the fact that you couldn't mistake the playing for anyone's but Tatum's, the side so far has little bearing on the jazzed classics argument.

But later the maestro uncompromisingly breaks into rhythm, but with such taste and artistry that even the most dogmatic will hardly fail to concede that the result, far from detracting from, has actually enhanced the charm of, the piece, no matter whether you look at it from the angle of jazz or straight music. Tatum's attentions to Massenet's *Elegie* on the other side are equally brilliant.

But not quite so satisfying. I am delighted to be able to say this. It has helped to restore my confidence in my ideal, by suggesting that, after all, *Humoreske* may be but an exception which proves the rule.

You see, a humoresque is essentially something fanciful, which does not demand to be taken too seriously, and so, I suppose I may say, literally. At any rate, liberties are less likely to destroy its meaning.

## New Swing Discs Reviewed by EDGAR JACKSON

But an elegy is (vide any dictionary) a song of lamentation. Tatum's version of *Elegie*, for all its technical brilliance, destroys the intended emotion immediately it breaks into rhythm.

If this is the fault of the way Tatum has dealt with the piece in the rhythmic movements, then my hopes fall to the ground. But I am more inclined to think that it is due to an inherent characteristic of jazz, which proves that nine times out of ten classics must lose something when translated into the jazz language, and that, therefore, any belief that classics should not be jazzed is, after all, a well-founded artistic ideal which all who are tempted to play about with classical music should remember—even Mr. Tatum.

## RADIO RHYTHM CLUB SEXTET

\*\*\*Dim Blues (Parry, Shearing) (Parlophone CE10720) (Recorded May 3, 1941).

\*\*\*Parry Opus (Parry) (Parlophone CE10721) (Recorded May 3, 1941). (Parlophone R2793—3s. 8d.)

Harry Parry (clart.) directing George Shearing (pno.); Roy Marsh (vibes); Frank Deniz (gtr.); Sam Molyneux (bass); Ben Edwards (drums).

SO Roy Marsh objects to being described as an imitator of Lionel Hampton—vide Eric Winstone's "Marsh Magic" in the "M.M." for March 31.

Well, that's O.K. by me; but at the risk of shaking the "passive imperturbability" of Mr. Marsh once again, not to mention discrediting Mr. Winstone,

I repeat that Marsh's playing has so much of Hampton's in it that it is safe to say that, whether or not Marsh or Winstone realises it, Hampton is Marsh's main inspiration.

At any rate, that is the only conclusion I can retain after having again heard Marsh's playing in these two records. And it needn't cause Roy any sleepless nights. I'd be tickled pink to be able to play equally delightful vibes, even if it did sound like Hampton.

Everybody else does well again, too, in these respectively slow and medium tempo "originals" by Parry, plus, in *Dim Blues*, the irrepressible George Shearing.

## GUITAR CRITICISMS

In addition to being tasteful and relaxed, the music has that understanding which has made this sextet of Harry Parry's the best local swing outfit that has ever awakened the B.B.C. into the desirability of giving it regular broadcasts.

My only serious criticism is against the guitar solos. Their tone is horrible, due, it seems, to the fact that Deniz uses an amplified guitar that is no credit to its makers.

I meant to point this out in reviews of the band's earlier records. Joe Deniz's solos suffered from the same trouble as these by his brother Frank, who replaced Joe when he was away sick. If better electric guitars aren't available over here, it would be much better to use an unamplified instrument.

In fact, for solos it would probably be better to do so anyway. Any necessary extra volume could easily be obtained by putting the instrument nearer the mike, even if this did not produce the rather fuller tone which may be required when three-part harmony by clarinet, vibes and guitar is wanted.

Think it over, Harry.

HUGHIE RADCLIFFE, first trumpet with Henry Hall's Band, is leaving shortly.

His place is being taken by Patrick O'Day, who for a long time now has been first trumpet with Percival Mackey at the London Coliseum and on Percy's other multifarious engagements.

TWO of the discs for this week's review have given me what I can only describe as rather alarming shocks.

The first has caused a long-revered idol to sway dangerously on the pedestal on which I have for years had him, as I thought, unassailably enthroned.

The second has caused me to do the swaying, by making me wonder whether some of my ideals, which I believed to be the most justified, may not turn out to be little more than unjustified prejudices.

In an attempt to reinstate my idol, I have encouraged my mind to play about with such sayings as "one swallow, etc.," which for the occasion I have allowed it to twist into "One bad pie doesn't prove the cook's lousy."

As regards the ideal, in an endeavour to show myself that it was a worthy one I have been telling myself that the jar to it is just the result of an exception which only goes to prove that the ideal is, after all, a well-founded rule.

But somehow these efforts to restore my shaken confidence in my hero and my beliefs have not been as convincing as I would have liked. These two discs are, in their different ways, too like the writing on the wall for their warnings to be so easily disposed of.



The one which has caused the idol to look as though even he may have his feet of clay is:—

## DUKE ELLINGTON AND JIMMY BLANTON

\*\*\*Pitter Panther Patter (Ellington) (Am. Victor OA053504) (Recorded October 1, 1940).

\*Sophisticated Lady (Ellington, Parish, Mills) (Am. Victor OA053506) (Recorded October 1, 1940). (H.M.V. B9179—3s. 8d.)

BOTH sides are piano and bass duets, or, if you prefer it, string-bass solos accompanied by piano.

Before going any farther, let me say, without any equivocation or mental reservation, that both the records are as imaginatively ingenious as they are technically brilliant.

Ellington and Blanton are nothing if not original, and at any rate Blanton has an instrumental technique that is amazing. His clear, rich, crisp tone and the immaculate manner in which he bows passages, the performance of which would

probably be anything but easy even on the small fingerboard of a violin, are things at which anyone might fairly wonder.

In fact, for sheer technical wizardry, these two sides make the by no means incompetent work of Bob Haggart in his bass and drums duet with Ray Bauduc, *Big Noise From Winnetka* (Decca F7005), fade almost into insignificance.

But what has all this virtuosity amounted to?

The answer is, as jazz or any other form of music—nothing!

## DUKE'S STUNT

The whole thing is just a stunt—as amusing, diverting and entertaining as clever tricks usually are, but having no other significance.

Some of you may feel that this criticism is all rather unfair; that it is taking things too seriously; that if Ellington wants to try a stunt, why shouldn't he be allowed to, especially as he seems to have done it more adroitly than anyone else could have?

Well, that's all very well, as far as it goes. But we have all always looked upon the Duke as one of the sincerest, as well as the greatest, figures in jazz, a man whose musical integrity has hitherto been unassailable.

To find him wasting his time on gallery-fetching exploits such as these is enough to shake anyone's confidence, and cause one to wonder whether, after all, even the greatest disciples of jazz can resist the temptation to pander to the yells of the crowd for what amounts to nothing more than mere exhibitionism.

The second disc, which has made one realise just how dangerous it is to allow oneself to assume any sort of prejudices in jazz, no matter how laudable an ideal they may be built on, is:—



## ART TATUM—Piano Solos.

\*\*\*Elegie (Massenet) (Am. Decca DLA1936) (Recorded February 22, 1940).

\*\*\*Humoreske (Dvorak) (Am. Decca DLA1937) (Recorded February 22, 1940). (Brunswick 03162—3s. 8d.)

IT has always been one of my firmest convictions that classics should not be called upon to do duty as jazz.

Quite apart from the fact that all classical music has its meanings and associations, which are almost bound to be destroyed if one tries to translate it into the jazz language, such music has

# F & D's

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M.M. 14/6/41





WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH

Drawing by  
Bernard  
Greenbaum

MANY are the weird and peculiar nicknames to be found in the jazz world, and though such nomenclature as "Fats," "Pee Wee," "Cozy," "Stuff" and "Jelly Roll" are liable to give the lay reader something of a shock, the jazz fan just accepts them as part of the whole jazz pattern.

Perhaps the most intriguing of all these nicknames, however, is that borne by that grand, but little appreciated, pianist, Willie "The Lion" Smith, and for an explanation of how Willie came to be tagged thus,

it is necessary to turn one's attention to World War No. 1.

Willie was serving in France with the 350th Field Artillery, Battery "A," when the call came for volunteers to go to the front and undertake the perilous task of firing a French "75."

Volunteer Smith, it seems, not only fired the aforementioned death-dealer, but repeated this act for some thirty-odd days without relief, thereby earning for himself the imposing title of Sergeant William H. Smith, "The Lion."

Born forty-three years ago in New York, Willie was taught the piano by his mother, an accomplished pianist and organist, and prior to his World War activities he had played many small jobs around town.

Arriving back in the States from Europe, "The Lion" turned to music as a livelihood, playing at such places as Son-tag's Café, Marshall's, Jerry Preston's Log Cabin Inn on West 133rd Street, and Reisen-weber's Restaurant, immortalised by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band with their *Reisen-weber Rag*.

#### PLAYED EVERYWHERE!

By now Willie's name began to mean something, and it was not surprising, therefore, that such musicians as Joe Sullivan, Eddie Condon and Bix began to frequent the places where "The Lion's" pianistics were featured. Recording dates, too, began to come his way, and he cut his first sides for Okeh, accompanying Mamie Smith.

Leaving Harlem for a short while, "The Lion" went on to the Keith vaudeville circuit, playing with a band which accompanied Valaida Snow and Dancin' Dotson.

Back to the Harlem gin-mills, he played in so many different places that it's practically impossible to enumerate them all, and "The Lion" himself says he can't remember half of them.

It's certain, however, that he played at the Club Napoleon and the Capitol Cabaret, to mention but two. Alongside Willie in these places were such world-famous names as Benny Carter, Jimmy Harrison and Sidney "Pops" Bechet, whilst the impression he left on everyone was enormous, for even Count Basie admits to being influenced by "The Lion."

Unfortunately, his appearances on wax have been very rare—a few sides with Mezz in 1934 and 1936, odd titles (odd in more senses than one!) with

the Milt Herth Trio and Quartet, and a few dates with his own pick-up group for American Decca (English Brunswick) seem to sum up his recording activity, with the exception of his fine solos for the Commodore Music Shop and his recent sides for the new General label.

Lately, however, work has not been too plentiful for this jazz veteran. He's had a band of his own more than once, his most successful attempt at bandleading being in 1939, when he took his own outfit on a tour of the Southern States.

Nowadays he remains a solo act, having recently been at the Café Society, and is at present to be found at the Forrest Hotel on West 49th Street.

#### MEZZ SESSION

After that necessarily brief biography, it would be opportune to discuss some of "The Lion's" recorded solos, especially for those who are as yet unacquainted with the work of this great artiste.

I, like many others, first heard "The Lion" on the much-discussed Mezzrow session which produced *Apologies*, *Sending The Vipers*, etc.

Although these sides contain fair samples of "The Lion's" style, I think most readers will agree that he turns in a much better job on the later Mezz session, two sides of which, *Muting In The Parlour* and *The Panic Is On*, are available on Regal Zonophone under the name of the "Broadway Swingsters."

Listen especially to the manner in which he plays the first chorus of *Muting In The Parlour*, revealing one interesting aspect of his style—a seemingly rambling melodic line, but with an undeniably rhythmic foundation, helped in no small degree by a terrific left hand of which one writer said: "Willie's left is as famous as Joe Louis's."

This feature of Willie's playing seems to have attracted Claude Thornhill immensely, as

## Our Record Competition

ACCORDING to the verdict of the majority, as ascertained from our Record Competition G5, the best twelve solos by tenor sax virtuoso Bud Freeman are in the following discs:—

1. *The Eel*—Freeman's Summa Cum Laude Orch. (H.M.V. B9007).
2. *The Buzzard*—Freeman's Windy City Five (Parlophone R2210).
3. *Nobody's Sweetheart*—McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans (Parlophone R643).
4. *I've Found A New Baby*—Freeman's Summa Cum Laude Orch. (H.M.V. B9029).
5. *China Boy*—Freeman's Summa Cum Laude Orch. (H.M.V. B9007).
6. *Friars Point Shuffle*—Condon's Chicagoans (Brunswick 03055).
7. *China Boy*—McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans (Parlophone R1033).
8. *Sugar*—McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans (Parlophone R2379).
9. *The Sail Fish*—Freeman's Summa Cum Laude Orch. (Brunswick 02998).
10. *Sunday*—Freeman's Summa Cum Laude Orch. (Brunswick 02968).
11. *Satanic Blues*—Freeman's Summa Cum Laude Orch. (Brunswick 02998).
12. *Keep Smiling At Trouble*—Freeman's Windy City Five (Parlophone R2285).

The winner is Miss Eglantine Freeman, of Aberdeen. Her list contained ten of above titles, enabling her just to beat Kenneth Foale, of Dunfermline, Fife, Kenneth Betteridge, of Cheltenham, Glos., and D. Goodall, of Sunderland, who each gave nine "correct" titles. A P.O. for 5s. is being sent to Miss Freeman.

Thirteenth on the list of Freeman solos in this competition came *Stop, Look, Listen* (Tommy Dorsey's Orch., on 12-in. H.M.V. C2938).

Others well backed were *Liza* (McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans, Parlophone R2379); *Easy To Get* (Freeman's S.C.L. Orch., H.M.V. B9027); *Who* (Nichols' Five Pennies,

# PORTRAIT OF THE LION

by  
**ARTHUR PARKER**

will be gathered if the reader compares "The Lion's" work here with Thornhill's efforts on *Tillie's Downtown* Now by Bud Freeman's group on Parlophone.

Another devotee of "The Lion's" mannerisms would appear to be Luis Russell. Listen to Russell playing behind Henry Allen's vocal on *Whose Honey Are You* (Vocalion). Every note inspired by Willie Smith.

"The Lion," of course, employs the basic piano style, and is sometimes reminiscent of the James P. Johnson—"Fats" Waller school, but he is far more melodic than either Johnson or Waller, and does not employ the interminable riffs and clichés which so often spoil the work of these two otherwise grand pianists.

#### SOLOS

With the advent of the first waxings by Willie Smith's Cubs for American Decca, enthusiasts were enabled to appreciate "The Lion's" undoubted virtuosity for the first time.

The eight sides recorded during 1935, with a quartet consisting of Smith, Cecil Scott, Eddie Allen and Willie Williams, are comparable, to my mind, with the very greatest jazz records.

"The Lion" demonstrates his amazingly subtle phrasing and unorthodox harmonic patterns to great effect, and an added treat is the superb growling clarinet of Cecil Scott.

The later sessions by the Cubs

have a more commercial tendency, but they will prove of great interest to all admirers of "The Lion's" work, whilst *The Old Stamping Ground* is well worth hearing for Pete Brown's thrilling alto.

The only solo waxings by "The Lion" which are available over here are *Passionette* and *Morning Air*, on Brunswick, and if Willie's love of flowery titles has put some readers off this disc, read what Hugues Panassie says about it in his review in "Hot Jazz":—

"*Passionette* and *Morning Air* rank certainly amongst the finest piano records in the history of jazz music. Ravishing harmonies and a style of execution which is above all praise."

Probably "The Lion's" best discs to date are the solos he waxed for the Commodore label, the majority being his own compositions. These discs bring out as never before Willie's amazing improvising talents and his great originality as a composer.

#### DUKE'S TRIBUTE

Each side is a little masterpiece of melodic construction and a gem of rhythmic interpretation.

The Cubs reappeared recently with four not very successful sides on the new General label, the titles being *Peace On You* and *Noodlin'* (General 1712) and *Wontcha Do It To Me* and *Rushin'* (General 1713).

The line-up for this session was: Jimmy Lane, Johnny Mullins, Stony Smith (saxes); Sidney de Paris (trumpet); Willie Smith (piano); Bernard Addison (guitar); Richard Fullbright (bass); and Puss Johnson (drums). Both *Noodlin'* and *Rushin'* are original compositions by Willie.

The latest waxings by "The Lion" should be really worth hearing, for he provides the accompaniment to *Rainy Day Blues* and *Doggin' The Dog* (American Decca 7824) by that grand blues shouter Joe Turner.

Would it be asking too much for Brunswick to release it over here in the near future?

All of which seems to bring "The Lion's" activities up to date, and has, I hope, brought the work of this jazz veteran to the attention of a few more British enthusiasts, for, sadly enough, he is probably the most underrated of all the jazz pianists.

Duke Ellington lists Willie as his favourite pianist, and even composed and recorded a number dedicated to him. No doubt many of you have heard it. It's a most intriguing piece, and a fitting tribute to this great artiste.

Yes, you've guessed it; the Duke calls it *Portrait Of The Lion*.

This week's competition is as follows:—

**WHICH DO YOU CONSIDER THE TWELVE BEST ALTO SAX SOLOS BY BENNY CARTER ON RECORDS TO-DAY AVAILABLE IN THIS COUNTRY?**

Titles of tunes, names of bands and makes and catalogue numbers of records should be given.

Don't forget that among the records from which you can choose are those by Benny Carter's own combinations on Vocalion, Brunswick and H.M.V., Kai Ewans' Orchestra on H.M.V. X4698 and X4699, a number of Coleman Hawkins' Octet sides on H.M.V., McKinney's Cotton Pickers on H.M.V., the Chocolate Dandies on Parlophone, Teddy Wilson's Orchestra on Parlophone, etc., etc.

Entries must be marked "G9" 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 30 next.

A prize of 5s. will be awarded to the sender of the list which conforms most closely to those of the majority. Result will be published in the "M.M." for July 12.

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## WHERE THE BANDS ARE—1

ANYBODY listening to broadcasts by, for instance, Carroll Gibbons or Al Collins is almost certain not only to find his thoughts turning to the Savoy or Berkeley hotels, but to picture these famous leaders directing, in all their glory, their big bands in their pre-war surroundings, to the same gay crowds which flocked to these famous resorts in pre-war days.

For on the air these bands sound very little different to-day from the way they ever sounded. Their instrumentation seems the same as usual; their standard of performance remains almost as high, if not quite as high, as it ever was.

But any pictures which these broadcasts may to-day conjure up are to a great extent false.

Anyone visiting any of London's West End hotels or restaurants where dancing is still an entertainment feature would in fact find things so changed that he would probably think for the moment that he was dreaming.

He would certainly wonder what had happened to the band

# WHO'S WHERE IN THE WEST END

he had heard over the air possibly only a day or two previously.

It is true that one finds many of the old, familiar leaders presiding with all their accustomed aplomb.

Glance at the list herewith of hotels and restaurants where dancing in town may still be enjoyed, and you will find that Carroll is still at the Savoy, Al Collins still at the Berkeley.

You will find also that Lew Stone is at the Dorchester, that Billy Mayerl has returned to dance-band work and is leading his orchestra at Grosvenor House; also that Reg Pursglove is installed at the Hotel Maurice (previously known as Quaglin's, where Van Straten once held sway), and that Norman Cole, the well-known dance violinist, has taken over at the Piccadilly.

But what of the bands over which these luminaries once waved their wands?

### SKELETONS!

Owing partly to call-ups, and the consequent shortage of musicians, and partly, it would seem, to the uncertainty of business in these uncertain times, they have shrunk to what can only be described as mere skeletons of their former selves.

Jack Jackson and Billy Mayerl are, for the moment, able to maintain ten-piece outfits; sixteen musicians are at time of writing employed in the two bands now working at the Montparnasse, run by Charles André, late of the famous Boef Sur Le Toit, Paris.

But against this, Carroll Gibbons is down to six men, including himself, at the Savoy; Al Collins to five, including himself, at the Berkeley. Lew Stone has only six men at the Dorchester, Pursglove only four at the Maurice, Cole only six at the Piccadilly.

And all these are establishments where anything from ten to fourteen musicians were employed in a single band, and which used to run two or more bands in place of their present one.

Nor is this the end of the story.

### CARRYING ON

Search around for the big-time players, and you will find most of them conspicuous by their absence.

Here and there one comes across a star almost as well known as the leader under whom he is playing. But he is only one of the few who are either over the age-limit, have been exempted on health grounds, or who have come back to civvy life, discharged as medically unfit.

All the others have vanished, and the presence of the few who remain, rather like ghosts of a past era, only makes the absence of these vanished ones all the more noticeable.

Rather depressing it all seems, doesn't it.

But, believe me, it's nothing like as depressing as it sounds.

These boys who are left are carrying on grandly.

And, what's more, the customers seem more than satisfied. If they have noticed the changed conditions they don't show it. Most of the places are doing amazingly good business, even the most expensive ones. Some are often packed up to capacity.

A heavy night blitz may result in a temporary falling-off of attendances. But the clients quickly regain their confidence, and before many nights have passed are back again, as full of life and gaiety as ever. It takes more than a few bombs to scare them off for long.

Most of the places have, of

vast building, and it is questionable if even a direct hit could penetrate through the masses of walls which surround it and the many floors above it.

Then Martinez, at his Regent Street restaurant, has opened up his wine vaults as a restaurant in which he can accommodate about sixty people. He's had the walls decorated with Spanish murals, and the customers think it great fun going down into, as one put it, the dungeons. More or less similar schemes have been introduced almost everywhere else.

### STRANGE

Of course, these unfamiliar surroundings all help to make war-time visits to these well-known resorts seem stranger than ever, and the picture of London dancing, which might be conjured up by those who know it only from pre-war days, probably very inaccurate. But I hope that this little sketch of what is really happening will

## A New Series of Articles Giving You Personnel and Details of the Big Bands at Work

help you radio listeners to get a more realistic impression next time you hear a London band on the air.

### ADDING FOR AIR

Which reminds me that you may be wondering how it is that these bands still manage to sound on the air so much like they sounded in pre-war days.

Well, in the first place, of course, they usually augment for broadcasting, either by borrowing musicians from each other, or by engaging the pre-war stars of the profession who are now in the Services, but being stationed in or near London, can get short leave for the occasion.

Then, of course, there are also the musicians in the night clubs and Palais de Danse.

Plenty of these places are still going strong. I hope to tell you about them and their bands in my next article.

## GUIDE TO THE WEST END BANDS

### BERKELEY HOTEL,

Piccadilly.

AL COLLINS and His Band—Al Collins (violin); Norman Payne (tpt.); Ronnie Cubertini (drums); and alto sax. and piano. Dancing: 8 p.m. to approx. 12.30 a.m. week-days.

### DORCHESTER HOTEL,

Park Lane.

LEW STONE and His Band—Harry Varley (alto, clarinet); Sid Maniken (tenor); Lew Stone (Novachord); Jack Penn (piano); Sid Jacobsen (gitar.); Cecil Cooper (bass); Jack Jacobsen (drums). Dancing: 8.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. week-days.

### GROSVENOR HOUSE,

Park Lane.

BILLY MAYERL and His Orchestra—Ralph Wilson, Teddy Prince (altos); Eddie Farge (tenor, accordion); George Radcliffe, Tommy Porter (tpts.); Al Roach (tmb.); Billy Mayerl, Geo. Middleton (pianos); Harry Martin (bass); Reggie Mills (drums). Dancing: 8.30 p.m. to 12.30 a.m. week-days. Tea Dance (to five-piece contingent from above full band): 4.30 to 6.30 p.m. daily (including Sundays).

### HATCHETT'S RESTAURANT,

Piccadilly.

HATCHETT'S SWING TETTE—directed by Dennis Noonan (saxes), clarinet; remainder of personnel unsettled. Stephane Grappelly (vln.) now on sick leave, but expected to return shortly. Dancing: 8.30 p.m. to approx. 12.45 a.m. week-days.

### HUNGARIA RESTAURANT,

Piccadilly Circus.

OSCAR GRASSO and His Orchestra—Oscar Grasso (violin); Bill Parkins (piano); Bill Tempary (gitar.); Bill Smiles (bass). Also—ALEXANDER ROSSI'S Gipsy Band. Dancing: 9.15 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. week-days; Sundays until midnight.

### KEMPINSKI RESTAURANT,

Regent Street.

GEORGE CASTELLY (piano). Dancing: 9 p.m. to midnight week-days.

### LANDSOWNE RESTAURANT,

Berkeley Square.

TIM CLAYTON and His Orchestra—Barney Lubell, Tom Lannon, Titch Poster (saxes); Arthur Lousley (tpt.); Len Patey (violin, accordion); Alec Blackford (piano); Harry Wilson (bass); Alfie Grey (drums); Barry Gray (vocalist). Dancing: 8.30 p.m. to 1 a.m. week-days; Sundays to midnight.

### MARTINEZ RESTAURANT,

Swallow Street, Regent Street.

EDMONDO ROSS' CUBAN BOYS—Dennis Walton (tpt.); Roberto Ingles (piano); Frank Deniz (gitar.); Leslie Thompson (bass); Edmondo Ross (vocalist, drums); Jimmy Cummings (maracas, etc.). Dancing: 7.30 to 11.45 p.m. week-days.

### MAY FAIR HOTEL,

Berkeley Street.

JACK JACKSON and His Orchestra—E. O. Pogson (saxes); Jack Jackson (tpt.); Jack Bentley (tmb.); Fred Aspinall (piano); Ben Edwards

(drums). Remainder of personnel (11 in all) unsettled. Dancing: 9 p.m. to 1.30 a.m. week-days.

### MEURICE HOTEL (QUAGS.),

Bury Street, St. James's.

REG PURSGLOVE and His Orchestra—Reg Pursglove (violin); Harry Porter (tenor, violin); Cyril Juchau (piano); Bobby Campbell (accordion). Dancing: 8 p.m. to midnight daily (including Sundays).

### MONTARNASSE RESTAURANT,

Jermyn Street, Piccadilly Circus.

JOHNNY CLAES and His Orchestra (presented by Charles André)—Johnny Claes (tpt.); Jerry Alvarez, George Harrison (altos); Spike Hornett, Reg Dare (tenors); Tommy Pollard (piano); Charlie Short (bass); Carlo Krahmer (drums). Vocalist: Benny Lea.

CHARLES ANDRE'S Tango Band—Ronnie Spinnelly, Denasso Rohero, Al de Lusch (violins); C. Snoeck (accordion, bandoneon); Teddy Jones (tpt.); Mark Denford (piano); Alfred Verzal (bass). Dancing: 4 to 6 p.m. (Saturdays and Sundays to 7 p.m.) and 8 p.m. to 1 a.m. daily (including Sundays).

### ODDENINO'S RESTAURANT,

Regent Street.

TOMMY ROGAN and His Orchestra

—Teddy Butler (sax., clarinet); Jack Harris (tpt., sax., violin); Tommy Rogan (piano); Nat Altan (bass); Jerry Da Costa (drums). Dancing: 8 p.m. to midnight week-days; Sundays to 11 p.m.

### PICCADILLY HOTEL,

Piccadilly.

NORMAN COLE and His Orchestra—Norman Cole (violin); Jack Scott, Teddy Prince, Gill Port (saxes); Harry White (piano); Sam Molineaux (bass); Doug. Howson (drums). Dancing: 4.30 to 6 p.m. (Sundays to 7 p.m.) and 8 to 11 p.m. daily, including Sundays.

### QUEEN'S BRASSERIE,

Leicester Square.

DAVID JAVA and His Orchestra—David Java (fiddle); Arthur Lewis (piano); Syd Luder (gitar.); Pete Stuteley (bass); Reggie Manus (accordion). Dancing: 8.30 to 11.30 p.m. week-days.

### SAVOY HOTEL,

Strand.

CARROLL GIBBONS and His Orchestra—Billy Apps (sax.), Frenchie Sartell (tpt.); Abe Walton (tmb., accordion, piano); Carroll Gibbons (piano); Sid Kreeger (piano); Jack Evetts (bass). Dancing from approx. 9.40 p.m. to 12.30 a.m.

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## LETTERS

MR. DENIS PRESTON, in his recent broadcast on Jazz Fiddlers, played Szigeti's recording of the last movement of Bach's *Unaccompanied Violin Sonata in G Minor*, in order to show that Venuiti has done nothing that had not previously been covered by the classical musicians.

One gathers that Mr. Preston's real aim was to impress the humble jazz fan with his catholicity. Profound knowledge of the works of the Masters, etc., and in this no doubt, he succeeded.

But if he had cared to play the first movement of this same Sonata, it would have been revealed that Bach wrote in many three-note chords, which Szigeti, despite his glorious classical technique, could play only with extreme difficulty, and was, in fact, unable to sound smoothly; whereas Venuiti, in the great *Tempo di Barrell* and many other records improvises four-note chord solos with complete fluency. Which proves not that Venuiti is greater than Bach, nor that Venuiti is greater than Szigeti, nor anything else, but merely serves to demonstrate the extreme futility of Mr. Preston's line of argument—one can scarcely call it reasoning.

C. WILFORD SMITH.

London, W.C.1.

DON'T you think that the result of the recent Ellington record competition is disappointing? Out of the twelve sides chosen, no fewer than seven are from approximately fourteen sides (excluding commercials) issued by H.M.V.s since June, 1940, a result which definitely ignores the masterpieces of the previous fourteen years.

Is the explanation that Ellington has improved so in the last year or two? I don't think so. Perhaps it is that the majority of the competition entrants were readers who have only recently taken an active interest in jazz; if such is the case, the result is gratifying, but they could be well advised to study his earlier recordings.

For example, no one who was acquainted with Cootie's early concerto *Echoes of Harlem*, issued on Brunswick, would surely not allow the recent *Concerto for Cootie* to take pride of place.

I am not supporting anyone's theories of the "decline of Ellington," but I would like to point out that for some reason or other the records that appear to be the most popular are surely not necessarily the better compositions.

May I venture to suggest the following twelve recordings as being fairly representative of the Duke's twelve best English issues—

- Mood Indigo (Bruno).
- Creole-Love Call (H.M.V.).
- Black and Tan Fantasy (H.M.V.).
- Misty Morning (Parlo).
- Echoes of Harlem (Bruno).
- East St. Louis Toodle-oo (Bruno).
- Washington Wobble (H.M.V.).
- Rocking in Rhythm (Parlo).
- The Mooche (Bruno).
- In a Jam (Voc.).
- Across the Track Blues (H.M.V.).
- Sweet Chariot (Parlo).

(Private) L. V. Blight.

The Essex Regt.



# BRAND'S ESSENCE

THIS is where I take a leaf out of the book of my incredible colleague on page eight, by scooping him on one of his own stories.

Gracing this page is a photo of **JOAN ALEXIS**, a better picture, I feel, than the one of her he published several weeks back, in the days when the Accordion Page occasionally mentioned accordions.

If you can think back that far, you may recall that he referred to her as "a sailor who hates the sea"—in other words, an accomplished accordionist who hates playing the accordion because her ambitions lie in the direction of stage and screen.

I can now round off the story by announcing that yesterday (Thursday) she opened as lead in Alfred Esdaile's new Prince of Wales's show, "Non-Stop Varieties," where she sings and dances to her heart's (and the audience's) content.

Maestro **JACK LEON** thinks very highly of this young lady (as do all who've seen her), and, if I may digress violently, told me that the new clothes-ratting is not likely to worry them much at the Prince of Wales.

As if I ever thought it would.

Overheard during a lull in a recent Jam Session at the No. 1 Rhythm Club:

"Of course, I like Charlie Kunz."

And having laughed that one off (I assume that you also enjoy page eight, and can there-

by  
**PAT BRAND**

fore laugh at anything), let me step in with advance news of a forthcoming charity show.

The title is "Laugh It Off!" which may read a little ironic when you realise that the show is in aid of the Hampstead and St. Pancras Air Raid Distress Fund. But it typifies the attitude of those for whom this charity is being organised—and it certainly typifies the programme, to which a host of West End stars are giving their services, on June 20 and 21 at 6.30 p.m., at the Phoenix Theatre, W.

Prominent among them will be charming **JULIE DAWN**, whom the producers have lost no time in starring in a high-spot Argentinean number ideally suited to her voice and personality.

High-spot, too, for the swing fans will be the inclusion of the band from **JIG'S CLUB**, whom **ALEC WARD** has generously given permission to appear.

Jig's, of course, is the Mecca of the coloured musician—a name which now evokes a bitter nostalgia in the host of American stars who made this their rendezvous in happier times. Ellington, Waller, Armstrong, Calloway, Mills Brothers.

Alec knows them all, and they all know Alec; and few are the top-liners who have not gone

to town on that piano or taken up their instruments to jam in with the resident boys.

On the stage at the Phoenix, bringing down the curtain, both metaphorically and literally at the finale, will be Cyril Blake, leading on trumpet; Lauderie Caton (guitar); Errol Barrow (piano); and Clinton Maxwell (drums).

And in front on one of these nights will certainly be myself.

Eighteen months ago, on a wet February evening, I went out on my first interview as a member of the "M.M." staff. I had, in fact, joined the staff only two hours before.

It was, you can imagine, a momentous undertaking, and, full of zeal, I hid myself across to Bethnal Green (a district hitherto unknown to me) for the purpose of asking two young men how it felt to be the first "M.M." discoveries to broadcast in "Youth Takes a Bow."

They were **HERBERT** and **HARRY STOKES**, violinist and guitarist respectively—and I hope I succeeded in persuading them that I was anything but the raw amateur I really was.

Time has passed, and both the boys and I have (we hope) progressed since then. They, at any rate, showed what they could do the other day—last Wednesday, to be precise, at 10 p.m., when they were featured in "Amateur Swing Half-Hour" in the Radio Rhythm Club programme.

You will understand my listening to them with more than usual interest.

News that former Doncaster leader, now Gunner, **HARRY WARD** and his trumpet are still together will come as a very pleasant surprise to those of you who read in the Press that he had been killed in action.

True, he's had it pretty rough since being called up in September, '39. He got knocked about a good deal at Dunkirk and has spent the whole of the time since then in hospital.

In fact, he'd only just come round from a bad bout of concussion when he wrote to inform me he was still alive and kicking and longing to hear from all his old pals. (Yes, I'll forward letters.)

Now well on the way to recovery, he's been asked to run the hospital concert party and to start a band—for which any instruments, however old or patched up, would be tremendously acceptable, as he's longing to get back into the swing again.

So much for Harry. As for his trumpet, it was the only thing he brought back with him from France.

Unable to bear the thought of leaving it behind for Nazi lips to play upon (or, more likely, to melt down and use in some weapon of death), he tied it round his neck and made his get-away through the hell of that evacuation.

Even so, it now bears the mark of a bullet that went clean through the bell.

There are many ways of getting around to gigs, from travelling in luxury coaches and air liners à la Hylton to balancing a double bass on a push-bike (as a pal of mine used to) and running alongside it.

But when former Tommy Arnold and Wally Dewar drummer **FREDDIE LOW** goes out on a gig these days, he usually travels by drifter!

Now a member of the Royal Marine Band stationed on an island somewhere off these shores, the small dance combination consists of three saxes,



**JOAN ALEXIS**  
Prince of Wales' star

trumpet, piano and drums; and their job is to entertain the troops whilst they are ashore.

The shore, and the nearest dance hall, being many miles away, Freddie and the boys have therefore to make a two-hour sea-trip—though whether any part of this time is spent in catching fish he does not tell me.

In between times, Freddie is finding things rather slow, and would appreciate any news from any of his friends in the profession, especially former "M.M." Brum correspondent, now Corporal **SONNY ROSE**, R.A.O.C.

I'll forward letters.

Aiding Bexleyheath towards raising £100,000 over and above the £250,000 they were aiming at in the Borough's War Weapons Week, was the **BEXLEY A.F.S. DANCE ORCHESTRA**.

Playing at the Ball held on May 29 were: M. W. Allnutt (piano); F. Langham and R. Stanley (violins); F. C. Deacon (alto and baritone); E. Baker (tenor and violin); C. Buck and R. O. Barker (tpts.); J. Terry (accordion); W. Shipway (bass); A. Lewis (mandoline banjo); and C. Simpson (drums); with S. G. Newson, as usual, conducting.

At the end of the evening they were congratulated by the Mayor on an excellent performance, and it certainly looks as though these fire-fighting boys are acquiring an enviable reputation in the district.

## LETTERS

**MAY** I crave a few lines of your valuable space to express my humble appreciation of James Godbolt's article. Not since Len Hibbs' old *Rhythm* reviews have we read such a fearless and brilliant exposition of the bigotry of the "Jazz is Dead" school.

As I wrote in the "M.M." of 25/1/41, "By all means let us search for the true and sincere in Jazz, but let us not go to the extreme of automatically condemning a great Jazz artist merely because he or she happens to become a commercial success."

Surely the crux of the matter is that whilst the disciples of modern Jazz have the most proof and respect for the music of the Golden Age, the die-harders reveal only their cheap snobbery in their fantastic generalisations.

Thanks again for a perfect article!  
V. L. Bellerby.

Stoke-on-Trent.

**I** HAVE received quite a large number of inquiries for a complete list of the records used in my broadcast on "Paul Whiteman's Rhythm Boys" last Thursday (June 5, Home Service, 4.40-5.0) and wonder if you can spare a few lines to print it.

It might be of general interest, as I know of no reference book which lists the Rhythm Boys' recordings, and, although this covers only a few of them, I think it is pretty representative.

Rhythm Boys: Mississippi Mud and I Left My Sugar Standing in the Rain; Ain't She Sweet? and Sweet L'il, H.M.V. B4424. Rhythm King; My Suppressed Desire, Col. 5240; Louise; So the Bluebirds and the Blackbirds Got Together, Col. 5457.

With Whiteman's Orchestra: Get Out and Get Under the Moon; Constantinople, Col. 4951. That's My Weakness Now, Col. 5006; Happy Feet, Col. CB86.

With Duke Ellington's Orchestra: Three Little Words, H.M.V. B5945. Roy Plomley.

Wimbledon, S.W.19.

# Classics of Jazz

No.28—"Arkansas"/"Sugar Step," by Fred Elizalde and his Hot Music (Brunswick 02332).

By Bill Elliott

## PERSONNEL:

Fred Elizalde (piano); Adrian Rollini (bass sax and hot fountain-pen); Bobby Davis (alto and clarinet); Chelsea Quealey (trumpet); Len Fillis (banjo and guitar); Ronnie Gubertini (drums).

**I**F you want to find out something about Fred Elizalde and the history of his Hot Music, I'm going to refer you to the excellent article in the MELODY MAKER some weeks back.

You'll get a very good idea from there, and I believe another article about Fred and the band is scheduled in the near future.

Having got that off my chest, I'm free to discuss this week's Classic, one of the very best recorded by this group. It's a grand performance in every way, especially *Sugar Step*, one of Elizalde's own compositions.

## 1928 GENIUS

I like the arrangement and the neat way the leads-in are arranged so that the soloists take over from one another perfectly. (Don't forget, when you hear this disc, that it was recorded in England in 1928.)

Rollini takes the intro. and opening bars, and then hands over to Quealey and Davis, who share the first chorus. Full marks to Davis for his smashing alto work.

Len Fillis comes into the limelight next with a few bars of pleasant-sounding guitar which serve as an effective lead to Elizalde's solo.

Fred's piano-playing here is typical Elizalde, full of ingenious phrasing and (for those days) unusual harmonies.

I like the next lead-in to Chelsea Quealey, who, starting with a Cooty-like growl, plays some good muted trumpet.

A few bars from clarinet and we go right into Rollini's chorus. This is one of his very best, as he plays some astounding notes and his break in the middle bars of the last ensemble has to be heard to be believed.

*Arkansas* is taken at faster tempo, and chief honours go to Quealey who, playing a Nichols-cum-Bix trumpet, takes a glorious first chorus.

## EVERY BAR A GEM

Davis follows on alto, and then Rollini gets things going by producing his hot fountain-pen and playing a duet with Len Fillis, this forming a passage that you can play over and over again and still enjoy.

Elizalde takes his usual solo, displaying his remarkable technique and piano tone, and full marks here must also be given to Ronnie Gubertini for his fine drumming.

Rollini leads the last ensemble to finish a record that has never had the recognition it deserved, although in my opinion there is something to listen for in every bar.

This is the last of the batch of Golden Age records and the end of my excursion into the past—for a time at least. I shall be returning to Bix and Co. in the future, but for next few weeks I shall (with the possible exception of next week) be dealing with some rather exciting new records that are on their way.

# WHO'S WHO IN JAZZ

(CONTINUED)

**TRUMBAUER, FRANK** W. C. melody saxophonist; the only artist ever to have achieved fame on this instrument. Led his own groups on and off from 1917, mostly in St. Louis, also playing with the Benson Orch. of Chicago, the Cotton Pickers (under Red Nichols), and early records of the Mound City Blue Blowers. Joined Jean Goldkette's Band in Detroit, and became famous for his association with Bix in that band, and numerous records they made both with Goldkette and with contingents from the band or pick-up groups under Trumbauer's own name or as the Chicago Loopers, Sioux City Six, Eddie Lang's Orch., etc. Played first recorded hot bassoon solo with Joe Venuti (Parlo. R531). After recording regularly under his own name to 1930 (all on Parlo.), he began to fade from the jazz limelight, using more commercial groups for records on Columbia (1932-33) and Brunswick (1934 and 1936-37), and working with Paul Whiteman. Formed "Three T's" Band with the Teagarden brothers at Hickory House, late 1936, recording for H.M.V. Later toured with groups of his own, with indifferent success, making numerous records for Varsity, 1939-40. Retired mid-1940 to take civil aeronautics post in Kansas City. Though lately regarded more as a technician than a hot musician, Trumbauer had a great influence on the trend of early white jazz, and his best records, such as *Singin' The Blues*, *Three Blind Mice*, *Wingin' And Twistin'*, *For No Reason At All*, *In C*, *Way Down Yonder In New Orleans*, are still considered classics of jazz. Most of the best were his own compositions; in later recordings he was also featured as vocalist.

**WALLER, THOMAS "FATS"**: C. pianist; b. New York City 1904, son of a minister. Was supposed to study for ministry himself, but ran away from home; formed his own band in 1921, with little success, later working with Fletcher Henderson and Erskine Tate in Chicago. Took part in some of the earliest mixed band recordings ever made, with Ross Gorman; later recorded with Henderson, 1926-27; with Sara Martin and other blues singers, as accompanist; made many organ solos

for Victor, 1926-27, and sessions with Morris Hot Babes and Louisiana Sugar Babes, 1927; also numerous piano solos, duets and small band discs up to 1931; sessions with McKinney's Cotton Pickers, 1929. During these years he played organ and piano in theatres, toured with singers, and worked various comparatively obscure jobs. Made his first vocal records in 1931, four sides with Ted Lewis and two with Jack Teagarden, on Columbia. Went to Paris, 1932, and teamed up briefly with Spencer Williams, but returned home suddenly; soon after began to feature his singing more, and started recording regularly for Victor in 1934, having remained with this company ever since, making hundreds of records with a six-piece combination. His comedy jive singing made him nationally popular, and he appeared in films and theatres, often using a full-sized band, first directed by Charlie Turner, later by Don Donaldson. Came to England as solo act summer 1938, recording six band sides and several organ solos for H.M.V., and touring the country successfully. Since return home continued recording regularly, also making an Eddie Condon session for Commodore and Lee Wiley organ accompaniment for Liberty under pseudonym of Maurice. Creator of a unique clean-cut piano style which he developed as a pupil of James P. Johnson. Waller is best known to the public for his exuberant personality; though more of an entertainer than a real jazz singer, he has a permanent place in jazz history as a pianist and as one of the few musicians to have played swing music successfully on the organ; also as composer, with lyricist Andy Razaf, of *Ain't Misbehavin'*, *Honeysuckle Rose*, *I'm Crazy 'Bout My Baby*, and scores of other hit songs.

**WASHINGTON, JACK**: C. baritone sax; b. Kansas City, 1907. Started on soprano sax at 13, went direct to Benny Moten's Band on leaving school, remaining with him until Moten's death; then stayed with similar group under Count Basie, came to N.Y. with him, and has remained with him ever since, playing mostly baritone, also alto and clarinet. Had solos on *Somebody Stole My Gal* and a few other sides. Wife, Maybelle, is composer of *It's Torture* and other tunes featured by Basie.

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# The Commercial Tune Is Not To Be Despised

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## says "MIKE"

whoever it is who devises the arrangement, is left with nothing to do but strew a lot of figures (or riffs) about the place and hope that a dynamic climax will suffice to give an impression of form and movement.

Therefore, I ask all budding arrangers and/or composers to concentrate on tunes. There are dozens of very good tunes which will bear new treatment, which will give the soloists something to work on.

Some of the pleasantest arrangements in recent years have been revivals; new orchestrations and treatments of tunes by Gershwin and Berlin. They are successful arrangements because the interest is primarily melodic.

And the best in jazz has always been melodic; which is why all the great soloists have been—like Bix, for instance—artists who create tunes on the base of other tunes.

### "POPS"

If you have any objection to arranging erstwhile commercial tunes, there are others. I don't see why you should have any objection frankly, as the best popular tunes conform to the pattern of what has proved to be some of the best jazz. Or maybe it's vice-versa.

Whichever it is, the good "pop" is not to be despised. You may say that a tune like *Blue Skies* is merely commercial, and not jazz, but it would still have made a good tune if it had had no lyric and had been recorded once by some "hot" band instead of having swept across five continents.

A tune like *Tea For Two*,

which was originally from a musical comedy, is every bit as good and musically as satisfactory as many a number that aims (or claims) to be sophisticated and "swing."

No, the commercial tune is not to be despised—provided, however, that it is *per se* a good tune. I make this provision because I don't want you to run away with the idea that those dreadful ballads about organs in valleys should ever be played again once they have run their natural course.

Let the Rhythm Club arrangers, therefore, concentrate on treatments of good tunes; and instead of the weekly jam session let the players get together and get a little music into their systems.

### SAFETY VALVE

Let them—if there are no local arrangers—take down the small-band scores of the Chocolate Dandies, and sink their own, rather dull personalities in the playing of music by people who matter.

I've no doubt that jam-sessions are an excellent safety-valve. But I consider that the discipline of playing other people's music is of more use to the amateur at the Rhythm Club stage of his career than any amount of Self-Expression through the medium of the 12-bar blues.

That can wait until later.

year-old Ellis Elison gave a recital on "New Personalities in Swing," followed by a swing session by Jack Duart's Swing Guitar Trio, later joined by Larry Cohen (alto). Len Kane, entertainment and recruiting officer, introduced Adelaide Hall, Gerry Moore and Max Geldray. The evening finished with Adelaide Hall accepting the hon. presidency, and Max Geldray, Jerry Dawson and Herman Mamelock becoming vice-presidents. The Jam Session included Gerry Moore (piano), Ralph Collins (cornet), Larry Cohen (alto), Jack Duart (tpt., gtr.), Terry Usher (gtr.), and Roy Etherington (gtr.). Meetings will take place every Tuesday and Friday at 7.45 p.m.

## Rhythm Clubs

No. 1. Next Sunday at the No. 1 Club Bill Elliott will give a recital with the title "Religious Meeting," and there will be a Jam Session with Lauderie Caton (guitar), Willy Wilson (piano), Andre Goersch (tenor and clar.), Hal Smith (tpt.), and other West End stars. The following week will have a really sensational attraction, details of which will be found on the front page.

No. 2. Last week's recital at the Winchmore Hill Rhythm Club meeting was on "Skin Wallopers," given by Bryant Cornell, on which a competition was afterwards based. The Jam Session comprised Bryant Cornell (piano), Derek Cox and Norman Whiting (clar.), Wally Harding and Den Harris (saxes), Ken Whiting (tpt.), Reg Norton (violin), and Jack Grigson (drums). Next meeting will include Stanley A. Wright's talk on Red Nichols.

No. 22. The June 5 meeting of the Notts Swing Club opened with Albert Brown's recital on his "Pick in Jazz," followed by a Rhythm Bee arranged and compered by Bill Kennill. The officials of the club are Robert M. Taylor (secretary), Marjorie Pepper (treasurer), Bill Kennill (programme arranger), Ken Allsop (record librarian), Bill Ingle (library librarian), and Ivy Pinder (committee's secretary).

No. 24. The first meeting of the Southport Rhythm Club was on June 7 at the Temperance Institute, London Street, when a recital was given by Jack Turnbull, and a Jazz Knowledge competition was held. Next meeting will be at the same place at 2.30 p.m. on June 14, when Jack Turnbull will give a recital on Count Basie, and M. T. Horwich will present discs featuring "The Hawk." Instrumentalists especially are invited to participate in the Jam Session, and inquiries should be sent to Jack Turnbull at 7, Bolton Road, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

No. 41. The June 8 meeting of the Leeds Rhythm Club comprised the second in Jack Field's series "The History of Jazz," piano solos by Jeff Chappell and Mr. Fawcett, and a record raffle won by D. Highton. On June 12 the club was invited to visit the Dewsbury Rhythm Club. On June 15, at 2.30 p.m., the club meets again, when George Bolam will present "British and American Jazz—A Comparison."

No. 65. The Salford Rhythm Club opened with over 100 people at the Lesser Hall, Higher Broughton Assembly Rooms, Salford, 7. Fifteen-

### YOUNG ARRANGERS

I am still concerned with the future of the young arranger—and, if he exists, of the young composer of jazz.

Composition of jazz is at present of a lower standard than it has ever been since the days of *Alexander's Ragtime Band*. Take a look round in the current catalogues; not the gramophone catalogues, but the publishers'.

The five-piece brass section, the four saxes have become a standard combination; there are very few printed orchestrations nowadays which do not cater for what was once an exceptional number of brass and reeds.

This is all to the good. But take a close look, also, at the material, as opposed to the manner of these orchestrations.

I heard a broadcast the other day, by the R.A.F. Band, which broadcasts to the German Luftwaffe. The programme consisted of a number of extremely well-played "swing" tunes. The individual solos were good; the ensemble fine. And I do not doubt that the Luftwaffe—for whom the programme was intended, after all—were as entertained as they were meant to be.

### "STRANGE MUSIC"

I listened to the broadcast, however, as a lover of this strange music called Jazz. And I had one big criticism to make: that no matter what the tunes are called, modern jazz composition is a drearily monotonous business.

It seemed to me that the 12-bar blues phrase ought really to be dropped for a couple of years.

Fully 75 per cent. of the tunes this R.A.F. band played were nothing more than a collection of riffs on the basis of this well-worn formula.

I'm not blaming the band, mind you. I'm blaming the circumstances which give a first-class band so little choice of material.

Certainly, to base a "composition" on the 12-bar blues is a great help to soloists; but even so, I feel it is time that the soloists were given something a little more substantial to bite on.

The continual choice of the 12-bar blues results in one thing: absence of tune. The blues is not a tune, so that when the ensemble passages arise, the "arranger" or

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# PULL-UP FOR CARMEN

**T**O the accompaniment of the exotic rhythm of the rumba, and with the highest blood-pressure yet achieved by any journalist in this office, I bring you this week's personality in paragraph in the shape—and what a shape!—of **CARMEN MIRANDA**, the "Brazilian Bombshell" of 20th Century-Fox Pictures.

Come a little closer, bashful reader, and let's get really acquainted. Born in Portugal, this fascinating, supercharged example of feminine pulchritude became a singer at the age of fifteen, and from her first appearance on the air waves of distant Rio de Janeiro, extra radio engineers had to be employed to keep the local wireless transmitters at an even temperature.

In the recording studios, her incandescent personality melted more waxes than a tropical heat-wave, and after three hundred records had finally preserved her sultry vocalising for unsuspecting posterity, Hollywood issued its first invitation to stardom in the form of a contract to play in a new musical film with Don ("Heart Throb") Ameche and blonde menace Betty Grable.

The result has since sizzled across every cinema screen in the country, and for the nominal price of 9d., plus tax, the massed males of England received their first inoculation of life as it is apparently lived "Down Argentina Way."

The filming of this topical and tropical epic was, however, not accomplished without difficulty.

With New York literally "hip"—notified by her undulating contours, and with the current debutantes from the "Upper Four Hundred" breaking out in Miranda make-ups, including heavy costume jewellery and an apparently unrationed depth of lip rouge, the lady of the moment naturally found it hard to leave her new-found playground on the pavements of Park Avenue.

As a compromise, the scenes for the film in which she starred were finally shot in the 20th Century-Fox studio on Tenth Avenue, the final "takes" being rushed back to celluloid city immediately afterwards.

With a new line in diplomacy that would have done credit to a Foreign Minister, producer Irving Cummings solved all transport problems by announc-

ing that her second vehicle, titled *That Night In Rio*, should deal with her home country, and, with this as the bait, finally lured her away from the big city.

With a command of the English language that is expressive rather than adequate, Carmen takes this second picture in her elegant stride, and, backed by her own orchestra, the famous "Bando da Lua," sings several rumba melodies, including *I Yi, Yi Yi Yi, Chica Chica Boom Chic*, and *Boa Noite*, that should certainly result in a fresh outbreak of maracas amongst leading West End dance bands in the near future.

For film-fans and bachelor readers, I can add that the lady is still as yet unmarried.

She doesn't smoke, doesn't drink, and is 5 ft. 2 in. tall. In fact, just the girl to take to the next party, providing you happen to possess a suit of asbestos.

I beg your pardon?

What is that peculiar noise you can hear?

Why, that must be the "Essence" man gnashing his teeth on page six.

If you walk past the Spider's Web Roadhouse on the Barnet By-pass, you cannot help but see the café called the *Busy Bee*.

Possibly from the outside you may not be impressed, but once seated at one of the small tables inside you will find that this unassuming pull-up for Carmen possesses a distinct attraction in the person of its twenty-six-year-old bearded accordion-playing manager **JOE CARTER**.

A young musician whose technique on the instrument is only equalled by his ability with a spanner, he is probably the only discovery of talent-scout Carroll Levis who refused to be discovered.

When Levis heard him playing the accordion one night in the café for the amusement of the patrons he suggested that Joe should enter the profession under his guidance.

But, to the astonishment of all and sundry, local boy declined to make good, and decided to remain in his present job, keeping music only for his leisure hours.

No, my cynical reader, in this case it was not just another art



CARMEN MIRANDA

for art's sake amateur scorning the unattainable.

If Joe had accepted the offer, I have no doubt he would have made good in the business, for not only does he play accordion, piano, clarinet, saxophone, xylophone and vibraphone, but he is also no mean performer on the organ, and already he has acquired a very enviable reputation in and around Watford.

If you are ever over that way, drop in for a coffee plus a little harmony, and hear for yourself that, even in these days of commercialism, many a musician's heart still beats beneath a mechanic's overalls.

West End accordionist **JIMMIE ROBERTSON** leaves the Queen's Brasserie, Leicester Square, to join the E.N.S.A.

## Personalities in Paragraph by ERIC WINSTONE

banner under genial Chris Morris, the man responsible for providing entertainment for the many isolated units not catered for by the usual concert parties sent out from Drury Lane.

If you can realise what it must be like to be cut off from all such amenities as cinemas, dance halls, etc., including even the village "local," for weeks on end, you will probably appreciate the kind of welcome Jimmie is going to get the minute he shows that cheery grin of his inside any camp he visits.

Actually, of course, his pleasant easy-to-get-along-with personality makes him an ideal man for the job, and from what I know of him, he will probably enjoy every minute of it just as much as the audience.

Which is, after all, probably one of the secrets of his undoubted success in the profession.

Still on her way to the top, eighteen-year-old Yorkshire accordionist **SONIA PERRIS**, who played her way into this page some time ago, again gets full marks for her tasteful accordionising in last Monday's air programme titled *Varie-Tea*.

Apart from her own solo efforts, apparently this young lady is also quite well known amongst local swing fans by reason of her ability to sit in with the various bands in the district and jam with the best of them.

Proving, of course, that when it comes to getting in the groove there is no such thing as a weaker sex.

With swing organist **ROBIN RICHMOND** leaving Hammer-smith Palais to concentrate on his many West End connections, trumpet star **JACK HAMILTON** takes over the stand in co-operation with vibraphone ace **ROY MARSH** from to-day on, with a new six-piece combination under the lengthy but explicit heading of Jack Hamilton and Roy Marsh and Their Music.

With Hamilton and Marsh on their respective instruments, the remainder of the line-up consists of Tony Mervin (tenor saxophone and vocalist), Tommy Pollard (piano), Charlie Short (bass), and Lou Galkin on drums, while, with such an unorthodox combination, the band can be expected to do its best to prove the truth of "Mike's" recent statement that the best jazz is still to be found in the popular dance hall of the people.

"Chicago Style." The competition was won by B. K. Faker, and the concluding Jam Session included L. Hughes (tpt.), T. Bailey (alto), D. Ballantine (clar.), H. Wilkinson and J. Sharrard (piano), and A. Hill (drums). Next meeting June 16, at the Park Hotel, Herringthorpe (where all future meetings will occur), at 7.30 p.m., and will include J. Sharrard's talk on "Quartets and Quintets."

No. 167. The newly formed Newcastle Swing Club meets every Friday in the Assembly Rooms, Merial Street, and the presidency of the club was accepted on May 30 by Gerry Moore, who enlivened the meeting with his greatly appreciated piano solos. All interested should write to the secretary, H. Bamford, 4, Vale Street, Silverdale.

N.W.3 Group. There will be a special meeting of the N.W.3 Group on June 13, at 7.30 p.m., at the "King of Bohemia," Hampstead High Street, when two record recitals will be given by Jim Holloway and Bill Elliott, the latter featuring more of his "Classics of Jazz." Willie Wilson, home on leave from the R.A.F., will feature his drumming in the Jam Session with Andre Goers, and the winner of last meeting's Riddle Rhythm will be presented with his prize. Records of Eddie Malden's "Bag o' Nails" band will also be heard.

Les Curzon, youthful hot trumpet at Queen's Hotel, Southport, with Harold Stevenson, is now studying at Liverpool University to become an officer in the Merchant Navy.

## NEWS FROM THE RHYTHM CLUBS

Jazz." The evening ended with a Jam Session directed by Tom O'Callaghan. Jazz enthusiasts, and especially musicians, invited to meetings every Tuesday at Herbert's School of Dancing, 738, Barking Road, near the Boleyn, East Ham.

No. 152. On June 8, the High Wycombe Rhythm Club held its last meeting of the season before closing for the summer. Max Jones (hon. treasurer) gave a talk entitled "The Female of the Species," followed by a record auction, and the evening closed with a farewell Jam Session featuring George Oliver (alto and clar.), Les Wilson (bari.), Tim Holden (trump.), Ron Cloke (cornet), Maurice Gooddear (electric gitar.), Doug Bell (piano), Ron Clark and Paddy Fleming (drums), and Bob Lord (bass). The Club reopens in September.

No. 162. Two recitals given to the Ashton-under-Lyne Rhythm Club on June 1 were by E. Bardsley on "Chicago Style" and C. Harrison on "The Trumpet." The June 8 meeting included a Jam Session by Eric Salthouse (tenor), R. Mott (alto), J. Peake (clar.), and A. Hall (drums). The Club numbers 50 members already, and is steadily growing, meeting every Sunday at 7 p.m. at "The Ladies' Conservative Hut," Oldham Road, Waterloo, Ashton-under-Lyne. All communications to G. A. Davies, c/o Rex Hoult, Ltd., 215, Stamford Street, Ashton-under-Lyne.

No. 166. On June 4, the Rotherham Rhythm Club met at the Brecks Hotel to hear D. Ballantine's talk on

No. 9. At last Friday's meeting of the Erdington (Birmingham) Rhythm Club, Dave Mortimer, of 260, Stechford Road, Alum Rock, Birmingham, 8, was placed in charge, and all future communications should be sent to him. Cliff Brown gave a recital on small American recording outfits, and the meeting ended with a Jam Session. Meetings continue every Friday at 7.30 p.m. at the Church House, Erdington High Street.

No. 112. The recently formed Batley Mill Lane Youth Group Rhythm Club first met on June 9, when R. Wraith gave a review of the month's swing discs, and future meetings include two more recitals by him—"How I Came to Jazz" and "What to Look For in Jazz" (June 16 and 23); "The Second H.M.V. Swing Album," by Jack Wood (June 30); and "The History of Jazz—Part One," by R. Wraith (July 7). Admission 3d. per meeting, going entirely to building Mike's "dream record library." Contact R. Wraith at 3, Jack Lane, Hanging Heaton, Batley, Yorks.

No. 114. The June 8 meeting of the Bradford Rhythm Circle opened with Alan Holgate's recital on "Tommy Dorsey," followed by guest artiste Harold Firth on swing accordion accompanied by piano and drums. Alan Holgate then played, and opened a discussion of Shaw's "Concerto for Clarinet." L. Jones continued his "Trumpet in Jazz" recital, and the meeting ended with a Jam Session. Alan Holgate has also introduced a novel record-lending library, free to all members, and passes the idea on to other Rhythm Clubs.

No. 150. At the June 3 meeting of the Ilford and East Ham Rhythm Club, Jack Surridge gave a recital on Lionel Hampton, and Harry Moulton presented his "Greatest Kicks in

## TRUMPET TIPS

**O**NE of the bad old tricks of the old-time cornet soloist which is sometimes imitated by the dance-band player is that of "sharpening up" a little bit for solo work.

The idea was that by playing a fraction sharp the soloist sounded more "brilliant" than the rest of the band.

This is true to a certain extent, but when being backed by a brass team it is dangerous, except in the most unusual circumstances.

Moreover, solo playing in a dance band consists of 32 bars (at most) at a time, and then back to ensemble work—there is no time for incessant re-tuning.

It is a bad practice and can lead to atrocious intonation of the whole band. Don't do it—the advantage it gives you, if any, is not worth it.

## DRUM DOPE

**T**EMPLE-BLOCKS have been discussed before in this column, when the dictum was "Pretty but virtually useless."

One way in which they can occasionally be used is in long breaks, coupled with tom-toms, and snares-off side drum. But a soft beater is essential.

The best kind is the hard felt marimba beater mounted on a long, semi-flexible handle.

Don't use s.d. sticks. And don't use timpani sticks. The former are too hard and are liable to split the blocks, and the latter are too soft in produce enough sound.

Use tom-toms, s.d. and temple-blocks in a series of ruining quavers. The artificial accentuation produced by the different timbres will give some fine rhythmic effects.



“DETECTOR”  
Reviews War Time Radio

PIANO  
POINTERS

UNDOUBTEDLY one of the worst snags in dance playing is the left-hand tenth, which, with no great logic, has become an essential in the pianist's armoury. In the first place, I have never agreed that the tenth is essential anyway.

I remember some twelve or thirteen years ago that an American player named Seger Ellis startled us all with what was an early form of boogie-woogie.

The recording in which Ellis showed that the tenth was anything but a pianist's *sine qua non* startled everyone in the business here, and especially those who, like myself, had been patiently doing myriads of exercises every day with the idea of being able to play tenths without “rolling” them. Now the boogie-woogie is a further welcome step in the fight against the apparently inevitable tenth which I, now that I have mastered tenths and been able to play them for years, really welcome.

I believe that the future will bring us the contrapuntal left hand in the Bach manner in our dance music, and, while we are talking about Bach, you might have a go at his “48” for really valuable work in the left hand.

TENTHS

But if you must play tenths—and you really ought to be able to play them even if you don't like the monotonous tenth-afterbeat—tenth-afterbeat style—then here are few tips which should help.

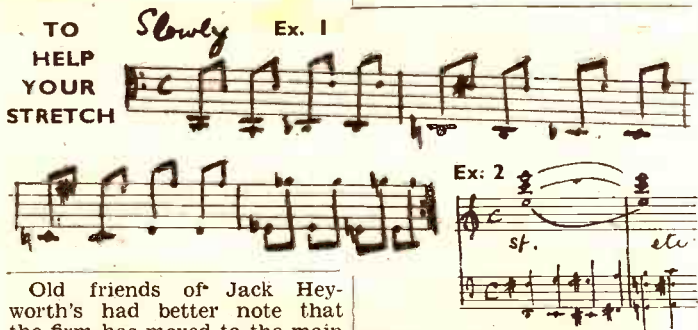
Practise reversing the tenth, i.e., the tenth first, then the fifth and finally the root. Use this in slow numbers and you will find that, with more certainty in your playing, you are actually stretching your hand so that when you play tenths in the ordinary way it will be easier.

In Ex. 1 I have given a useful stretching exercise which will do the hand muscles a lot of good. As soon as your hand is tired, however, rest for a few minutes before starting again.

In Ex. 2 the sort of thing that Jess Stacey does with ease will be yours when you have had a week or two at Ex. 1. Stacey plays this kind of thing without spreading the tenths, of course.

**ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS**  
**F. Yates, Enfield.**—A good book on jazz piano is that by Bert Read. Look through the classified advertisements of this paper and see if one is on sale. Old-fashioned, although excellent for keyboard harmony, is Lee Sims' “Jazz Piano Method,” published by Keith Prowse. For blues style, listen to any of the star coloured American players on records.  
**Fred Grant, Chichester.**—The example by Jess Stacey in the first article of this series was, of course, in the key of C major.

**NOTE.**—As far as possible, queries will be answered at the foot of the weekly article.



Old friends of Jack Heyworth's had better note that the firm has moved to the main shop in Blackpool, but if you're on leave and are in Liverpool business can be transacted through Jack's representative, Bob Melander, at 32, Threagbut Lane, Liverpool. Bob has been leading his seven-piece band at the King's Hall since its open-

THE “BLUE ROCKETS”  
DISAPPOINT

SORRY, folks, if we caused any of you to miss the airing by Eric Tann and the R.A.O.C. Blue Rockets last Wednesday week (June 4) by telling you they would be on the air on June 9.

Actually the error was the more regrettable because it appeared twice in the “M.M.”—once on the front page of the May 24 issue and again in this column the following week.

But, honest, it wasn't our fault. The B.B.C. blurb sheet said June 9, and being too dumb to do anything but copy, we let it go at that.

However, having at last learnt to read, we managed to find out the error from our “Radio Times,” and so were able to tune in our sets on the right day.

Candidly, I was a little disappointed.

When this band first went on the air last February, it was not only the next best thing in Service outfits to Jimmy Miller's R.A.F. Dance Band, with George Chisholm and Co., but gave every indication that it was on the up beat.

DULL ARRANGEMENTS

In a way it redeemed this promise. It was more polished and played with more confidence.

But I must say I found the arrangements pretty dull. Most of them were fastish two-in-a-bar Palais type quick-steps, with hardly a solo in the true sense of the word to relieve the monotony.

A band of this calibre, and with such talent (line-up was given in the “M.M.” of March 1 last) is worthy of a better fate.

My belief is that this outfit has been doing too much of the wrong kind of work. What it wants—and I'll bet it hasn't been getting it—is the chance to play to a few audiences whose appreciation of better things would inspire it to a more ambitious form of music—for instance, more broadcasts.

Why hasn't it had them?

In case you missed it, last week's meeting of the Radio Rhythm Club, on Whit Monday (June 2), took the form of recital by Rex Harris on “Higgy”—trombonist Jay C. Higginbotham to you.

I'm afraid Mr. Harris is another whom I can compliment on being no more than a yes-man, with plenty of adulatory adjectives, but no great ability to tell us anything about his subject that most of us didn't know already.

Still, I thank him for an interesting selection of records.

Here's the list for all you lads who write to me after every broadcast asking for the num-

bers and titles of the items aired:—

1. *New Call Of The Freaks*—Luis Russell's Orch. (Parlophone R1645).
  2. *Call Of The Freaks*—King Oliver's Orch. (H.M.V. Special List JP36).
  3. *It Should Be You*—Henry Allen's Orch. (Am. Bluebird B10235\*).
  4. *Feeling Drowsy*—Henry Allen's Orch. (H.M.V. BD103).
  5. *Higginbotham Blues*—Higginbotham and his Six Hicks (to be issued on July 1 on Parlophone R2799).
  6. *Dallas Blues*—Louis Armstrong and his Orch. (Parlophone R973).
  7. *New King Porter Stomp*—Fletcher Henderson's Orch. (Columbia CR701).
  8. *Roll Along, Prairie Moon*—Henry Allen's Orch. (Vocalion S29).
  9. *My Blue Heaven*—Hawkins' All-Star Orctel (H.M.V. B9151).
- \* This is an American issue, unobtainable in this country.

Anyone wanting to turn an honest five bob (sufficient for one pair socks, provided you can produce also 1,746,842 coupons) has a chance to do so by sending in a joke to Neil Munro at the B.B.C.

The B.B.C. will pay 5s. for each of the jokes sent in which producer Munro selects for use in the programme “Listeners v. Comics” on June 24 next.

One presumes that the jokes should not be too aged or hackneyed, but, judging from B.B.C.'s usual standard gags, up to forty-five years old should stand every chance of being accepted.

Listened in last Saturday to what is supposed to be one of the week's high-spots—“Music Hall.”

Can only say that it seems to be going from bad to worse.

To give you an idea of the justice of this complaint, I have worked out a little marking system.

The system consists of each turn being able to secure a maximum of ten marks.

AWARDING MARKS

On the standard I have set up, I consider any really first-class turn ought to be able to get nine if not ten marks, though eight isn't too bad for an act that isn't meant to be top of the bill. The show as a whole should be able to average seven marks per turn, and no turn which cannot earn five marks should be allowed to appear.

Here is the way last Saturday's marking worked out:—

	Marks
Vine, More and Nevard	5
West and Woodburn	9
Ivy St. Helier	3
Harry Tate, Jr.	7
Margaret Eaves	5
Tommy Handley	9
	35

Well, there you have it. A total of 35 marks (and that's being generous) out of a possible 60, and against my irreducible minimum of 42; and two acts which didn't manage to earn enough marks to qualify for inclusion.

The fact that the low marking of some of the acts is due more to their unsuitability for “Music Hall” than to their lack of talent for more suitable programmes doesn't make it any better.

And the worst of it is that if you apply the same test to any B.B.C. programme coming under the broad heading of variety, you will find that most of them fail to the same, and in some cases an even greater, extent.

The trouble is not so much the inadequacy of the artistes (although, goodness knows, some of them are pretty weak, while others become stale by being used too often), but the insufficiency of the producers.



BILLY PLONKIT: “The clobber may look a bit odd, jellers, but anything is good enough for these cheap gigs. Remember, we've got to keep our dress-suits for our seven-and-sixpenny jobs!”

COMMERCIAL CORNER

New Records Reviewed by “CORN”

**ARTHUR YOUNG'S SWING-TETTE** have recently turned out some sides which, I am rather sorry to note, Edgar Jackson has not found space to mention.

The titles are *Steamboat Bill* (vocal by Beryl Davis) and *Prim and Proper*, a pleasant little tune by Young and Stephane Grappelly (whose violin is a feature of the side), on Decca F7844; and, on Decca F7852, *I L-love You So*, coupled with the inevitable *I've Got Sixpence*.

Although essentially on popular lines, these records are bright and, in their way, original. Arthur Young's novachord is full of ingenuity, and there are often spots of solo work, especially by the guitar, which wouldn't be a disgrace to performances of a less compromisingly commercial nature.

**GERALDO AND HIS ORCHESTRA** have the assistance of Jackie “Umbridge” Hunter in the nursery-rhyme jingle *The Bad Humour Man*, from the film “You'll Find Out” (Parlophone F1828).

If the song doesn't give Jackie quite the scope he found in *Down By The Winegar Works* and *The Life Of The Party* (H.M.V. BD921), at least it's Jackie.

Geraldo's other three sides this month—*I'd Know You Anywhere*, also from “You'll Find Out” (Parlophone F1828), and *Down Argentina Way* and *Two Dreams Met*, both from the film “Down Argentina Way” (Parlophone F1827)—are all slow and sentimental.

But you've got to hand it to Gerry for knowing how to make pretty music the outward simplicity of which will not conceal from musicians the polished efficiency of the playing.

**NAT GONELLA AND HIS NEW GEORGIANS'** swing version of the well-known ballad *Song Of Songs* (Columbia FB2619) forces me to confess to agreeing with Edgar Jackson and many others in their dislike of jazz presentations of classics and standard music.

But if you've no such scruples, you'll probably like this record. The arrangement is good. It transcribes the tune into dance rhythm with a neat competence that is not devoid of taste, even though Jack Wallace's vocal does sound somewhat out of place.

On the other side the boys busk the burlesque of Kennedy and Carr's *South Of The Border*, originally conceived and introduced (on H.M.V. B9155) by Wing Mannone under title *South With The Boarder*. As comedy it has its points, even if the playing is a bit wild and woolly.

Nat's other efforts for the month are *The Sheik Of Araby*

and *Mean To Me* (Columbia FB2620).

As commercial-hot music they have their moments, notably in Nat's trumpet, which often turns a phrase that is worthy of his undeniable technique, and the nice work of the pianist.

DON'TS  
FOR  
DANCE BANDS

Don't waste that guitar player.

There has been a move going on for years to eliminate the guitar player. It got particularly active four or five years ago, but slackened off for a bit.

Now, aided by callings-up and so on, it's taking shape again.

And do you know who is mostly to blame? The guitar player. He sits in the back there, plonking away, working out complicated chords and fingering, and never giving much thought as to how much he is helping the band.

It's up to the leader, therefore, to put matters right by saving the guitarist from himself. He will also help the band.

A microphone is essential to the modern band. Most bands have one these days. Put the guitarist in the centre of the front row of the band with the mike a yard from his instrument.

If the mike is used for singing and other instruments, it can be momentarily readjusted and then put back.

Even if the guitarist has to lay off for a few bars to do it himself it will be worth it.

For solos (usually neglected) he can hitch his chair forward so that he's within a few inches. You'll find it an amazing improvement.

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# NORTHERN NEWS NOTES

by Private JERRY DAWSON

ITS title probably more apt now than ever. Lawrie Wright's annual "On With the Show" once again opened for the summer season at the North Pier, Blackpool, at Whitsuntide.

In charge of the musical arrangements for the third successive season is our old friend of the Holborn Restaurant—Bram Martin, who finds it hard to leave the north these days.

I haven't yet seen or heard the show, and have no knowledge of the band's size or instrumentation, but, Army duties permitting, I hope to be able to have a look at Bram and his boys in the near future.

In "On With the Show," this year for the first time, is the Norman Thomas Trio, a fast-moving, coloured, music and dancing act which it is worth anyone's while to see.

The leader of the trio—Norman Thomas—is the bloke I wrote about some months ago, who loves to tell—against himself—the story of when he, many years ago in the States, turned down a coloured pianist, saying he "wasn't good enough."

Name?

Why—Duke Ellington. . .

Back home in Manchester for a few days last week was trumpet man Ralph Collins. Ralph was convalescing after having spent several weeks in hospital with scarlet fever—which was the reason for his leaving the Garrison Theatre Orchestra on tour with the Jack Warner presentation.

After a few more days' rest, Ralph is due to open with Frank King's Band at the Piccadilly Club, Glasgow.

Due to Harold Beasley leaving to join the R.A.F. (as mentioned last week), Reg Warburton has now returned to the piano chair at the Midland Hotel, Manchester, for Joe Orlando.

As it is only a few months since Harold took Reg's place at this spot, it would seem that quite a game of chess is developing.

Still continuing its successful series of Sunday Concerts, the band of the 2nd Battalion Manchester Regiment—my Regimental Band—directed by Leslie Statham, introduced an unusual innovation at a recent show at the Salford Hippodrome.

The show was carried out by the usual stage-dance combination until the final item, when, using the full military band—over forty performers—they played the terrific 1812 Overture, complete with all the effects and paraphernalia usually associated with this number.

Its warlike atmosphere and the fact that it was played by the boys in khaki was very suitable to the day, and it proved a very big climax to a thoroughly successful performance.

The band broadcast on Wednesday night of this week. My band, I'd again remind you!

The Ambassador Theatre at Pendleton (Manchester) would appear to have become a favourite spot for bandleaders to try out new vocalists, for following on Irene Johnson's debut with Joe Loss a few weeks ago, Oscar Rabin and his band put in a welcome re-appearance there on Sunday last and Oscar took the opportunity of introducing for the first time with the band a new male singer, Bob Dale.

Bob, who has been singing for some months with Billy Thorburn under the name of Wally Windsor, is a polished young artist of the Crosby school, and he received a terrific ovation from a packed house.

He is, without question, the most promising of recent vocal discoveries and I have a feeling that he is the very one to take the spot in the public's affection left vacant by Denny Dennis's departure to the R.A.F.

Former Preager vocalist Eddie Lester, visited Co-op. Hall, Chatham, recently. Returns to-day, Friday, June 13, with his "Swingtime Signallers." Promoter is again Dick Davis.



"Black Berets" are in season early this year. The boys above are members of the Dance Band of the Royal Tank Corps, stationed somewhere in the West of England, and you will be hearing them over the Forces wavelength on Monday next (16th).

Their line-up is: Cpl. Ivan Dozin (tpt.), Sgt. T. Young (drums), Bds. Teddy Thorne (sax., clar. and vocals), L/Cpl. Norman Sullivan (piano), Sgt.-Major John Foley (gtar.), and Tpr. Dawson (bass). Vocals are also taken by Sgt. Scott.

You have heard them on the air before (May 6), and, with the "Black Berets" concert party, they have been doing much to entertain their comrades in arms.

## MUSIC FOR SCOTS HOLIDAY-MAKERS

### Hugh Hinshelwood's Glasgow Gossip

ONE of the most popular Clyde Coast variety shows is now under way, the Cosy Corner at Noon opening up with a "pit" band recruited from the Louis Freeman office.

Willie Rose is on piano here, with Bryce McKay (alto and clarinet); George Caird (violin); Jimmy Young (trumpet), and Alec Barclay (drums).

There are no "after the show" dances at the Cosy Corner, but holiday-makers are catered for efficiently by the Pavilion, where Tommy James' Band is to be installed. More of this anon.

The line-up of Louis Freeman's trio at the Whitehall Restaurant has changed a little through the usual reasons, and now consists of Michael Rudik (violin), Johnnie Guthrie (piano), and Louis Miller (cello).

Tommy Paterson, who was on piano at the Whitehall for some time, is on the inevitable other business now.

### MUNRO MAKES GOOD

Since he took over the job of directing the Variety Orchestra at Scottish Broadcasting House, Ronnie Munro has certainly delivered the goods, despite the tremendous handicaps of band recruiting, with so many of the boys absent on duty and others turned semi-pro.

The orchestra will be on the air again on June 13, in the "Silver Sporrán" programme.

The old-fashioned dance sessions promoted by Louis Freeman at the West Regent Halls have been so successful that Louis is opening up on still another evening in the week, the sessions now being held on Wednesdays and Saturdays.

Bertie King's news item in the other week's "M.M." was certainly of interest to Glasgow fans, as the ship's band mentioned is all composed of local boys who have managed to keep together even under the stress of U-boat dodging.

When peace breaks out the dance business is going to hear more from Jack Drummond, a swell pianist; Bobbie Hamilton, stylish alto, and that up-and-coming vocalist, Andy Russell.

Among the local Glasgow "unit" bands, the Highland Light Infantry Dance Orchestra

The Huxley Brothers on tenor and guitar are now playing with Len Macarrol at the Jubilee Dance Club's dances at Assembly Hall, Gillingham.

Charlie Johnson, manager of the club, began promoting at Gravesend this week, the band being labelled as "Charlie Phillips's Swing Sextet."

## MEDWAY SUMMER DANCING BOOM

USUALLY by mid-June, dancing in the Medway district is in the dumps and few dances are run.

As proof of the popularity of dancing as a relaxation for war workers, however, is the fact that all promoters are carrying on and even extending their programmes for the summer months.

A case in point is Reg. Kearn, presiding genius of the P.E.T. Dance Club.

Reg has just commenced the heats for the Medway Championship Shield, which bids fair to become the premier dancing contest award of the season.

The dances in connection with this event will be held at Assembly Hall, Gillingham, every Wednesday, although Reg usually promotes at the Masonic Hall on Tuesday, Friday and Sunday. (Another significant point—Sunday dancing never paid in peace time.)

Resident band for all P.E.T. promotions is Claude Giddens and his Ambassadors of Swing, a fine outfit, who have been playing for the club since its formation five months ago.

The initials P.E.T. stand for "Pleasant Evenings Together," and the public seems to agree with this slogan, the club membership being over four hundred.

Jack Collins, drummer of Jack Cox's Swing Rhythmics, was the unfortunate victim of thieves recently, when a case containing kit was stolen.

Alterations to the Rhythmics' line-up, recently given in these columns, are Les-Ansell, violin, and Fred Bursey, bass.

N. H. F.

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