

# Melody Maker

INCORPORATING RHYTHM

Vol. XVII. No. 430 OCTOBER 18, 1941

## MYSTERY OF RAY VENTURA "KILLED ON EASTERN FRONT" REPORT

A DISPATCH FROM HELSINKI TO THE OFFICIAL ITALIAN NEWS AGENCY ON WEDNESDAY (15th) ANNOUNCED THAT FRENCH BANDLEADER RAY VENTURA HAS BEEN KILLED IN ACTION ON THE EASTERN FRONT WHILE FIGHTING FOR THE FINNISH ARMY AS A PARACHUTIST.

BUT INVESTIGATIONS BY THE "MELODY MAKER" SUGGEST QUITE DEFINITELY THAT THE REPORT IS FALSE, AND THAT VENTURA IS NOT ONLY ALIVE BUT IS VERY FAR FROM THE SCENE OF THE RUSSIAN-GERMAN WAR.

According to the Italian story, Ventura and his Band were playing in Helsinki at the outbreak of hostilities between Russia and Germany (i.e. on June 22).

It then goes on to say that Ray and some of his musicians joined the Finnish Army under Mannerheim, and that Ray himself became a parachutist, being killed during the battle for Viipuri.

But the M.P.M. Agency, which handles Ventura's business in England, heard from Ray as recently as August of this year, when, far from being in Finland or anywhere near it, he and his band were playing in Switzerland.

And this was two months after the outbreak of the Russian-German war. Furthermore, in his communication to London, Ventura stated he was returning to Unoccupied France at the conclusion of his Swiss tour, and had booked a tour through Spain, commencing in September.

### PRO-BRITISH RAY

These facts conclusively suggest that the Italian report is just another lie.

But just as convincing as the facts is our personal knowledge of Ray—a patriotic Frenchman and a lover of England, if ever there was one. It is unthinkable that he would ever descend to the depths of fighting for Britain's enemies.

It will be remembered that Ray Ventura and his Collegians were to have played a six weeks' tour of the British music-halls, commencing on September 4, 1939.

The visit was cancelled because Ray and his boys were all called up for service in the French Army.

### BIG CHANCE FOR ACCORDIONISTS

Amateur and semi-pro. accordionists from all districts should enter immediately for the next heat of the GREATER LONDON PIANO-ACCORDION CHAMPIONSHIP, to be held at the Ilford Town Hall on Friday next, October 24.

It is our intention to approach the B.B.C. with a view to a broadcast for the three finalists.

Entry forms and full details can be obtained from F. H. Allison, 23, Grey-stone Gardens, Barking-side, Ilford, Essex.



Ventura

## Geraldo On The Stage

THE thousands of London admirers of Geraldo and his broadcasting Band will be delighted to learn that "Gerry" has decided upon a policy of variety appearances, the first of which commenced last Monday at the Streatham Hill Theatre, to be followed immediately by a week at Golders Green Hippodrome, with the following week at the Wimbledon Theatre.

These welcome appearances will be succeeded, it is anticipated, by a further series of interesting dates.

### ALL THE STARS

Geraldo is, of course, featuring his full combination, with those stars who have done so much to make the band famous—including Ivor Mairants, Harry Hayes, George Evans, Ted Heath, Joe Ferrie, Maurice Birman, Sid Bright, etc.—and with Jackie Hunter, Len Camber, and Dorothy Carless in fine vocal form.

Jackie Hunter also contributes his own amusing solo act to the first half of the theatre's programme, before the band appears.

The band's playing on the stage was as impeccable as it is on the air; the arrangements used were first class; there was good individual solo work, notably by Ivor Mairants, Harry Hayes, and George Evans, especially in that old applause-getter, "Blue Heaven" (this arrangement, in spite of these bright solos, slightly missed fire somewhere, by the way); and there was a little comedy stuff, well put over by Jackie Hunter, George Evans, and Dorothy Carless. The first-named was (Please turn to page 2.)

## Shearing Leaves Harry Parry

WHEN George Shearing, England's high priest of boogie-woogie, joined the Ambrose Octet, it was inevitable—as a good deal of touring had to be done—that some of his regular broadcasting and recording work would suffer. In these circumstances it may not surprise his friends to know that he will no longer be present on the Harry Parry Rhythm Club Sextet Sessions.

This looked like a serious blow to the Sextet, but Harry Parry has shown great discrimination in fixing up Tommy Pollard, the stylish young piano ace from Johnny Claes' Band, to do all his future broadcasting and recording work.

# M. of I. TO MAKE FILM OF ARMY JAZZ

## Co-operation of all Army Musicians is Urgently Required

THE MINISTRY OF INFORMATION WANTS TO MAKE A FILM—A FILM ABOUT JAZZ IN THE ARMY. THE FILMS DIVISION OF THE M. of I. WHICH HAS ALREADY SPONSORED SUCH A MASTERPIECE OF DOCUMENTARY PICTURE-MAKING AS "TARGET FOR TO-NIGHT," IS INVESTIGATING THE POSSIBILITY OF A FILM TENTATIVELY CALLED "OFF DUTY."

HOW SOON THAT FILM CAN BE MADE IS UP TO YOU.

A well-known musician has been commissioned to do the preliminary investigation, as the M. of I. believes that the British Army is full of fans whose off-duty time is spent in pursuit of their favourite hobby, "swing music" or jazz.

Has your unit a dance band?

Have you formed a unit rhythm club, or an informal jazz discussion circle?

If you have a band, how did it start?

### QUESTIONS

These are questions the M. of I. wants to know, and the "M.M." has undertaken to co-operate fully in finding out the answers.

The film, which is planned to last fifteen minutes, is intended to appeal particularly to the film public of the United States.

We want to show the Americans how professional musicians go through the rigorous training required by the modern Army, and spend their off-duty time entertaining their comrades with America's national music; we want to show how many of the country's 100,000

semi-pros, and fans have become good soldiers, and how their off-duty time is devoted to following their hobby of playing and discussing jazz.

Perhaps some of you have learned to play only since you've been in the Army; we want to know about you, too, and how you first found a "kindred spirit" in your unit.

And what about the Ack-Ack boys? If a gun-site doesn't encourage the formation of a band, we still believe that jazz has its place in the off-duty lives of the gunners.

These are the things we want you to tell us about.

### ARMY LIMELIGHT

So far the R.A.F. bands have had the limelight to themselves; now the M. of I. is offering the British Army a chance to show its swing paces.

Naturally, we cannot guarantee that everybody who plays or listens to modern dance music in the Army is going to be put in the film; but if you have a good "story," you'll have a chance of putting it over.

Remember, it all depends on you.

All you have to do is write to THE EDITOR, the "M.M." 93, Long Acre, W.C.2, marking the envelope "ARMY FILM" in the top left-hand corner, answering the questions set out above, and sending your name, number and unit address (which will be treated in the strictest confidence), and any other details which are likely to prove useful to the M. of I.'s investigator.



Greatest surprise of Joe Loss's present variety tour is the new show-stopper, Pat McCormac (on right), who toured with Roy Fox in Australia, and who has been domiciled for some time in Hollywood. Returning to his native Eire for a holiday, he was snapped up for Joe Loss by the M.P.M. Agency, and now his lovely tenor voice and quite unspoiled mannerism is the big sensation wherever Loss appears.

## THIEVES BUSY

THERE is an epidemic of instrument-stealing in London at the moment, and all musicians are warned to keep close guard on their instruments at all times, and never to leave them unattended.

The latest victim of these thieves is Mickey Lewis, the grand singer with Mantovani's orchestra in the pit of the "Let's Behave" show at His Majesty's Theatre, London. Mickey has been robbed of his Selmer lacquered alto (No. 21197), which can be recognised because the guard of the low C sharp key is missing and cannot be replaced.

Anybody who sees a sax answering to this description should communicate immediately with his local police-station.

And, by the way, a wise musician not only guards his instrument, but also insures it under the "M.M." scheme. Write for full particulars to Messrs. B. Hawes Wilson, 2, Hampstead Square, London, N.W.3.

## MANCHESTER SAXIST GETS MEDAL FOR BLITZ HEROISM

LAST WEEK-END IT WAS ANNOUNCED THAT THE BRITISH EMPIRE MEDAL IS TO BE AWARDED TO MANCHESTER POLICE WAR RESERVIST B.M. BERNARD KYTE—BETTER KNOWN, PERHAPS, AS SAXIST BARNEY KYTE—FOR GAL-LANTRY IN AN AIR RAID.

It was during the Christmas blitz on Manchester that Barney—a well-known figure in the West End in happier days—when on duty was called to a couple of gas containers, both of which had been punctured by bomb splinters.

The gas was escaping and hostile aircraft were overhead dropping their stuff, but Barney, along with some civilians, climbed 50 ft. to the top of each container and plugged the holes with wet clay.

"Because of his resolute determination," says the official report, "the fire was put out, and what might have been a serious explosion averted."

The congratulations and admiration of the whole of the profession will go out to Barney in his hour of glory.

## Moonan for Hipp?

SPECULATION has been rife among West End musicians as to the band to be featured in the new George Black show "Get a Load of This," now in rehearsal for presentation at the London Hippodrome.

Advance bills outside the theatre now announce that the famous Hatchett's Swingtette will appear. Just before closing for press, however, we learn from Dennis Moonan, leader of the Swingtette, that the contract for the appearance has not yet been signed.

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## PIANO POINTERS

I THINK I have told you before of the keen interest which jazz piano students in this country have in the work of Billy Kyle. A number of them have written to me asking for an analysis of this star's work, and I have been at some pains recently to get something of Kyle's idiom down on paper.

He has all the typical exaggerated staccato of the coloured players, but what I think is of the greatest importance is that he seems to dispense once and for all with the rooted idea that the pianist must swing his left



hand four-in-the-bar to give a basic rhythm.

I have always disputed this contention, arguing that all dance music, if subtly accented, does not require this pounding of the basic metre behind it.

Without pursuing that fascinating thesis further here, I will say that Kyle seems to rely mainly on a single note right-hand style while merely keeping two in the bar with his left hand. But so far from his left-hand playing a passive part in the proceedings this is also used as a sort of "pick-up" with chord interpolations and runs.

In a representative recording of Kyle's *Afternoon In Africa*—with the O'Neill Spencer Trio—he uses at one point a reiterated note figure in the left hand against an off-the-beat melodic line in the right.

A fascinating use of the left hand, however, principally attracts me to this player's style. He often splits up the seventh chord in the way shown in the appended example as a lead-in to a right-hand figure.

What is admirable about Kyle, too, is that he does what Gerry Moore always does and so many players do not, i.e., uses both hands as the complement of one another. I'd like to hear from some of you again on this player.

N.B.—I am sorry that there was an error in my last example which might have puzzled some of you. The chord on the third beat of the first bar of the Tatum example should have read A flat 9 and the G in the treble should therefore have been flattened, as well as that in the bass.

## 60 YEARS OF MAKING INSTRUMENTS

IN the summer of 1881, 14-year-old W. J. Pugh joined the firm of Hawkes as an apprentice. About a year previously young R. G. Skillin had already started to work for Boosey. Both young fellows laboured diligently, and grew to manhood and middle age in their respective jobs, until their employers decided to amalgamate about eleven years ago, and called into being Boosey and Hawkes as we know the firm to-day.

Employed in the brass shop on trumpets and trombones, who knows whether Mr. Pugh may not, indirectly, have been responsible for the fame of Nat Gonella and half the hot trumpeters of to-day? Whilst Mr. Skillin, working on wood-wind instruments, is perhaps entitled to some of the credit for the existence of Andy McDavitt and Harry Parry.

### CHEQUES PRESENTED

The sequel to two lifetimes spent in the service of the musical instrument trade came on Friday last, when Boosey and Hawkes workers assembled in the factory canteen during the lunch hour to witness the presentation by Messrs. Leslie Boosey and Geoffrey Hawkes, on behalf of the firm, of cheques in tangible token of thanks to these fine old craftsmen, Pugh and Skillin, for their 60 and 61 years of service, respectively.

Mr. Pugh, who was celebrating his golden wedding over the week-end, further received, as a mark of that occasion, a wallet well padded with currency, being a gift subscribed for by his fellow-workmen on the firm.

The speechmaking, the replies and applause were interspersed with the appropriate music of "Dear Old Pals" and "We Are The Boys Of The Old Brigade," played spiritedly by the staff band, specially augmented for the occasion by uniformed members of the local Royal Artillery Band.

(See photographs on page 4.)

### S.O.S.—PIANIST WANTED

OWING to a misunderstanding, last week's issue of the *MELODY MAKER* stated that Matt Moors was wanting a tenor player for his Covent Garden Opera House Band.

Actually it is a pianist whom he is seeking, to open on Monday next, so get in touch with him at once.



The three stars of the Geraldino show—Geraldino (left), Jackie Hunter, and Dorothy Carless.

## GERALDO

(Continued from Page One)

funny (in costume) with "Hey, Little Hen," without completely getting over with it.

Straightforward vocalism by above-named trio and Len Camber was very effective, both individually and as a trio, quartette, and quintette (with Joe Ferrie). Dorothy Carless sang a particularly good vocal in "Russian Rose." There was a change from the dance music idiom in some flashy piano duet stuff between Geraldino and Sid Bright.

### FINE BRASS

The brass section played its largely straightforward score in quite a masterly way, especially the three trombones; and Maurice Burman is evidently quite as much at home when drumming on stage as in studio.

A fine show, then—on paper; but in actual reality there was a coldness, a strange lack of spontaneity, about it; an absence of complete cohesion in the knitting together of the various numbers; and a slight lack of general stage slickness.

This is perfectly natural when a band that has concentrated for so long upon studio work embarks on a variety tour, especially on its first night, when it is never wise to judge a performance; but, nevertheless, such little imperfections must be ironed right out before the band can equal, in stage value, the terrific reputation which it has won in radio.

## Alfredo Emerges From Retirement

KEEPING to their excellent policy of featuring dance bands and leaders in their weekly shows, the Phoenix Theatre, London, is this week presenting the famous old-timer, Alfredo, whose band takes a leading part in the production, "Flying Colours."

Alfredo returns from a lengthy retirement with a violin, a wild-looking "gipsy" costume, and a mixed orchestra of eleven, containing zimbabul, piano, accordion, three violins, two cellos, flute, bass, and drums, with several soloists and vocalists thrown in.

The music of Alfredo has known drastic changes since he used to dispense rhythm to the dancing crowds at London's New Princes' Restaurant many years ago. After that period he became renowned in variety for his gipsy orchestras, and he is again exploiting his fame in the sphere of the "tzigane" type of music, at which he long ago became expert.

Alfredo has now been on the road seven weeks since he made his quite dramatic return to the musical fold, coming back from virtual retirement in response to bookers' requests.

The Phoenix management has a treat for patrons next week, for those rhythm stars, the Three Greene Sisters, will be featured, supported by another old-timer, Jan Ralini, and his band.

## WINSTONE'S BIG RECORD BREAK

WITH several months still to run on his existing contract, Eric Winstone signed this week a new agreement with E.M.I. covering a further year's output of titles under his own name, with a greatly increased personnel on all sessions.

Following a policy of gradual augmentation since he first broadcast with a quintette three years ago, to-day Eric has built up a most polished combination, and ample proof of the rapidly growing power attached to his name in the entertainment world is shown by the company's decision to drop the long-established "house" name of the London Accordion Band, which in the past has been under his direction, and to issue the new recordings under the heading of Eric Winstone and his Band.

### PERSONNEL

Bringing with it the addition of a strong fiddle section, the new agreement undoubtedly allows Eric full scope to present his many imaginative ideas in commercial dance music, and the first pressings, scheduled for release in the November lists, bring a new slant on the treatment of popular tunes.

The personnel for the new sessions consists of Vic Parker, R. Manus, and J. Robertson (accordions); Oscar Grasso, Dave Java, and Len Lee (violins); Ronnie Selby (piano); Joe Nussbaum (bass); Frank Deniz (guitar); Roy Marsh (drums and vibraphone), with Alan Kane and Julie Dawn handling the vocals.

Arrangement may also shortly be made in the near future to enable Eric to record many of his own compositions for orchestra, amongst which, of course, are both "Oasis" and "Mirage," undoubtedly among the most played band numbers of recent years, together with a new opus titled "Stagecoach," which, in the opinion of those who have heard it to date, will probably be the greatest of them all.

### COLLECTOR'S CORNER

Sorry, discophiles, but this feature has been squeezed out this week. It will appear as usual next week.

## CALL SHEET

Week Commencing Oct. 20.

**ALFREDO**, Empire, Newport.  
**AMBROSE OCTET**, Hippodrome, Ilford.  
**TEDDY BROWN**, Hippodrome, Brighton.  
**FREDDY BAMBERGER**, Empire, New Cross.  
**ELSIE CARLISLE**, Empire, Nottingham.  
**EVELYN DALL**, Max BACON and Sam BROWNE, Hippodrome, Coventry.  
**"GARRISON THEATRE"**, Empire, Glasgow.  
**GERALDO and Orchestra**, Golders Green Hippodrome.  
**JACKIE HUNTER**, Empire, New Cross.  
**"HUTCH"**, Palace, Manchester.  
**PAT HYDE**, Palace, Dundee.  
**JOE LOSS and Orchestra**, Streatham Hill Theatre.  
**JIMMY MESENE**, Tivoli, Aberdeen.  
**OSCAR RABIN and Band**, Playhouse, Glasgow.  
**HAROLD RAMSAY and Ladies**, Empire, New Cross.  
**BILLY SCOTT-COOMBER and Singing Grenadiers**, Empire, Sheffield.  
**HAL SWAIN and Swing Sisters**, Palace, Manchester.  
**PAT TAYLOR**, Hippodrome, Wolverhampton.  
**TROISE and Mandoliers**, Blackburn.  
**ANONA WINN**, Empire, Edinburgh.

No. 152. High Wycombe's last meeting was October 12, when the Secretary presented "Approach to Jazz," and the Jam Session featured G. Oliver, Stan Moss, Fred Griffin, Les Wilson, Ron Clarke, Jimmy Smith, Maurice Gooden, and Norman Hill. Next meeting, October 26.

**Aldgate**. A Rhythm Club is to be formed in Aldgate, where premises with seating capacity of 100 have already been obtained. Write to the Secretary at 19, Wentworth Buildings, Wentworth Street, E.1.

**Medway**. A club is to be formed in the Medway district embracing the towns of Chatham, Gillingham, Rochester, etc. Letters to B. E. Farmer, 32, Castlemaine Avenue, Gillingham, Kent.

## TRUMPET TIPS

MANY are the inquiries I get about tone. The latest says: "My tone is muffled and furry; there is much air sound with the note, particularly with a mute."

As always I looked for the vital piece of information—how long had this fellow been playing? Six months! That, of course, is the answer. His embouchure hasn't had time to get firm and set yet. And I suspect that there is something wrong with his method of breathing.

It appears that he is getting more air into the instrument than is necessary for the volume—actually it takes very little air to produce a note. This player should look to his breathing—see that he is breathing from the diaphragm, not the stomach.

Let him try a series of practice periods, using as little air as possible. Every time he inhales he should feel the tension on his diaphragm—which is the membrane at the bottom of the ribs—the stomach must not distend.

It may also be that he is using a trumpet with too big a bore.

## CLAES' NEWS

JOHNNY CLAES' latest venture is a series of one-night stands all around the outskirts of London, so that many admirers of this stylish outfit may have an opportunity of hearing it at their local town halls.

These appearances, which are being organised by George Day, and compered by Rex Harris, of the No. 1 Rhythm Club, will feature the full combination, and it is hoped that Harry Hayes, Aubrey Franks and Andy McDavitt will be able to appear.

Dates and details for this rhythm fans' treat are as follows: Monday, November 3, Ilford Town Hall; Tuesday, November 4, Wembley Town Hall; Wednesday, November 5, Chiswick Town Hall; Thursday, November 6, High Wycombe Town Hall; Friday, November 7, Wembley Town Hall. Tickets are obtainable from George Day at 62, Torbay Road, South Harrow.

Since leaving the Nut House, as reported in our last week's issue, Johnny Claes' rhythm section—Tommy Pollard (piano); Charlie Short (bass); and Carlo Krahmer (drums) have been booked by Milly Hoey for the Slip-In Club, where the band is led by old-timer xist Derek Neville.

## Drummer's Airing

EX-JACK PAYNE drummer Joe Wyndham is on the air next Thursday (23rd) (12 noon to 12.30, Forces), with a nine-piece band, which he will comper himself.

Joe has arranged all the material for this airing, which will last half an hour, and will take place during the hour in which the band is entertaining the staff of a certain London factory engaged on important war work.

The line-up for this show, in addition to Joe Wyndham himself compering, is Les Davies (piano); Bill Thomas, Trevor Bayliss, and Ted Wellman (saxes); Jack Fletcher (trumpet); Chas. Hughes (trombone); Grace Upton (violin); Ben Bowring (bass and guitar); and Eddie Freeborn (drums).

## Jig's Boys Click

CYRIL BLAKE and his Jig's Club Band are likely to do a series of broadcasts of West Indian music as a consequence of the success of their first airing last week.

Cyril claims to have a repertoire of pasesos and calypsos second to none in this country, and he is particularly pleased that his young pianist discovery, Colin Veaton, has fitted in so well with the band.

Veaton is a North Londoner of only 17, and he had never played in any West End outfit until Cyril heard him and engaged him to play in the place of Tommy Pollard, who left to go with Johnny Claes.

At a "Sportsman's Ball" at the Paramount Ballroom last week Harry Parry joined in with Cyril's band and brought the house down with what he described as "the best swing backing I have had for a long time."

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# BILL ELLIOTT Takes Over Edgar Jackson's Record Reviews For the Week, Discusses The Re-issue of old Jazz Discs, And Gives FULL MARKS TO TEDDY

MY thanks are due to Edgar Jackson for sportingly letting me take over his Record Reviews for this week. I am sure he meant it as l'amende honorable after our little word-war, and I would take it as such—only there are one or two points that I must clear up before I sign the armistice.

First of all, let's put aside all the pettiness of mistakes in personals and routines. All critics the world over have made them from time to time—and Edgar Jackson and I are no exception. I am sure both of us will try to be as accurate as we can in the future.

It is when Edgar Jackson sees fit to drag an innocent third person—Wally Moody, of the Gramophone Company—into our argument as an excuse to take a slam at me that I am not so ready to be forgiving.

I consider Edgar's attack on Moody to have been hitting below the belt in the worst possible sense, because Edgar surely knows that Moody's position at the Gramophone Company does not allow him to enter into a public argument with a critic.

## "GRAND WORK FOR JAZZ"

And what was the excuse for the slam at Moody? Simply that I said in my "Classics" that he is "doing grand work for jazz over here." And isn't he? Who was responsible for the grand "Jelly-Roll" Morton Album about which Jackson faved so enthusiastically on this very page last week? Jackson didn't give him any credit—but it was the self-same Wally Moody who, according to Jackson's allegations, is doing quite the reverse to "grand work for jazz."

For seven years, in my rhythm club capacity, I have been knocking my head against the brick wall of the gramophone companies, and, during that time, only about a dozen records were ever issued at the Rhythm Club's request. A dozen records in seven years, mark you, yet, since I met Wally Moody only eight months ago, we have had 22 sides issued, and there are plenty more to come. If this is not doing good work for jazz, what is?

Naturally, mistakes are made, and I myself don't always agree with the swing issues. Many times, too, there are far more mo's than yes's coming from Moody, but he tells me—and can prove it—that never before in the history of jazz recorded music have there been such good sales for swing records over here.

## REALLY, MR. J.!

Our worthy Mr. Jackson rather put his foot in it with his remarks about "a most commendable eye for the box office," because Edgar himself has far more eye for that than Wally.

Edgar Jackson had a job of compiling two albums some time ago—one for H.M.V. and one for Parlophone. In the H.M.V. album he issued "Five o'Clock Whistle" by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, and, in the Parlophone series, two Benny Goodman records that had definite commercial appeal.

Eye for the box office—really, Mr. J.!

Another point was made about "many of Goodman's records lying rotting on the shelves." I mentioned that to Moody, and he tells me that this is not the case, as any records by this band that they have over here are scheduled for release in the near future.

One must not assume that because one sees records listed in the American catalogues, the masters always find their way over here—not everything gets across the Atlantic safely, Mr. Jackson.

As regards Charlie Barnet, this must be blamed on to the swing fans. The one or two Barnet records issued have not sold to any extent; and, after all, a gramophone company can hardly be a charitable institution.

Well, Edgar, I have now answered all the points you have mentioned, answered them to my own satisfaction, and, judging from letters received, to the general satisfaction of our readers.

And so our little feud has run its full cycle. Edgar Jackson started it—and I have finished it. He attacked Wally Moody; I have defended him.



Now let's get back to our jobs, and, for this week, my job is reviewing records, so here goes:—

## BARNEY BIGARD AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Am. N.).

\*\*\*\*Lament For Javanette (Bigard, Strayhorn) (Am. Victor OA053622).

\*\*\*Ready, Eddy (Bigard) (Am. Victor OA053624).

(H.M.V. B9215—3s. 8d.)

Bigard (clart.) with Ben Webster (tenor); Ray Nance (tpt.); Juan Tizol (trmb.); Duke Ellington (pno.); Jimmy Blanton (bass); Sonny Greer (drums). Recorded November 11, 1940.

ALTHOUGH Barney Bigard is always spoken of as a fine clarinet player, to my mind this is an understatement, for I regard him as ranking as one of the greatest ever on that instrument. That fact would be more universally recognised were he not a cog in the Ellington organisation.

Records like this one, however, give you a chance really to appreciate Barney, and I find his playing in "Lament" utterly charming. It is not jitterbug jazz, but is the right sort of jazz for all those who find in our music a form of relaxation and enjoyment.

"Lament" is somewhat reminiscent of "Caravan" and this effect is heightened by Tizol, who plays the same sort of trombone solo as on that record. Ben Webster's tenoring is well up to standard, and the few notes that Duke plays on piano could not be improved upon. Above everything, though, rises the clarinet, the opening solo of which is perfect.

I don't know who "Eddy" can be; probably the half-brother of "Charlie The Chulo," and if that is so, then anything this family does is all right by me. It's a wistful sort of composition with a haunting theme that you'll probably whistle in your bath, and the band do it full justice.

My only quarrel is the matter of solos. I think tenor or trumpet could have been given a chorus in place of rather too much ensemble. Still, Barney is playing clarinet, the Duke is playing good piano—and all's well.



## BOB CROSBY AND HIS ORCHESTRA (Am.).

\*\*\*For Dancers Only (Oliver) (Am. Decca 66793) (Recorded October 23, 1939.)

\*\*\*Where The Blue Of The Night (Turk, Ahlert) (V. by Bob Crosby) (Am. Decca 67234) (Recorded February 27, 1940.) (Decca 1 970—2s. 5d.)

66793—Crosby directing, probably. Joe Kearns, Bill Stegmeyer (altos); Eddie Miller, Gil Rodin (tenors); Irving Fazola (clart.); Bill Butterfield, Zeke Zarchy, Shorty Cherock (tpts.); Ray Conniff, Warren Smith (trmps.); Joe Sullivan (pno.); Nappy Lamare (gtar.); Bob Haggart (bass); Ray Bauduc (drums).

67234—Crosby directing. George Koenig, Stegmeyer (altos); Miller, Rodin (tenors); Fazola (clart.); Butterfield, Bob Peck, Max Herman (tpts.); Smith, Conniff (tpts.); Jess Stacy (pno.); Lamare (gtar.); Haggart (bass); Bauduc (drums).

THE Decca Company have developed an unfortunate habit lately of issuing Bob Crosby records with one side for the swing fans, and the other with more commercial appeal. This is a habit of which I heartily disapprove.

In this particular coupling, though, things have become

## (GRACE, not WILSON)

rather muddled because "Blue Of The Night"—in spite of a sticky vocal—has a piano solo by Jess Stacy, plus some all-too-short Fazola clarinet, that lifts it into the three-star class.

For those of you who like your Stacy, you can't afford to miss this side. It shows all the style, phrasing and delicate touches that stamp him as a first-class pianist.

"For Dancers Only" suffers by comparison with the Lunceford record of the same tune (Brunswick 02531). The number was written by Sy Oliver as a vehicle for the Lunceford Ork, and hardly seems suitable for the Dixielanders.

The brass play well as a team, and clarinet, tenor and trumpet have nice spots; but, on the whole, it all somehow fails to register.

The Crosby crew are fast becoming just another band; 'tis a great pity.



## LEW STONE AND HIS STONECRACKERS.

\*\*\*Aunt Hagar's Blues (Handy) (Eng. Decca DR5787).

\*At The Jazz Band Ball (La Rocca, Shields) (Eng. Decca DR5789).

(Decca F7916—2s. 5d.)

Stone directing. Andy McDevitt (clart.); Aubrey Franks (tenor); Dave Wilkins (tpt.); George Chisholm, Eric Breeze, Dave Walters (trmps.); Jack Penn (pno.); Ivor Mairants (gtar.); Charlie Short (bass); Jess Cummings (drums). (Recorded May 22, 1941.)

WITH such a galaxy of local talent, this record should have been terrific, but something has gone astray. That "something" is the rhythm section, which, with the exception of Charlie Short on bass, is wooden and completely devoid of lift and feeling.

Some excuse can be made for the front line on those grounds, but, even allowing for all that, they show very little inspiration. McDevitt on clarinet is the one exception, as he turns in some good stuff on the "Jazz Band" side, whilst his solo in the blues earns that side an extra star.

The rest is a sorry tale.

Aubrey Franks seems afraid to let himself go; Chisholm seems to be standing miles from the mike—we can blame the studio engineers for that—whilst Dave Wilkins, for whose trumpet-playing I have the greatest admiration, has had one of those off-days from which he sometimes suffers.

I cannot see any reason for the drumbreaks interspersed liberally through both sides, but I do know one thing—that these boys can really play good jazz when they like. How about putting some on wax next time?



## JOHNNY DODDS AND HIS CHICAGO BOYS (Am. N.).

\*\*\*Blues Galore (Jones) (V.) (Am. Decca 63192).

\*\*\*29th And Dearborn (Jones) (Am. Decca 63191).

(Brunswick 03205—3s. 8d.)

Dodds (clart.) with Charlie Shavers (tpt.); Lillian Armstrong (pno.); Teddy Bunn (gtar.); John Kirby (bass); O'Neil Spencer (drums, vocalist). (Recorded January 21, 1938.)

THIS was originally released over here in February, 1939, on Vocalion S215, and its reissue on Brunswick now is due to that company's policy of putting out the best of the Vocalion series on the other label.

Nothing can be said about their choice in this case, for the band is really in the groove.

Johnny Dodds was a very sincere clarinet player, and his playing of the blues denotes intense feeling. For that reason alone his rather quavery vibrato should not worry you, as the music he makes keeps you listening intently.



MAX BACON shows SAM BROWNE what he's going to do to Hitler when he meets him. Jack Marshall took this dressing-room shot of the two Ambrose stars who, with Evelyn Dall, are slaying 'em in their new variety act. This week they are at the Empress, Brixton, and follow with the Coventry Hippodrome.

His first chorus in the "Blues"—after Bunn's lovely intro—is a fine example of all I've said. Other spots on this side are young Shavers' trumpet and Spencer's vocal in true blues tradition, while the last rified chorus rides nicely.

Taken in slower tempo, the reverse follows the same pattern, except that the vocal is missing. In its place we have a lot more trumpet, and I for one am not complaining.

Might I suggest for the next reissue in this series "Bump It" and "Four Or Five Times"—Jimmy Noone and Band—originally Vocalion?



## TEDDY GRACE (Am. N.) Blues Singer.

\*\*\*\*Low Down Blues (Williams) (Am. Decca 65588) (Recorded May 15, 1939).

\*\*\*Hey, Lawdy Papa (Reed) (Am. Decca 65626) (Recorded May 23, 1939).

(Brunswick 02920—3s. 8d.)

Acc. by Buster Bailey (clart.); Charlie Shavers (tpt.); Sonny Lee (trmb.); Billy Kyle (pno.); Dave Barbour (gtar.); Delmar Kaplan (bass); O'Neil Spencer (drums).

AS far as I'm concerned, this is the record of the week, and Miss Grace has the freedom of my radiogram for a long time. She displays real coloured blues singing at its greatest, and the band with her was selected by someone who knew his jazz.

The tromboning of Sonny Lee

on "Hey, Lawdy Papa" really sends, and although Sonny has had a long and varied career in jazz (he was some time with Isham Jones' Ork, then, the Herman bunch), I rank his playing here as his tops to date.

That man Shavers excels in some fine behind-the-vocal trumpet, and the rhythm section are more than adequate. But, with all that, I give five stars willingly to Teddy.

More like this, Brunswick, please.

## U.S. Hit Parade

Here is the latest available list of the ten most popular tunes on America's radio, as assessed by the weekly nation-wide ballot conducted by the American Tobacco Co. and broadcast in their "Your Hit Parade" programme over the Columbia network.

1. DADDY (1-1).
2. MARIA ELENA (2-6).
3. 'TIL REVEILLE (9-2).
4. INTERMEZZO (5-7).
5. GREEN EYES (3-3).
6. THINGS I LOVE (4-4).
7. YOURS (6-8).
8. I GUESS I'LL HAVE TO DREAM THE REST.
9. YOU AND I (8-9).
10. HUT-SUT SONG (5).

Figures in parentheses indicate previous placings since we reintroduced this feature the week before last.

No. 8. The newly formed Norwich Club is going on well, and a successful meeting last Sunday heard Beryl Bryden discuss Benny Goodman, while the Jam Session included Chic Milne (clart.); Jack Hornsby (piano) and Peter Pinching (drums).

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# BRAND'S ESSENCE

"SEAWARD HO!" is the name of the house from which pianist HARRY PACKHAM writes to me. And seaward ho! it is with him these days. No leisurely voyage across well-charted seas, but hectic, hair-raising dashes into mine-strewn, misty waters to rescue British and German airmen who have been forced down in the "drift."

For he's working with the Directorate of the Air/Sea Rescue Services, and many is the hazardous trip he's been called upon to make.

There was the recent occasion when they succeeded in picking up a complete bomber crew who'd been in their dinghy right in the middle of a minefield for over eight days. And were the crew glad to see them!

There was another occasion, a few weeks back, when their little speed-launch was trapped and attacked by enemy surface craft, probably E-boats, in the pitch black of a misty, murky night. Luckily, speed and what Harry calls "the noble art of doing the right thing at the right moment," got them all out of a nasty jam.

All the same, he manages to get in any amount of playing, and comments upon the love of the Services to reminisce around a piano after the dance has finished. One night they kept him at it for three-and-a-quarter hours, recalling high-spots of the past with hit-tunes of bygone years!

It took Harry back a bit, too; to most of the capitals of Europe, where he and John Colyer so successfully played their two-piano concerts; to the days of Lou Abelardo (remember his "Lou Speaking" from the old Kettner's?); when Leo Vauchant was trombonist with the original Ambrose Blue Lyres; when the late Harry Bentley sang with Carroll Gibbons; when Fred and Manuel Elzalde first burst upon the British jazz scene.

Still, as Harry says, it's no good living wholly on the past. And to support his words, he announces that he has just become engaged to a very charming girl, whom I look forward to meeting before very long.

Best of luck to you both!

By one of those strange coincidences that keep happening in this office, JOHN COLYER himself dropped in as I was reading Harry's letter.

With first-class musical degrees behind him, and with much dance experience on top of that,

by  
**PAT BRAND**

he is now preparing to bid temporary farewell to his two Bluethner concert grands in the country, and return to London's dancers.

Though if he gets the sort of resident job he's looking for, he says he'll even have one of his own Bluethners installed.

Another unexpected visitor last week was vivacious swing saxist red-head IVY BENSON, whom nobody would have suspected had just come off the Scottish express after eleven-and-a-half hours in a sleeper in which she could not sleep.

She is enthusiastic about her Glasgow Locarno fourteen-piece—with justification, as all who heard their recent broadcast will agree.

But she told me a story behind that session that will touch a chord in the hearts of all broadcasting band-leaders.

Forty-eight hours before the red light was due to glow her clarinet broke!

For six and a half years, she had used no other. It was a Pensel Mueller. Danny Polo had introduced her to the make when he was over here; he and Billy Amstell possessed the only two in this country until Ivy sent to America for hers. What was to be done?

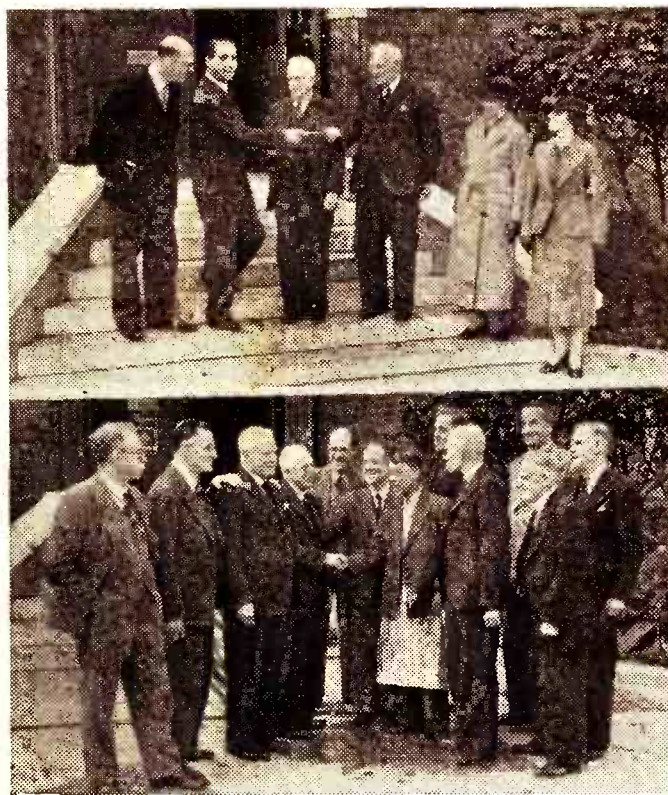
Impossible to effect repairs in the time. Frantically she contacted Boosey and Hawkes—who sent her their best model by return of post! To them goes no little share of the credit for the excellence of the broadcast.

Now, she tells me, she's enlarging the band, and is looking for a first-class straight pianist, if possible with a good singing (not crooning) voice, to play second piano; and also for two good violinists.

This will bring the band up to 17—five brass, four saxes, three fiddles, five rhythm, out of which a string section of seven is available—plus vocalist.

How is it that you never hear a JACK PAYNE programme over-run or under-run its allotted air-time?

Not for Jack is that maddening fade-out in mid-vocal, nor that equally infuriating tick-tock,



(Above): W. J. Pugh and R. G. Skillin being presented with cheques by Leslie Boosey and Geoffrey Hawkes to celebrate the completion of 60 years' service in the brass and woodwind shops, respectively, of Boosey and Hawkes. (Below): A group of Boosey and Hawkes' instrument-makers whose combined ages total 730 years. (See news-story on page 2.)

tick-tock during which you wonder why on earth the band isn't allowed to play another number. Watching Jack on a broadcast gives the clue, and is at the same time an astonishing revelation into the amount of forethought that lies behind every single session he does on the air.

To begin with, he prepares his programme of numbers, and allots so many minutes to each one. This he passes over to his arranger, and at the first rehearsal compares the running-time of each number with that pencilled on the programme sheet, making out his schedule accordingly.

Then comes the actual broadcast.

Here, from the first glow of the red light, he works by stop-watch. At the end of each number, his assistant, Bernard Reddington, shows him the stop-watch, and Jack knows to a fraction how time is going. Bridge passages in the concert arrangements are accelerated to gain perhaps only a second—chords are held just that extra bit longer, or cut off as required.

The final bars of "Say It With Music" are exciting to watch as well as listen to. Stop-watch in hand, Reddington stands beside the maestro. Jack's eyes are fixed upon it. Up go his hands to hold the final chord and—down! Out goes the red light.

Jack Payne claims, and has proved his claim over a number of years, that no matter how many times he conducts a number, the tempo never varies. If he says it will run for three minutes twenty seconds on the air, it might run three minutes eighteen or three minutes twenty-one. It will never run three minutes ten or three minutes thirty seconds.

Don't ask me how it's done. It's a gift, plus intense planning behind the scenes. And so the B.B.C. and the listeners appreciate it!

And, by the way, congratulations to Jack for his friendly gesture in bringing LOU PREAGER to the microphone on his broadcast last Thursday evening (9 p.m.).

Lou made a cheery and confident speech, and the whole episode was most human and comradely.

May I extend a welcome here to THE SEMI-PRO NEWSLETTER, second issue of which is now in the hands of dozens of former S.E. London musicians now serving in the Forces?

The Editor, who modestly describes himself as "just a com-

mon or garden semi-pro playing sax and clarinet, who has played with most of the well-known S.E. London semi-pro outfits and participated in 'M.M.' contests," has devised this scheme to keep his colleagues in touch with one another and their profession, has written and produced it, and is distributing it free to those who ask for it, entirely solo.

It's a grand gesture on his part, and all he asks in return is your collaboration. So drop him a line, you ex-semi-pros, giving him all the dope you've got, and address it to 57, Kingsground, Eltham, London, S.E.9.

To-day (Friday), at 7.30 p.m. on the Forces wavelength, Harry Parry and the Radio Rhythm Club will be presenting ROY PLOMLEY in a record recital entitled "Swing from the Paris that Used to Be."

Roy knows Parisian swing probably better than any other Englishman. He was one of the last Englishmen to leave Paris at its capitulation, and his four years with I.B.C. gave him every opportunity of meeting the visiting and resident stars. He was responsible for those exciting Sunday-night broadcasts from Poste Parisien by Willie Lewis and his Orchestra, which were twice relayed by the B.B.C.

Garland Wilson, Guy Viseur, Max Geldray, Una Mae Carlisle, Alice and Benny Carter, Josephine Baker, Henry Starr, Bill Coleman, Herman Chittison, Valaida, Danny Polo, Michael Warlop and, of course, the Quintet du Hot Club—these and many others took the air under his direction, and it is with such names as these that to-night's broadcast will deal.

One of his happiest Paris memories is of Duke Ellington and the Duke's two sensational concerts at the Trocadero in 1938.

After the second concert, while jazz celebrities from London and all over France were seeking him with a view to interesting him in various jazz masterpieces that they had written, Roy and his fiancée, the Chinese film actress Diana Wong, sat with the Duke and Irving Mills, chatting in an almost empty café.

Roy tried in vain to get him to talk about his music. The only thing the Duke would say was: "You know, I'm one hell of a bad pianist. I wish I could get better!"

No. 22. At a recent Nottingham meeting the Chicago and New Orleans albums were reviewed. Next, on October 19, will include a J.S.

No. 33. Southsea met last Saturday to hear "Records at Random," by Roy Leggett, and the usual J.S. Next meeting, October 26, at 3 p.m.

# Classics of Jazz

by **EDGAR JACKSON**

(who swaps Features with Bill Elliott for the week)

No. 45—"Home Cooking"/"The Eel," by Eddie Condon and his Orchestra (Parlophone R2807)

## PERSONNEL.

Pee-Wee Russell (clarinet); Bud Freeman (tenor); Max Kaminsky (tp.); Floyd O'Brien (trb.); Joe Sullivan (pno. in "Home Cooking"); Alex Hill (pno. in "The Eel"); Eddie Condon (banjo); Arthur Bernstein (bass); Sidney Catlett (drums).

Recorded 1933. Originally issued December, 1934, respectively on Brunswick 02005 and 02006, as part of a "Short Survey of Modern Rhythm," compiled by Leonard Hibbs, and for which he wrote a descriptive booklet on jazz.

DOING this feature just once is very different from doing it regularly.

You feel you have to justify not only yourself, but jazz all in one go.

It's like being granted one wish before being executed. There are so many things you want to wish that you can't decide on which.

And it's no use trying to spin it out by any such request as to be allowed to learn to play the violin. Even if I could spin this feature ten times its length, I'm still tied down to one record.

## THE EASY ROAD

All sorts of choices have been running through my head. Billie Holiday, some of the old Red Nichols' Five Pennies discs, Count Basie's "Jumpin' At The Woodside," and "Topsy" (Brunswick 02684) and, oh, dozens of others which Bill Elliott has overlooked!

Then I remembered that the too-pressing attentions of a certain Luftwaffe had robbed me of my library, and it would be impossible to play any of these records to check up the details you will expect.

So in the end I decided to take the easy road and use those two famous

Condon sides which Parlophone have just reissued.

First thing about them is that they provide some of the greatest work of the famous Bud Freeman.

He opens this fast "Eel" with a 32-bar solo which is not only inspired in itself but remained the inspiration for many of his subsequent solos. Then, after a chromatic interlude in which he takes the lead, he goes on to do another 24 bars before being heard again, with the band just playing stop melody, before the record breaks into the slow tempo coda with Kaminsky taking the lead.

## RHYTHM'S "PUMPING DRIVE"

In between there are good solos by O'Brien, Pee-Wee and Kaminsky, but the feature of the side is Bud's tenor and the pumping drive of the rhythm section, with Condon's busy but swinging banjo, in a typical intimate gin-mill get-together set-off.

There's more good Freeman in slower, 12-bar blues "Home Cooking," but this isn't Bud's record to quite such a great extent.

As typical dive jazz in the Chicago style, I'm not certain that Pee-Wee's roaky, breathy clarinet isn't even more outstanding.

Sullivan's simple piano eloquence, O'Brien's naïve but effectively direct muted trombone solo, and Kaminsky's more biting trumpet declamations (with O'Brien's gloriously "dirty" lunging gliss underneath Maxie's intro, to the side), are other features which go to make this another perfect example of improvised white jazz at its best.

# LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

MR. JACKSON'S criticism of the selection of records issued in this country, and of the activities of Messrs. Moody and Elliott, is both surprising and extraordinarily inopportune.

It is surprising because we all know what happens when Mr. Jackson selects records. The second H.M.V. "Masters of Swing" Album contained three deplorable sides by Pastor and Barnet, and two strictly mediocre sides of Mannone. In the Parlophone "Super Rhythm Stars" Album of six records, only that by Joe Sullivan was worth a cuss.

In addition, the couplings of the records in these two albums had all been juggled about. To those of us who buy records, that is an infuriating thing.

Presumably, what Mr. Jackson would now give the "lovers of true jazz" is more and better Goodman, and Charlie Barnet. (The good Lord spare us!) The importance of Goodman depends upon your credulity, your resistance to the ballyhoo which has made of him a kind of jazz god. Barnet's chief claim to fame, it would seem, is that he has a band which skillfully imitates the Duke's. Let's stick to the original.

The criticism is inopportune because we have just had twelve records of the true, deep jazz issued here—the New Orleans set on Brunswick and the "Jelly Roll" Mortons on H.M.V. It is hard to imagine that Mr. Jackson had anything to do with their release, for previously he had panned vigorously and regularly a series of records with similar charming characteristics—Bechet's.

[Bill Elliott's suggestion to Wally Moody was responsible for their release.—Ed. "M.M."]

Finally, the Goodman "Amapola" is cited as an example of Mr. Moody's evil work. Recall Mr. Jackson's reviews of the marvelous and previously unused sides by Louis in the Parlophone "Jazz Classics Series." They showed such appreciation of the subject that Mr. Moody may well have deemed "Amapola" to be right up the Jackson alley.

Braintree, Essex. **STANLEY F. DANCE.**

I have watched with growing concern the attitude of Edgar Jackson towards jazz in recent months. His approval of the Goodman Sextet records was a bad sign. His anti-Bechet crusade was, to say the least, alarming. Now his objection to the reissuing of old and established jazz classics is the last straw and thus prompts me to register my protests.

Possibly Mr. Jackson is unaware of the fact that the majority of collectors in this country, like myself, have only begun their hobby during the last five years. What chance have they had then of obtaining these outstanding examples of their favourite music? But possibly our eminent critic thinks that a flow of slick synthetic tripe will make up for shortcomings like that.

The only redeeming feature of this week's Jacksonian outburst is the advocating of more records by the brilliant Charlie Barnet. But most certainly not at the expense of the Parlophone Jazz Classics series and the new H.M.V. Collector series.

I say that, in the inauguration of these two series, Mr. Moody is doing a lot for jazz, for, being utterly uncommercial they appeal to the connoisseur only. I indict Mr. Jackson as a positive menace to true jazz collectors all over the country, who, I feel sure, would not like to see this latest outrage influence Mr. Moody in any way. Phew! Thank Heaven for Bill Elliott!

Withington, Manchester. **J. ADDISON.**

A FEW years ago, Leonard Hibbs put forward the suggestion that if single-sided records were issued, thinner than normal discs, and backed by a plain surface covered by a good adhesive tape which covered a really good gum, two could be placed back to back, and they would form one double-sided disc. The advantage of which, of course, is obvious.

All record lovers have often to buy a record simply for one side, the other side of which they detest. With us jazz fans, for example, how many of us I wonder have cursed the fact that we have had to buy Trumbauer's corny "How Am I To Know" in order to secure Armstrong's classic "St. Louis Blues"?

There are hundreds of similar instances in all branches of the record world, and, as far as we jazz fans are concerned, especially in these days when we are offered many a record on one side of which there is a "solid sender" and on the other side a "commercial," which we do not even bother to play.

But if we could only choose our own two sides and stick them together, what a blessing it would be! And who would begrudge paying a little extra to have discs both sides of which equally pleased us?

What about it, gramophone companies?

Afterthought: If "Mike" suggests putting adhesive tape on the playing sides of current jazz records, don't take any notice of him!

R.N. Barracks

G. E. PRICE.

When a number of classical students or enthusiasts get together, the conversation nearly always turns to a discussion on what composition of music is the acme of perfection.

Beethoven's 3rd, 5th, 6th and 9th, Tchaikovsky's 5th and 6th, and perhaps Mozart's 40th all have their admirers, but perhaps after lengthy discussion, one usually is admitted the very best—perhaps the "Pastoral."

It may be interesting to see what the opinions of the "Jazz Men" are on the question: "What is the best jazz record ever waxed?"

I know that before I start I am letting myself in for some rude remarks and brickbats but I think I'll chance that.

Let us see what the best record should consist of:—

(a) I don't think it need be both sides of the disc. The actual recording is what I really mean.

(b) It must be more than just a string of choruses. It must have a definite form which can be recognised when heard, so that on hearing it one can say: "Ah! that is so-and-so."

(c) I think that it must contain a certain amount of good orchestral work and it must, of course, contain very spirited playing, a certain amount of good solo playing, and, of course, it must be the very essence of "jazz."

A tall order may be, but I think that I have it!

Gentlemen (and ladies, too), I give you the Bob Crosby disc of "SOUTH RAMPART ST. PARADE." What do you think, "Mike"?

SAPPER HARRY E. BRIGGS.

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# JAZZ AS AN INCENTIVE TO HOLDING HANDS

by  
"MIKE"

Our Critic-at-Large

OWING to one thing and another, I have had no opportunity of playing Duke Ellington's "Blue Serge" since I last wrote on this page. I can only hope, therefore, in discussing this piece, that it is, in fact, the record I have in mind.

If by some mischance I am found to be talking about two other records altogether, please don't be too rude about it, and insist that I do not know what I am talking about.

Whatever the title of the record I have in mind, it is still characteristic of the phase of Duke's work which, if it does not puzzle me, at least distresses me.

It distresses me above all because I find that this later aspect of Duke's music is defended by some of my colleagues whose taste I had hitherto respected.

Let us presume, therefore, that I am right in supposing that "Blue Serge" is the record I listened to ten days ago.

Yes, I listened; I did not merely put the record on the turntable and go on talking. Some of the best of jazz sounds even better for being a tolerable background to conversation: in-

deed, I am not certain that, in many cases, the supreme test of jazz is not its value as a purely social function, as an incentive to social intercourse, whether you are talking to your dancing partner or making love to her sitting at a table away from the dance floor.

All this, however, is sheer romanticising.

What perturbs me in these days is that jazz no longer sets out to fulfil either function. It barely inspires one to dance; still less does it allow one to talk to one's dancing partner. Least of all does it encourage the holding of hands across—or underneath—the table.

It seems to me that jazz is in a state of bitter revolt—against itself. It is as though it had grown ashamed of its powers, of

its own inherent ability to soothe, to inspire and encourage sentimental thoughts and emotions.

Soft lights and sweet music may sound a dreadfully commercial way to think of jazz, but I'm not certain that half the charm of jazz in the days gone by was not in fact its value as a sentimental background.

The earliest expressions of jazz were the expressions of sentiment—of joy, of sorrow, of happy and unhappy love affairs. By means of music, both player and listener were closely related.

You and your girl, living in that peculiarly misty and exquisitely miserable state that we call being in love, found your emotions encouraged and underlined by artists who seemed to understand exactly how you felt.

A solo by Hawkins was a musical commentary on your own state of mind, played by an artist who somehow understood how you both felt about it all.

But that quality, that sense of atmosphere—in short, the expression of sentiment—has disappeared from jazz. The only artist who still realises its importance is Artie Shaw.

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Editorial, Advertising  
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93 LONG ACRE, W.C.2

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He plays as though he really felt music meant something in other people's young lives. Indeed, Artie Shaw is almost the only personality left in jazz who still interests me.

Maybe his recording of "I Cover The Waterfront" is considered "commercial"; maybe it isn't "swing." But it has something which precious few of his contemporaries can provide.

Shaw's contemporaries are passing through a phase—at least I hope they are passing through it, and not adopting it as a permanent habit—a phase of violence and deliberate materialism, which characterised art shortly after the last war.

## JAZZ AGE

The years which followed 1914-18 were popularly known to produce the art of the Jazz Age. Tremendous talent and energy were wasted in the production of art which was meaningless, which attempted to shock and shatter, and which was dead and buried within a few months of its birth.

Listen to that piece called "Blue Serge." It is unpleasant music; the melodic line is deliberately—there is only one word for it—"wrong."

It represents a self-conscious attempt to shock the listener; by the most studied of methods it avoids the obvious.

It avoids the obvious so successfully that, after a while, you begin to anticipate the twists, the unmusical jerks of harmony and melody until the unobvious in itself becomes obvious and commonplace.

Listen to it. For the first few bars you expect the tune to go one way, and it goes another. A few bars later, realising that Duke has no intention of following the natural path, you can begin to anticipate the unnatural path. In the end the whole business has become so familiar and stale that it holds no surprises, except unpleasant ones.

It is hard, unfriendly music. And there is no place in jazz for hardness and unfriendliness.

## COMMERCIAL RECORDS REVIEWED by "CORN"

NOT wishing to cause a second universal upheaval, I'm mentioning—for the moment, at any rate—no names.

But when I hear some of the records being issued these days, especially by the larger British dance bands, which provide the bulk of the recordings of current "commercial" song-and-dance tunes, it makes me wonder how they have the nerve to put them out.

There is, of course, some difficulty in finding good bands, but the recording companies seem to have overlooked the existence of at least one—Jack Payne's.

Now I know Jack's band is rather "straight." It never really swings a phrase, even by accident, even when it has arrangements (e.g., "Daddy") which could be swung.

But it's a mighty good band nevertheless. In addition to a musicianliness which many of our better more avowedly "dance" bands might do well to study, it has a character of its own. Its music is different. Many of its arrangements are as attractive as they are original.

And if singing means anything, you'll have to go some way to beat those two kids Gloria Brent and "Georgina," not to mention the capable Bruce Trent.

I'm not suggesting that Jack Payne should be flung into the recording melting-pot as just another band to churn out contemporary "pops" as such, with arrangements hacked out overnight and committed to the wax insufficiently rehearsed, as is all too obviously the case with all too many bands.

But I do suggest that many of the more carefully conceived performances which I have heard from him over the air would make pleasurable additions to anybody's stock of records.

### DORSEY NAP

"Aurora," by JIMMY DORSEY (Brunswick 03209) is my nap selection for this week. It has a good deal more than the supreme instrumental efficiency which has become a *sine qua non* of the modern American dance band, and a good vocal by Helen O'Connell. The patterning for the piano against stop melody by the brass, and a fast, swinging,

walking bass in the first and last choruses is at once a most original and effective touch. And it's not the only one in this novel treatment of this typically South American song.

Coupling, "A Rose And A Prayer," is as sentimental as its title suggests, but you can't help admiring the boldness with which J. D., abetted once again by that arch-maestro of crooners, Bob Eberly puts it over.

On Monday (20th) evening the B.B.C. are due to broadcast radio version of "Kiss The Boys Good-bye," the Connie Boswell-Mary Martin "Rochester"—Don Ameche film which Paramount are scheduled for general release on December 15.

I haven't seen the picture, but I think you ought to catch this pre-audition, because of its three more promising tunes; one—"Sand In My Shoes"—is a cert. for the hit stakes.

### GERALDO—AMBROSE

There's a good record of it by GERALDO (Parlophone F1861, coupled with the current waltz hit "Russian Rose"), and an even better one by the R.A.F. DANCE ORCHESTRA (Decca F7697, with "I'll Never Let a Day Pass By" from the same film).

Much of this R.A.F. Ork's version is Jimmy Miller's unassuming, but none the less telling, singing; but what with the last chorus and the accompaniment to vocal, one hears more than enough of the band to realise that it's up to form in both performance and arrangement.

Geraldo is also in the current supplements with "Aurora" and "St. Mary's In The Twilight" (Parlophone F1859).

Former, for all its triple-tongue trumpets, bright tempo and easy beat in the rhythm section, somehow lacks atmosphere, but you can't say that about the coupling. They've even got a full-sized organ going to put over this deluge of sentimentality.

AMBROSE, incidentally, does the same number on Decca F7952, with "It Always Rains Before The Rainbow," but happily without descending to quite such depths, and the records may be said to be about as good as a good band can do with such tunes.

But the best of the new Ambroses is "London Pride" (Decca F7966), if only because our Ammie achieves the impossible and gets this tune over without any trace of its inherent corniness. All other bands please note!

The coupling here is a waltz, "The Band Played On," from a film "The Strawberry Blonde."



Jack Payne.

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# SMALL HOT BANDS ON THE AIR

I'll bet some of you guys grinned on reading last week that your great radio expert (!!!) had put himself *hors de combat* trying to repair a radio set.

But it wasn't really quite as bad as that.

First, I don't profess to be a radio technician (we've a real one on the staff—"Dabbler"); secondly, I wasn't trying to repair a set. I was packing one up in a crate when the 'ammer slipped, mum, and 'it the wrong nail—to wit, one on my thumb.

Nevertheless, many thanks to all you boys and girls who so kindly sent me notes of sympathy, also to those of you whose letters I was able to use for the column the injury prevented me from writing myself. I must try the same gag again next time I want a week's holiday.

Up to time of writing the B.B.C. have maintained an aloof silence on the suggestion made by a reader, and accepted by us, the week before last, that the "M.M." should stage a Jam Session for the Radio Rhythm Club.

But on three occasions since the suggestion was published they have themselves provided what may fairly be described as the next best thing to a real Jam Session—i.e., small hot bands not hampered by too much in the way of arrangements.

## LEW STONE

Last Sunday night we had Lew Stone and his Stonerackers.

Whatever advance qualms the title of the programme, "Artistic Jazz," may have caused, they were dispelled in the first few moments of the broadcast.

Using Carl Barribeau (clart.), Aubrey Franks (tenor), Dave Wilkins (tpt.), a section of three trombones consisting of Woolf Phillips, Lad Busby and Harry Roach, with Jack Penn, Ivor Mairants, Tom Bromley and Jock Jacobsen as the rhythm section, Lew put over exactly the same sort of music as he has featured on his latest Stoneracker waxings.

The employment of the trombone team (used mainly for harmonic background) necessarily called for a certain amount of dots, but most of the rest of the music was improvised, and we had plenty of the usual good stuff from Barribeau, Franks, Wilkins, Phillips and Penn, not to mention Ivor and his guitar.

In fact, taken all round, Franks, Wilkins, and, particularly, Phillips (who played like a little

## Recent Radio Reported by "DETECTOR"

angel), were so much better than they were on the recent Radio Rhythm Club Jam Session that they might almost have been different people.

Exactly why this should have been so is perhaps not so difficult to explain as it might at first seem.

Even the best jazz improvisers have to be completely at ease before they can give of their best.

The presence of a microphone and all that it implies, whether in a radio or recording studio, tends to destroy that ease, and the best way to restore it is through the confidence which comes of knowing what is going to happen—in other words, through having rehearsed the numbers first.

At any rate, the rehearsals for the broadcast undoubtedly gave this band not only a polish, but a sense of relaxation which most purely impromptu broadcast jazz in this country seldom has.

The previous Friday (October 10) we had something on the same lines from Ann Shelton and her Playboys.

Ann more than lived up to her reputation, but it was the Playboys who at once surprised and pleased your humble critic.

## ANN'S PLAYBOYS

Lined up and directed by that grand old stalwart Poggie, with his clarinet, they consisted of Benny Greenwood (tenor), Dave Wilkins (tpt.), Jack Penn (pno. and arranger), Tom Bromley (bass), George Chisholm (trmb.), and Max Abrams (drums).

Chisholm, of course, stole the show, but the rest of the boys (especially, perhaps, Greenwood) put up a fine performance in the many numbers the band had to itself, as well as providing Ann with a background which ought to have been as pleasing to listeners as it should have been satisfactory to her.

Thus, once again did the capable David Miller prove himself to be one of the all too few hopes for jazz at the B.B.C.

Thirdly, there was Harry Parry's R.R.C. Sextet at last Thursday week's meeting of the Radio Rhythm Club.

This was conspicuous for more than the return of Joe Deniz and Tom Bromley, now happily sufficiently recovered from the injuries they received in the Café de Paris blitz the night poor Ken Johnson was killed.

The inclusion of more solo items—for instance, Lauderica Caton's "Java Jive" and Roy Marsh's "Oceans Of Notions"—and the presentation of the latest trumpet "discovery," Kenny Baker, did much to dispel the "sameness" from which the Sextet's previous broadcasts had commenced to suffer.

Although young Baker didn't seem quite up to form, he played more than well enough to show that he is a real stylist.

Another who did well was Tommy Pollard, who replaced George Shearing, and Harry Parry's little verbal character sketch of Roy Marsh helped to capture the true Rhythm Club spirit more than anything I have heard him say on any other R.R.C. broadcast.

## READERS SAY IT FOR US

Isn't it enough that we should have to suffer such childish nonsense as the comedy (sic!) in such shows as "Just Kidd-ing," without having to bear also the shame of knowing that it is being broadcast to America?—"Squirring," Claygate.

People talk about musicianship in bands, but if they want to know what it really means, they should listen-in to Fred Hartley and his Music.

The way the strings in this outfit play is equalled only by the way they are scored for.

And that's not the only good point about this at once tuneful, imaginative and—yes!—often rhythmically stylish combination—"Jazz Musician(!)," Manchester.

A few days ago the B.B.C. broadcast in a programme of unusual records a rhythm section accompaniment for "Tiger Rag." Are such records suitable for practising to, are they obtainable to-day, and, if so, who makes them?—"Semi-Pro," Lincoln.

[That's just what these records are meant for—practising your own hot choruses. They are called "Melody Maker," "Rhythm" Accompaniment Records, and were made under the supervision of Edgar Jackson. There are heaps of them, all available on Decca and Brunswick. Full lists of titles appear in these catalogues.—"Detector."]

Have I gone ga-ga, or has the B.B.C. again altered its interval signal?—Mary Ashworth, A.T.S.

[You're not ga-ga, girlie. The three trombones now play those notes B.B.C. more legato. Change is certainly an improvement.]

Can it be that the B.B.C. is at last taking some heed of the disgust "M.M." readers have rightly expressed at the alleged comedy in its variety shows?

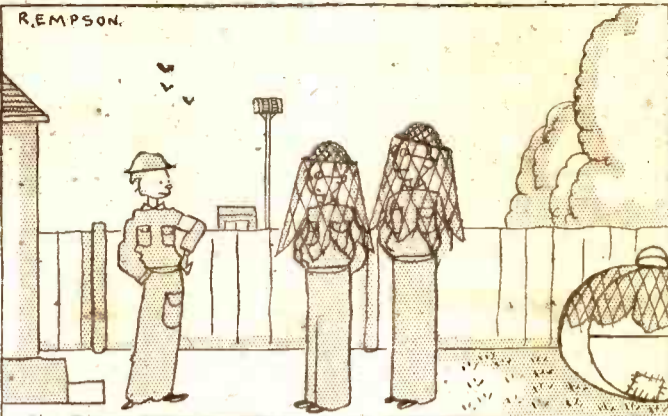
At any rate, I recently heard, while on leave, two such productions which were really funny.

First was "Welcome All!—a Village Concert" (Wednesday, October 8). The compering by "Farmer Will Watchet" and his Stooges was great enough to have bolstered up many worse acts, even though some of them were not so hot. This team of comperes must be retained, and not only for "Welcome All!"

Second show was last Friday's (October 10) edition of "I.T.M.A." I bow to whoever wrote that script. Every line a laugh, and every laugh a good one; and none of that boring old-fashioned dragging tempo or drawing out of moth-eaten chestnuts. This is the sort of show the B.B.C. should get America to take. It would at least let them know over there that our idea of comedy isn't entirely confined to the slow-witted, red-nosed, custard-pie era.—Sgt. Geoffrey Roberts, Royal Tank Corps.

No. 2. Winchmore Hill. Next Thursday's recital will be "Jazz Piano," by Bryant Cornell. Last Thursday's recital was given by Den Berry on "Converting People to Jazz," which had been postponed from the previous week. The usual Jam Session will follow. Meetings held at Highfield Road School, Winchmore Hill. Inquiries to Bryant Cornell, 68, Dawlish Avenue, Palmers Green, N.13.

No. 150. The last meeting of the East Ham Club featured an interesting debate on "Was Bix Overrated?" Colin Tyler is the recitalist on October 21, when he will present "Sidelights on Solos." Herbert's School of Dancing, 738, Barking Road, East Ham, every Tuesday.



BILLY PLONKIT (HOME GUARD)! "We'll have to discontinue our camouflage lessons, fellers. Mum wants the curtains to put back on the bathroom windows!"

## NORTHERN NEWS NOTES

A CHANGE of both bands and policy has recently occurred at the Rialto Ballroom, Liverpool. After the recent dispute, when leader Artie Williams, pianist Bill Harrison, drummer Jackie Brooks, and manager E. Harrison, all left, everything is going smoothly again under the guidance of the new manager, Mr. Ramsden, Jr., son of well-known Sam Ramsden, of the Plaza, Derby, home of Billy Merrin's Commanders.

The new leader and featured trumpeter is Hadyn Powell, from the Garrick, Southampton; Tommy Heath, from Morecambe, is on drums; whilst youthful Dennis Steele, ex-Henry Hall and Johnny Rosen virtuoso, is on piano, although he may be going back to the R.A.F. shortly.

A policy of engaging whole-time musicians only is now being followed.

## RHYTHM CLUB NEWS

No. 1. Wally Moody was the chief attraction last Sunday, and his recital was a great success. The Jam Session included Danny Deans (trumpet); Tee Snoad, Andre Goersh (tenors and clars.); Bernie Silver, Peter Verney and Jack Turner (drums); Joe Deniz (guitar); and Dick Katz (piano). The chief feature next week will be the disposal of 500 records, part of a super collection ranging from 1928. These will be on sale from 2.30 onwards, and some will be played and auctioned during the afternoon. Jam Session as usual.

No. 5. Next meeting (Friday) of the N.W.3 group will include "Waller in Doggerel" by Tom Parker, some piano solos by Dick Katz, and the Jam Session. Friday, October 24, King of Bohemia, High Street, Hampstead, at 7.30.

No. 9. Erdington meet to-night (Friday) at the Church House to hear K. P. Darke on the "Chicago Boys" and a Jam Session.

No. 16. The Wolverton (Bucks) Club is now under way, and a very successful first meeting was held at the Scout Hall on October 5. The next meeting is October 19 at 8 p.m., and all interested should contact the secretary at 213, Windsor Street, Wolverton, Bucks.

No. 24. Doncaster had a very good opening night and are looking forward to the next meeting on Sunday at the Ritz Ballroom at 7 p.m., when there will be a record recital and Jam Session.

No. 87. Hitchin meet at the Church House every Thursday at 8.15, and on October 16 heard Ken Payne present "What Jazz Does to Me." The "Jelly Roll" Album was also played.

No. 114. At Bradford's last meeting the recitals were by J. Gittinas and Alan Holgate, whilst the Jam Session included Nat Gonella, Tommy Simms, Danny Brett and Roland Bowers.

No. 151. The last meeting of the Dewsbury Club featured V. M. Thorne on "The Story of the Blues," followed by a discussion on "The Merits of British Jazz." The usual Jam Session was a great success.

No. 161. The next two meetings of the Sidecup Club, to be held at the Station Hotel, Sidecup, on Mondays, will include recitals on Fletcher Henderson and "Corn" by Pte. Gillians and J. C. Godbolt respectively.

No. 174. Putney had another fine meeting on October 9, when Peter Tanner discussed Bunny Berigan and the session included Dick Katz, Eddie Guy, George Weston. Next meeting October 23, when Bill Elliott presents "Out of the Oven," and there will be a J.S. "Duke's Head," Lower Richmond Road, 7.15.

No. 175. Streatham's next meeting is October 23, when Stan Wright presents "Blues Singers." Owing to pressure of work, Roy Hardy has had to resign the secretaryship, and letters should now go to Alan Black, 50, Wharfedale Gardens, Thornton Heath. Bristol, T. Rogers, 21, Beloe Road, Horfield, Bristol, wants to get a club going, so write and give him a hand.

NOVEMBER 1 will be the first anniversary at the Stretford (Manchester) Trades and Labour Club, of Hughie Gibb and His Band, who took over when Stan Scholes was called into the R.A.F. and was thus obliged to relinquish the job.

Playing each Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Saturday, with Fridays allotted for private functions, Hughie, even in these difficult times manages to keep together a grand little six-piecer which lines-up as follows: Hughie Gibb (drums), Geo. Bradshaw (piano), Harry Clay and Jimmie Cauldwell (saxes, etc.), Dicky Mason (trumpet), and Harry Thompson (trombone).

In addition to this work, Hughie is also one of the leading lights in the dance band at Metropolitan Vickers works, where he is engaged during the daytime on work of paramount national importance.

Back home again in Manchester is guitarist-vocalist Ivor Daniels, who, since being invalided out of the Army some three months ago, has been playing at Blackpool with the Tower Band under Richard Crean.

His stay at the seaside has proved very beneficial to his health, and he is now comparatively fit again and anxious to get to work. If any band-leader is interested in securing his services I will be glad to effect the necessary introductions.

Some weeks ago I mentioned in these columns that ex-Rosen percussionist Vernon Leigh, now a gunner in the R.A., had formed a band in his unit. What I should have said was that Vernon had "joined" the band, as it was actually formed by L/Br. Maurice Ashurst, who plays guitar and tenor sax in the band.

Perhaps this will put right any misapprehension that may have arisen due to this slip.

JERRY DAWSON.



THE next in the series of prize-winning New Noises is from H. Kunick, of Oxford. This is his contribution:

"Place a cymbal on the vellum of the snare drum, dome side up, and strike with timp stick. By pressing on the cymbal with the left hand with varying pressures the tone will vary. Better to have a strap through the cymbal for quick withdrawal. Snares may be on or off."

This is a good one. There is a slight danger, however, of getting too enthusiastic and pressing the cymbal so hard (in the desire to get still higher tones) that the head splits. Remember not to overdo it, however, and there is no danger.

Don't agree with "the snares may be on or off" part—having tried this I'm convinced that snares off is far and away the better way.

Timp stick wants to be fairly hard. A soft rubber xylophone beater, or wool-wound marimba beater, is even better.

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