

Melody Maker

3^d INCORPORATING "RHYTHM"

EVERY THURSDAY Vol. XX No. 562

F. D. & H. SHOW NETS £1,000 FOR R.A.F. AND FINDS A NEW SWING OUTFIT

A NEW SWING COMBINATION WAS DISCOVERED AT THE DANCE BAND FESTIVAL OF 1944, ORGANISED BY FRANCIS, DAY AND HUNTER, LTD., IN AID OF THE R.A.F. BENEVOLENT FUND, AT THE LONDON COLISEUM LAST SUNDAY (23rd).

The combination is the Frank Deniz Swingtette, consisting of Joe and Frank Deniz on two guitars, Clare Deniz on piano, Jimmy Skidmore on tenor, Tony Butlin (deputising for Tony Lytton) on drums, and Tommy Bromley on bass.

In a star-studded programme with big commercial bands playing big commercial arrangements, this little outfit shone like a planet. It recaptured on the vast stage of the London Coliseum the relaxed spirit of a session at a small night club, and with particularly brilliant tenor playing by Jimmy Skidmore, coupled with a delightful jazz understanding between the two brilliant guitar brothers, plus a really lively rhythm section, their show will long remain in the memory of the packed audience who heard it.

This outfit must appear on Radio Rhythm Club, and what is more, an enterprising recording manager ought to put them on wax right away. This is the small-band stuff that this country badly needs.

FINANCIAL SUCCESS

The concert was a magnificent financial success, over 2850 being taken in tickets, the whole of which goes to the R.A.F. Benevolent Fund, plus a contribution from Francis, Day and Hunter, Ltd., to bring the grand total up to the round figure of £1,000.

Next to the Deniz's—and, of course, in a different genre—the success of the show was the No. 1 Balloon Centre Dance Orchestra (Skyrockets), directed by Cpl. Paul Fenouillet, with Beryl Davis and Denny Dennis singing. This band gets better every time we hear it, and its performance was impeccable.

Eric Winstone brought his big band along, and played some over-orchestrated arrangements which didn't get this critic raving. Eric is a good personality in front of his own small combination, but he seemed a little at sea with all the complications of a big band.

There were some disappointments in the show. Leslie Hutchinson and his All-Star Coloured Orchestra were unable to appear for reasons which Pilot-Officer Roy Rich announced as a "genial misunderstanding" between the Ambrose office and the organisers; Pat Taylor could not appear as she was rehearsing for a broadcast; and Roy Marsh and his Swingtette could not get their dates switched and were unable to make the journey to London from Cardiff in time.

However, there was plenty of other good stuff in the show. Nat Allen and his Band put up a very effective performance, and it was good to meet Johnny Denis and his Novelty Swing Quartet—one of the up-and-coming small combinations of the day—although there is more novelty than swing in the outfit and Johnny's own personality dominates the rest of his boys far too much. Laurence Ross's swing violin tickled the fans, but wanted amplifying.

Ronald Chesney was in brilliant form on the harmonica, and finished his magnificently played programme in a blaze of glory with "Flight of the Bumble Bee."

The London Fire Forces Dance Orchestra wasn't in its best form, although the Debonairs, who sang with the band, certainly made it ride, and finally there was vocalist Mary Naylor, who would have been twice as good had she sung half as many songs.

Usually dance band concerts are "thrown on" in the production sense, so we congratulate the Coliseum back-stage staff, and also Reg Casson who helped, on their splendid staging of the various bands. Their setting for the Skyrockets—which included a huge fluttering R.A.F. flag—was particularly effective.

We also congratulate John Abbott and the Francis, Day and Hunter management for their charitable gesture; Roy Rich for his fund of good stories and cheery personality; and all the artists who generously gave their services for an excellent cause.

HEFT OPENS

FAMOUS piano-star Matt Heft opened up with his own quartette at the exclusive Albany Club in Savile Row last Monday (24th).

Quartette is being presented by Eric Winstone in collaboration with Anglo-American Artists, Ltd.

Combination is piano, Don Stutely (bass), Archie Slavin (gtr.) and Fred Ballezini (tenor and fiddle), and, with Matt's reputation and experience behind it—he was accompanist to Bebe Daniels and is nowadays one of London's busiest "sessioners"—the new outfit scored heavily at its opening, and should be very popular.

From Malta To Malta

READERS will have read in our "Brand's Essence" columns a few weeks ago of the fine reputation built up in Malta by a sapper of the R.E.S. James Kishy, whose xylophone broadcasts helped to keep the population cheerful during the worst of the island's terrible "blitz" period.

Now Sapper Kishy, who is in England, is to be featured in next Sunday's "Calling Malta" programme, and will thus broadcast from the outside world to the little island upon whose internal broadcasting system he was for so long a star.

The "M.M." introduced Kishy to bandleader Nat Allen and "Calling Malta" producer Mike Meehan; and as a result he will broadcast two xylophone solos with Nat Allen's band on Sunday (30th, 8 p.m., G.P.P.).

AS we close for press, we learn that "Concerto, 1944," due to be held in London on Whit Sunday (May 28), has had to be postponed. Full story next week.

MICHAEL FLOME KILLED IN ARMY ROAD-CRASH

THIS IS A TRAGIC WEEK FOR THE DANCE BAND BUSINESS.

TWO ROAD ACCIDENTS HAVE TAKEN THEIR TOLL OF MEMBERS OF THE PROFESSION, AND IT IS WITH THE DEEPEST REGRET THAT WE HAVE TO ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF BANDLEADER-VIOLINIST MICHAEL FLOME, WHICH OCCURRED LAST SATURDAY MORNING (22ND), AFTER THE ARMY LORRY IN WHICH HE WAS TRAVELLING HAD BEEN INVOLVED IN A COLLISION WITH ANOTHER SERVICE VEHICLE.

Michael Flome, who was 36 years of age, will be well remembered for his peace-time broadcasting and bandleading activities, first in the North of England and then at the May Fair Hotel, London.

At the beginning of the war he was M.D. at the Majestic Hotel, Harrogate, and subsequently joined the R.A.M.C., being transferred to the "Stars in Battledress" entertainment unit.

With these boys he did a seven months' tour of North Africa and the

Battledress" were leaving an Army camp in the Midlands, where they had given their first provincial concert since returning from the Middle East.

They were being taken by lorry back to their quarters when a head-on crash occurred, and the truck in which Michael and his companions were travelling was completely wrecked.

Severely injured, Michael was rushed to hospital, where he passed away in the early hours of Saturday morning.

Other members of the company were also injured, and pianist Willie Solomon is still in hospital, suffering from a broken thumb and severe shock. Sax-player Jimmy Williams had his back injured, and comedian Leslie Noyes hurt his head, but both of these boys have now been released from hospital.

The other members of the outfit all suffered severely from shock.

All our readers will join us in expressing our very deepest sympathy with Michael's mother and relatives. Indeed, the profession has lost one of its most cheerful, hard-working and popular personalities. All who knew him will mourn him deeply.

The funeral takes place to-day (Thursday), at East Ham Jewish Cemetery, Marlow Road, East Ham, at 12 noon.

SECOND TRAGEDY

OUR second sad news of this week is to report a tragedy which overtook a semi-professional band within an hour of their winning a Melody Maker Dance Band Contest. Stan Fielding and his Band, having just won the 1944 Potteries Championship at the King's Hall, Stoke, on Thursday last (20th), were returning from the contest when they were involved in a fatal road accident.

Vocalist Dennis Owen was a passenger in the car driven by drummer Ted Chilton, and as the car threaded its way through the blackout it collided with a 12-ton lorry.

The car was wrecked. Chilton escaped with cuts on his face, but Dennis Owen sustained a fractured skull. He was rushed to the Royal Hospital, Wolverhampton, where he died early on Friday morning.

His death will be a very big loss, not only to Stan Fielding's Band, but to a very large circle in his home area, in which he was extremely well known and popular.

Twenty-two years of age, and a native of Wolverhampton, Dennis worked in an aircraft factory during the day. Every bit of his spare time.

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MICHAEL FLOME

Middle East under Army conditions, and it is a tragic reflection that, after being dive-bombed and really in the thick of it in the desert, he should come back to meet his death on the quiet roads of England.

The accident occurred late on Friday night, when the "Stars in

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