

# AMBROSE, HYLTON, JUDGE BEST U.S. SERVICE BANDS

**T**HE leading British bandleaders, including Bert Ambrose, Jack Hylton, etc., are this week co-operating in a particularly pleasant "inter-Allied" innovation at the London Queensberry All-Services Club.

**THIS TAKES THE FORM OF A COMPETITION TO FIND THE BEST AMERICAN SERVICE DANCE BAND AT PRESENT STATIONED IN THIS COUNTRY. SIX BANDS ARE PLAYING AT EVERY EVENING SESSION THROUGHOUT THE WEEK; EACH PLAYS FOR QUARTER OF AN HOUR, AND THERE IS ONE TEST PIECE INCLUDED, THE REST OF THE PROGRAMME BEING ACCORDING TO THE CHOICE OF THE BANDS THEMSELVES.**

In a real spirit of transatlantic comradeship, the pick of this country's bandleaders have willingly helped towards the success of the competition by acting as judges.

On Monday evening (28th), the date the competition started, Bert Ambrose judged, in company with one of the American experts from the West Point College of Music in the U.S.A.

On Tuesday, Jack Leon assisted with the judging, and to-night (Thursday) Jack Hylton is due to be on the judges' panel. Mantovani, Maurice Winnick and Eric Winstone are also down to judge, and it is expected that a very representative panel will be present on Saturday for the Grand Finale, when the three winning bands will be picked.

### A.E.F. RECORDINGS

No direct broadcast of the Final has been arranged, unfortunately, but this does not mean that you won't hear the show on the air, for recordings are being made of the winning bands, and these will be broadcast on future dates, not yet specified, in the A.E.F. programme.

The winning band will be recorded on the evening of June 8, before a seated audience at the Queensberry Club, and the band coming second in the competition will be recorded on June 11.

Some of our readers may be surprised to know that there are still so many U.S. bands over here, but it must be remembered that there are many units scattered about in different parts of the country and playing almost exclusively for their own Service engagements, so that the public has little or no chance to hear them. This is bad luck for the British fans.

The competitions have been arranged jointly by Lieut. Ferguson, chief of the Music Department of the U.S. Army, and Mr. E. C. Harding, energetic secretary and manager of the Queensberry Club, whose enterprise regarding dance bands shows we have, in the past, commended again and again.

Mr. Harding told the "M.M.":

"The standard of playing of these U.S. bands is very high, and the competition is arousing an enormous amount of interest. I am very grateful for the enthusiastic co-operation of the London dance band leaders in giving me such valuable assistance with the judging and in helping me to make the whole affair something which, I know, will always be happily remembered by the American musicians when they return to their own country."

## HARRY HAYES AND BAND FOR LONDON BALLROOM

**B**IG news for London fans is the announcement this week that Harry Hayes and his band have been engaged to play nightly at the Anglo-American Ballroom, 100, Oxford St., W., commencing Monday, June 4.

Recently started by Philip Moss-Vernon, the Anglo-American Ballroom functions every week-night in the premises occupied, on Sundays only, by the Feldman Swing Club, and this new, big attraction should bring the dancers and fans flocking. Harry will play every night (except Sundays) from 7 to 11 p.m., and is fronting a band of stars who will put over the type of well-arranged, small band dance music with which he is making such a big name for himself on broadcasts and H.M.V. records.

Particularly interesting is the fact that this engagement is the first appearance of the band in public. Line-up consists of ace tenor-star Johnny Gray; Lad Busby (trombone); Jimmy Watson (trumpet); Billy Lonsdale (drums); Johnny Franz (piano); and charming songstress Primrose vocalising.

Jimmy Watson is a Scots boy who is gaining a very big reputation around town; Billy Lonsdale is the young drummer who used to be with Harry Parry.

The engagement of Harry Hayes and his Band for a dance hall of this kind is significant as showing the trend of the more enterprising promoters in getting the best bands for their ballrooms.

The resultant improvement of public taste in dance music is highly important for the future, as is also the "commercial" outlet for modern, style name bands.

**Melody Maker**  
3d INCORPORATING  
"RHYTHM"

EVERY THURSDAY VOL. XXI No. 619

## JAZZ JAMBOREE SCHEDULED FOR SEPTEMBER: £50 PRIZE FOR SWING OPUS

**N**EW FOR WHICH ALL THE FANS IN THE COUNTRY HAVE DOUBTLESS BEEN WAITING COMES FROM THE MUSICIANS' SOCIAL AND BENEVOLENT COUNCIL, WITH THE STATEMENT THAT THE 1945 JAZZ JAMBOREE WILL BE HELD DURING THE LATTER HALF OF SEPTEMBER.

There will, of course, be the usual tremendous band show and, in addition, the All-Star Band, comprising the winners of the various solo-instrumental titles in the "Melody Maker" Dance Band Poll of 1944, will be appearing again—plus, no doubt, many new sensations and surprises, in compliance with the established traditions of the Jamboree.

That nowadays-regular Jamboree institution, the Jazz Jamboree Award for the best instrumental swing composition, will again be a big feature. A prize of £50 will be awarded through the generosity of the Peter Maurice Music Company—via the agency of their General Manager, Jimmy Phillips—for the best composition, and Jimmy guarantees, in addition, that the work will be published.

### THE RULES

In connection with this year's award, it is to be hoped that all readers and fans who have composing and arranging talent will rally round to the very best of their ability.

The sponsors of the Jazz Jamboree Award feel that there must still be a great wealth of composing originality somewhere in the country, and they hope that the 1945 event will produce some results far more out of the usual rut than previous events have done.

Don't forget the compositions must be suitable for dancing; that is important. They should have a rhythmic and melodic content that should combine commerciality with modern originality.

The Competition is open to all comers resident in the British Isles, and the finally selected compositions will be played and judged at the 1945 Jazz Jamboree. A number of extremely well-known personalities of the musical profession will be acting as judges.

And now, here the rules for entering the Competition:

(a) Competitors are requested to submit the score and parts of an entirely original jazz composition for dancing. It should be of such a length as to play for about three minutes—i.e., the length of the commercial 10-inch record. Only compositions orchestrated by the composers will be considered. The composer's name and address, or any identifying marks, must not be written on the score or parts. Tempi must be clearly marked.

The instrumentation must be for the usual dance-band combination—i.e., four or five saxes doubling clarinets, five or six brass, piano, bass, guitar and drums (no violins).

£50 advance royalties will be paid to the successful applicant by the Peter Maurice Co. The publishers undertake to publish the winning composition, and to give it all necessary publicity.

(b) Competitors must enclose a stamped, addressed envelope with each entry, large enough to take the score and parts—for purposes of identification and for the return of manuscripts to entrants.

(c) In consideration of the award of contract and £50 advance royalties, to the winner, publishing rights subsisting in the composition shall become the property of the Peter Maurice Music Co., Ltd. The contract will provide for publication on generally recognised terms and conditions, and the payment of the usual royalties.

(d) Entries should be packed flat, and sent, under full letter rate, to Joe Jeanette (Hon. Organiser), Jazz Composition Contest, The M.S.B.C., 5, Egmont House, 116, Shaftesbury Avenue, London, W.1., to arrive not later than August 1, 1945. Whilst every possible care will be taken of manuscripts, no responsibility can be accepted for loss.

## NAME BANDS BACK M.U. IN MUSIC-HALL FIGHT

**L**EADING dance bands are giving fullest support to the M.U. in a strike campaign to obtain better salaries for their less fortunate brother-musicians.

Disputes between the Union and three music-halls in and near Newcastle resulted in an official strike by the pit orchestras on Whit Monday.

After one week without orchestras—during which an attempt was made to substitute pianos—two of the halls made an arrangement satisfactory to the M.U. which permitted the boys to resume work temporarily pending further discussion; but the third—the Grand Theatre, Byker—did not make a similar arrangement.

### £4. 5s. RATE

Hardie Ratcliffe (assistant general secretary of the M.U.) who is conducting the Union's campaign with Ellis Miles, the popular district organiser, and Walter Lorraine, who transferred temporarily from the Midlands to co-operate, gave the Melody Maker this statement.

"It is astonishing that in these days the Union has to fight to obtain the paltry wage of £4 5s., which is all we are asking for our members at Byker. It is gratifying to find that the highest-paid musicians realise that this fight in an obscure place is important to the whole profession.

Telegrams have been arriving at our campaign headquarters from the most eminent personalities in the dance, theatre, and show-band world heartily endorsing the Union's action in making a fight for a decent wage for the pit musician.

"The Byker music-hall is being picketed, and, as the strike continues, a campaign will be conducted in which the stars of the profession and other trade unionists can join."

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# HAMPTON AT CARNEGIE HALL

Latest New York News from  
**LEONARD FEATHER**

## IVY BENSON GETTING READY FOR CONTINENT

BY no means fit—her ear in which she recently had a severe abscess is still giving her trouble—Ivy Benson has nevertheless passed her "medical," and is all set to proceed overseas to entertain the boys in North-Western Europe in the near future. She was turned down for medical reasons for a journey East, so has to be content with a European trip.

In Edinburgh last week she was busy auditioning aspirants to accompany her, and is still looking for vocalists, accordionist, and comedienne, also a good tenor player.

Ivy's outfit for overseas will consist of six brass, five saxes, piano, drums, guitar, solo violin, three vocalists, a dancer and a comedienne, and some reshuffling has had to be done to comply with E.N.S.A. regulations that artistes must be over 16 years of age. Incidentally Ivy has released Bette Gaddy (alto sax) from her contract to enable her to join Mary Gamble at Blackpool Plaza. Bette was "loaned" to La Gamble for a week when Ivy was playing Blackpool, and the temporary arrangement has now developed into a permanency.

Rene Fitzgerald, Ivy's manageress, is looking forward to the overseas trip, and they're taking along Mrs. Kitty Hart, wardrobe mistress and famed personality from the Windmill and Prince of Wales theatres and elsewhere, to "mother" the girls. The next Benson broadcast is scheduled for June 16, from Birmingham.

## CALL SHEET

(Week commencing June 4)

Ivy BENSON and Girls Band.  
Plaza Ballroom, Derby.  
Johnnie CLAES and Clae pigeons.  
One-Night Stands, South England.  
Billy COTTON and Band.  
Hippodrome, Lewisham.  
George ELRICK and Band.  
Coliseum, Harrow.  
Gloria GAYE and Band.  
Hippodrome, Norwich.  
Phil GREEN and Radio Dance Band.  
Green's Playhouse, Glasgow.  
Adelaide HALL.  
Hippodrome, Bristol.  
Felix MENDELSSOHN and  
Hawaiian Serenaders.  
Empire, Kingston.  
Ronnie MUNRO and Orchestra.  
Shakespeare Theatre, Liverpool.  
Harry PARRY and Radio Dance  
Orchestra.  
Palace, Dundee.  
Al PODESTA and Band.  
Gaumont, Chadwell Heath.  
Oscar RABIN and Band.  
Hippodrome, Dudley.  
Monte REV.  
Palace, Manchester.  
Harry ROY and Band.  
Band of the Week, B.B.C.  
TROISE and his Mandoliers.  
Hippodrome, Golders Green.

LIONEL HAMPTON'S Carnegie Hall debut last week presented his orchestra in an evening of music that ranged from the wild, extra-long version of "Flying Home" to a sedate, sophisticated series of specialities for a 32-piece string section.

Arrangements for the latter were written by Lionel's pianist, Milt Buckner, who did "Fiesta de Amor"; by Herb Quigley, a radio arranger, who wrote an original called "Four Minutes with Three Notes," and by Earl Bostic.

Eino South sat in with the first violin, the rest of the section consisting of white radio musicians. Also guest starred at the concert was Dizzy Gillespie, the fantastic trumpet man whose new harmonic ideas have made him the most talked-of hot jazz musician in swing circles and the favourite of hundreds of fellow-soloists.

Lionel is not by any means the only jazz orchestra leader to be experimenting with strings. Eleven fiddlers from Kostelnetz's orchestra sat in for two sides with Count Basie on a Columbia record ("This Heart of Mine," "That Old Feeling") with arrangements written by Hugo Winterhalter.

The Hampton band (without strings) is now playing at the Zanzibar, its first New York location job in more than a year. Herbie Fields, the white alto-tenor-soprano-and-clarinet man, is still getting a lot of solo work, as is the great Arnette Cobbs on tenor.

## ELLINGTONIA

Duke Ellington is playing a four-week engagement at the 400 Restaurant. There is no other entertainment and no relief band, which means that for the first time New Yorkers can hear the Duke without interruptions and without bring-downs.

There is so much excitement that it is hard to know how to allot the credits, but certainly Al Sears' tenor and the trumpet work by Cal Anderson, Taft Jordan and Ray Nance deserve their share of praise, as do such perennials as Lawrence Brown, Tricky Sam, Rex, Hodges and Greer. Musicians who have dropped in to hear the band are of the unanimous opinion that it sounds better than ever; but personally, I want to make one qualification.

Duke still needs a great singer. He has four now, and none of them is worthy of the band, with the possible exception of the greatly improved Jova Sherrill, whom you'll be hearing on records.

Stuff Smith is back with his trio at the Onyx, alternating with Ben Webster, who has a fine little mixed group featuring a terrific newcomer named Bill de Arango on guitar. Dizzy Gillespie and his alto-playing counterpart, Charlie Parker, opened at the Three Deuces, with another unknown but brilliant youngster, Al Haig, on piano.

The other group here features Don Byas, with the most original pianist in years, Erroll Garner, plus bass and

drums. Slam Stewart gave up his job here because it was too hard to keep doubling with the Benny Goodman Sextette, which is still at the Paramount, causing more talk and more kicks than Benny's big band in the same show.

Louis Armstrong has been going through another reorganisation with his band, and at the last rehearsal I caught, Teddy McRae, the leader, was out, and Joe Garland was back, trying to organise a group composed mostly of new men.

Louis is back at work this week after several weeks' rest, playing the Apollo.

## ARMSTRONG'S FAVOURITE

Incidentally, in an interview recently Louis was asked to name his favourite trumpet men. He immediately named Roy Eldridge, then selected Scat Hemphill as his favourite all-round man, and after that he wouldn't talk.

But he did say most emphatically that he believes the younger musicians are far ahead of the old-timers, and that if all he had to do himself were to play like some of the veterans who are being boosted for a revival by reactionary jazz fans, he could "do that with one finger!"

In other words, Louis wants it known that he believes in the modern jazz and doesn't want to live in the past.

Shorty Sherock, the Heldt trumpet man who has branched out on his own is doing well with a promising band that includes veteran trombonist Floyd O'Brien.

Glen Gray and his Casa Loma crew have returned to town at the Pennsylvania. The band has modernised itself somewhat, with the help of a better rhythm section—Jackie Mills on drums—and some arrangements by men like Ray Conniff.

Bobby Hackett, who has been with the band for six months and on the wagon all that time, is playing better than ever and declares himself very happy. His lip is in good shape, and he gets some nice solo spots in the arrangements.

More interesting orchestrally is the Boyd Raeburn outfit at the New Yorker. Boyd is in the vanguard of 1945 jazz, playing some fine arrangements by George (Fox) Williams, and featuring such superlative young soloists as Frankie Socolow on tenor and Johnny Bothwell, the "white Hodges" on alto. This band has recorded for Guild and has also made a couple of sessions under Bothwell's name for Signature.

## LESTER YOUNG IN TROUBLE

A new organisation has been started in New York which may turn out to be an important force in the promotion of good jazz. It is known as the New Jazz Foundation.

The young jazz fans who run it, Monte Kay and Mal Braveman, are well liked by musicians; they are starting their activities with a big concert at Town Hall which will feature, among others, the Stuff Smith Trio, Dizzy Gillespie, Teddy Wilson and possibly Georgie Auld, whose band is currently on another theatre tour with Lena Horne.

Lena, by the way, no longer has Horace Henderson as accompanist. His place has been taken by Cyril Haynes.

Reports from Alabama state that Lester Young, who had been stationed at an army camp there, was found with some marijuana on him, was court-martialled and sentenced to a dishonourable discharge and a year in jail. According to latest reports, he is serving his sentence at Leavenworth Jail.

WELL-KNOWN dance pianist and peace-time bandleader Johnnie Addlestone will be on leave from June 1-12, and would like some work—either in Town on tour; he isn't particular where. The "M.M." will be pleased to supply his address to anyone who is interested.

## SUNDAY'S GREAT WINTER GARDEN SWING SHOW

THE announcement of the first mammoth Victory Swing Concert in the form of the big Swing Celebrity affair being held this Sunday (June 3) at the London Winter Garden Theatre (2.30 p.m.), has set swing fans by the ears, and there has been a heavy demand for tickets.

Enthusiasts are excited over the composition of the programme for this eagerly awaited affair, which is in many ways an ideally varied one, ranging from the sophisticated swing of Leslie ("Jiver") Hutchinson and his Band, to the crude, but welcome, strains of the very "authentic" Dixielanders of George Webb.

Other items on this terrific bill include Buddy Featherstonhaugh and his Sextet; the Parnell-Lewis "Jazzmen"; the polished and ultra modern Caribbean Club Trio, with Lauricé Coton; and some instrumental swing discoveries from Phil Green's Radio show; with the whole expertly blended together and compered in effortless style by ex-B.B.C.-ace David Miller.

Tickets, at 12s. 6d., 10s. 6d., 8s. 6d., 7s. 6d., and 3s. 6d. (the latter unreserved), may be obtained direct from the box-office at the Winter Garden Theatre, Drury Lane, London, W.C.2, or from the usual Theatre Ticket Agencies.

The box-office will be open on the day of the Concert, so latecomers can pay at the door.

## SINGER WANTS JOB

DOES anyone require the services of a good male vocalist? Gerry Dean, who will be remembered some little while back with Billy Tennent's Band, has just terminated a long contract at the Plaza Ballroom, Derby.

Gerry suffered a nasty accident whilst in the Army which has resulted in optical trouble. Trying to make the grade in civil life, he finds himself first banned by the B.B.C.—which is certainly no disgrace, seeing that this august body has seen fit to ban some of the best singers in the country—and then disengaged altogether. Gerry would like to get fixed up as soon as possible, and the "M.M." has all his particulars and his address.

## U.S. HIT PARADE

HERE is the latest available list of the nine most popular tunes in America, as assessed by the weekly nation-wide ballot conducted by the American Tobacco Co., and broadcast in their "Your Hit Parade" programme over the C.B.S. network:

1. CANDY (1-3-4-7).
2. I'M BEGINNING TO SEE THE LIGHT (2-2-2-1-7-7).
3. MY DREAMS ARE GETTING BETTER (3-1-1-3-1-4-3-5-0-0-5).
4. ALL OF ME (0-7).
5. JUST A PRAYER AWAY (5).
6. A LITTLE ON THE LONELY SIDE (7-4-3-2-2-1-8-3-5-9-6).
7. THE MORE I SEE YOU.
8. LAURA (6).
9. THERE MUST BE A WAY.

Note to readers who have written in asking why our "Hit Parade" lists do not coincide with those broadcast in the A.E.P. programme. Answer is that our lists are much more up to date. For instance, the list broadcast in the A.E.P. programme on Tuesday of last week (May 22) was actually the list for the week ended February 10 last.

WELL-KNOWN rumba band personality, Jimmy Cummins, has recently had stolen from a London restaurant, a case containing all his music. (Here is yet another warning to musicians to take especial care of their property.)

This loss is causing considerable inconvenience to Jimmy, as the music is almost irreplaceable. It is all marked with his name, and any reader who comes across any of it is requested immediately to report the matter to Jimmy Cummins at GLAdstone 4338, or to the police.

PROSPECTIVE Labour candidate for Glasgow's Maryhill Division is Councillor William Hannan, who studies piano in his spare time and won a London College award not so long ago. He had, only a few years back, a definite connection with the "business," and did the round of local gigs, with "Bill Hannan's Rhythmics."

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# BLUES FROM BASIE

EDGAR JACKSON'S Record Reviews

## COUNT BASIE AND HIS ALL-AMERICAN RHYTHM SECTION

\*\*\*\*Café Society Blues (Basie) (Am. Columbia HCO878) Count Basie and his All-American Rhythm Section with Don Byas and Buck Clayton.

\*\*\*St. Louis Blues (Handy) (Am. Columbia HCO880).

(Parlophone R2970—5s. 4d.) 878.—Basie (piano) with Walter Page (bass); Joe Jones (dms.). Recorded July 24, 1942.

880.—Basie (piano) with Don Byas (tenor); Buck Clayton (tpt.); Freddy Graen (gtr.); Walter Page (bass); Joe Jones (dms.). Recorded July 24, 1942.

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed "Café Society Blues," but the "St. Louis" side hasn't gone so well with me.

Now, it's easy enough to make bald statements like that, but not always so easy to explain one's reasons for them. In this case, however, I think it's mainly a question of sincerity, or perhaps naturalness is a better word.

"Café Society" is just blues, and none the less so because it is neither unduly slow nor noticeably melancholy, or because it has in places more than a mild flavouring of boogie-woogie.

Basie, who, you may remember, learnt piano and organ with the late lamented "Pats" Waller, was a keen student of the early blues players, and one has only to turn back to some of his records with the Bennie Moten Kansas City Orchestra of the early 1930's to appreciate that his understanding of the blues was a great deal more than just superficial.

### DISCIPLE OF SWING

More recently Basie has become a disciple of swing—swing in the best senses of the word, but nevertheless swing.

But he is one of the few swing devotees who can, when the occasion calls for it, forget the affectations of swing in favour of the more sincere modes of the earlier days, and that is what he does here.

The result is a record which has all the charm of the blues played with a simple unaffectedness that far from concealing actually reveals both its true character and Basie's nice understanding of it.

Now for the "St. Louis" side. This has all the individuality—I might even say virtuosity—that one would expect from Basie and the cornermen from his main band who appear with him in this record. But it hasn't quite come off. There is something about it that doesn't ring quite true.

I put it down to two things: firstly, that in trying to appear relaxed and unpretentious the band manages to sound little more than rather spiritless; and secondly, that it has to some extent fallen between the two stools of modern swing and true jazz.

The style is neither one nor the other, and one is never quite certain which, if either, it was meant to be. Not that these ambiguities are noticeable throughout the side.

Opening the record, Basie plays the sort of piano he played when he was with the Moten band, and it is again not only in keeping with the character of the blues, but also Basie at perhaps his best.

But I have my doubts about Byas and Clayton.

Byas plays a rhapsodic sort of tenor which is more than just tasteful, and Clayton, growing in his second solo, is more than merely interesting.

But neither really captures the character or the spirit of the blues any more than either seems particularly inspired by what he is playing; and while one must pay tribute to Walter Page's technique, it must also be said that bass-players never played the blues as Page plays them here for the simple reason that in those days that style of bass-playing hadn't even been thought of.

GEOFF ARMSTRONG tells us, that there are still a few tickets available for this year's "Riverboat Shuffle," which takes place on Sunday, June 10, commencing 9.30 a.m.

Tickets, which include a free luncheon box, cost £1 each, and should be obtained from Geoff Armstrong at 181, Old Oak Road, West Acton, London, W.6.

Music on the trip is to be provided by two bands, the George Webb Dixielanders and the regular West London Rhythm Club Group.

### SCOTLAND

KIRKCALDY (Fife) — Thursday, July 5, at the Ice Rink (8 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 "All-Scotland" Championship.

This, being the only championship to be held in Scotland this season, will rank as an Area Final and the winning band will be eligible to go direct to the 1945 "All-Britain" Final.

Organiser: The Manager, The Ice Rink, Rosslyn Street, Kirkcaldy, Fife, Scotland; (phone: Dysart 5251).

### LONDON AREA

Wednesday, June 27.—Porchester Hall, Porchester Road, BAYSWATER, W.2 (7 to 10.30 p.m.). The 1945 Central London Championship.

Organisers: Messrs. S. W. Thompson and Reg Bates, 18, Ranmoor Gardens, Marlborough Hill, Harrow, Middlesex.

Wednesday, July 11.—Palais de Danse, PENGE (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 "Palace" Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Frank J. Fiveash, 88, Allerford Road, Catford, London, S.E.6. (Phones: Hither Green 2534; Ravensbourne 6084.)

Monday, July 23.—Town Hall, ST. JOKE NEWINGTON (7 to 11.30 p.m.). The 1945 North-East London Championship.

Organisers: Messrs. Lyn Morgan and Charles Cooper (in association with Syd Beames), 78, West Way, Rickmansworth, Herts. (Phone: Rickmansworth 2167.)

NOTE: The Lea Valley Championship, previously announced for June 22 at Wallham Abbey, is now cancelled for reasons beyond the control of the organisers or ourselves.

### PROVINCES

OXFORD. — To-night, Thursday, May 31, at the Town Hall (7 p.m. to 11 p.m.). The 1945 Oxfordshire Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Stanley W. Moulson, 22, Granville Road, Oxford.

HALIFAX. — To-morrow, Friday, June 1, at the Victoria Hall (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 South-West Yorks Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

WARRINGTON. — Friday next week, June 8, at the Parr Hall (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 North Cheshire Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs. NORTHAMPTON. — Thursday, June 14, at Franklin's Gardens Ballroom (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 Northamptonshire Championship.

# Harry Parry Married



THE horde of rhythm fans all over the country who follow the fortunes of Harry Parry will chronicle Thursday, May 24, as an important date in the clarry man's career, as on that day he duly signed his marriage contract with Miss Jean Bradbury, from London, one of Harry's featured vocalists.

As the happy couple emerged from the Glasgow Registry Office, where they did the deed, they were met with the strains of "I'm Just Wild About Harry," played by the assembled boys of the band, as shown above.

Then followed a reception in the

Marlborough House, the guests including Turner Layton, Suzette Farri, Eddie Shaw, Chalmers Wood and Mr. Evans, Playhouse manager. Best man Bill Elliott read out a shoal of telegrams from well-wishers, and band-leader Eddie Shaw told how he was associated with Harry in earlier days at Llandudno. In responding suitably, Harry said Eddie was the only band-leader who ever sacked him—for refusing to play a waltz!

At Green's in the evening, the dancers were quite aware of what had been going on, and gave Harry and his bride a big hand.

The "honeymoon" will be spent at work, of course, as a week of one-night stands in Scotland will be followed by dates at Dundee and Aberdeen.

## CONTEST FIXTURES

Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell 38, Ruseby Road, Hinckley, Leicesters. (Phone: Hinckley 563.)

WOLVERHAMPTON.—Friday, June 15, at the Civic Hall (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 Staffordshire Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Jack Andrews, Messrs. W.M.E. Ltd., 3, Jones Avenue, Wolverhampton, Staffs. (Phone: Wolverhampton 20722.)

BRADFORD.—Friday, June 29, at the Co-operative Hall, Southgate (7 to 11 p.m.). The 1945-West Yorks Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

LIVERPOOL.—Friday, July 6, at the Grafton Rooms (7 to 11 p.m.). The 1945 South-West Lancs Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

BUXTON.—Thursday, July 12, at the Pavilion Gardens. The 1945 Peak District Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Eric George, The Music Studio, 4, Hardwick Street, Spring Gardens, Buxton, Derby. (Phone: Buxton 1451.)

BOURNEMOUTH.—Friday, July 13, at the Town Hall (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 West Hampshire Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Philip Moss-Vernon, 17, Gloucester Mansions, Cambridge Circus, London, W.C.2. (Phone: Temple Bar 9140.)

BRISTOL.—Monday, July 16, at the

Victoria Rooms (7 to 11 p.m.). The 1945 Gloucestershire Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

CREWE.—Tuesday, July 17, at the Town Hall (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.). The 1945 Shropshire Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Edgar Harrison, 23, Queen Street, Crewe, Cheshire. (Phone: Crewe 2958.)

SHEFFIELD.—Wednesday, July 18, at the City Hall. The 1945 South Yorks Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs.

LOUGHBOROUGH.—Wednesday, July 25, at the Town Hall (7.30 p.m. to midnight). The 1945 East Midlands Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell, 38, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leics. (Phone: Hinckley 563.)

SWING BAND CHAMPIONSHIP (open to all bands which have not won a "M.M." Swing Band Contest this year).

Saturday, July 21.—Porchester Hall, Bayswater, London, W.2 (2.30 to 6 p.m.). The 1945 Metropolitan Swing Band Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Syd Thompson, 18, Ranmoor Gardens, Marlborough Hill, Harrow, Middlesex.

Rules and Entry Forms for all the above now available from their respective organisers.

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## BANDLEADER BERT FIRMAN IS INTERVIEWED BY THE "MELODY MAKER"



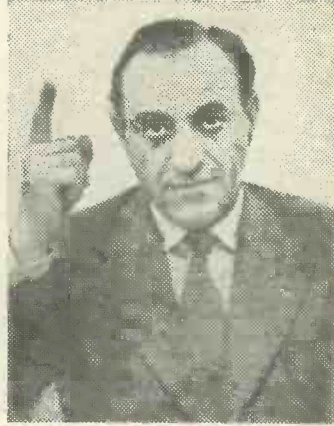
"I led my first band in 1925. Heavens, it makes me feel very old!"



"Sidney Lipton and I were wondering if we would be 'forgotten men' of this business!"



"From what I have seen in this town, I say we have got to bring good music back to London."



"I will do my very best for the men who have been in the Services. They have got to be looked after."

INTO the MELODY MAKER offices last week breezed famous West End bandleader of pre-war days, Bert Firman, and if I say that I had a shock when I saw him (writes Ray Sonin), that is putting it mildly.

Gone was the famous "night-club tan" and the rather dejected air of the bandleader who has to keep too late hours and always looks as if he needs more sleep.

Bert looked younger, fitter, and more cheerful than I have ever seen him, and while there is no truth in the rumour that he is to be made the subject of a recruiting film to show what Army life does for harassed bandleaders, he might well do so!

Giving up his big engagement at the Café de Paris in 1940, Bert volunteered for the Army and joined the South Staffordshire Regiment. Some time afterwards the "Stars in Battledress" were formed, and Bert became one of its original members.

Playing his usual good fiddle and also becoming an actor in sketches, Bert was in charge of an all-male two and a half hour show which toured the whole of Egypt, Syria, Palestine, Persia, and almost to India.

For a year and a half they travelled wherever there were troops to be entertained, and in many cases gave shows for small garrisons who had previously not seen a bit of live entertainment since the war.

Back to England they came, but not to rest. They immediately went off with the B.L.A., and Bert says positively that he and his "Stars in Battledress" were the first entertainment party to make the crossing of the Rhine, which they did with the 51st Division (pretty good company, if I may say so!).

They performed as far up as Bremen, and were playing on the outskirts of that town under real front-line conditions before it fell to the Allies.

After the long strain of continual travel and work, the principal comic of the company had a nervous breakdown at Bremen and the boys were brought back.

Now they are, for the moment, in this country awaiting a new job, but Bert, of course, is hankering after getting his band together again and leading once more in the West End.

The pictures on this page were taken by Jack Marshall while I was interviewing Bert Firman, and here is a verbatim report of what Bert told me:—

"You want to know when I started in this business? Don't remind me! I was seventeen years of age when I led my first band at the 'Midnight Follies' of the Metropole Hotel, London. Heavens, that was twenty-two years ago! It makes me feel very old!"

"Then I went to the Carlton Hotel, where I started broadcasting on 2 L.O., and afterwards opened Devonshire House.

"The next important news about me? Let me see. I went to America to broadcast with my own band on N.B.C. for just over a year. Then I came back to France and did the usual lovely round of engagements that made that country a band-

## BRAND'S ESSENCE

### DANCE BAND GOSSIP

leader's paradise in those days—you know, Paris, Monte Carlo, Cannes, and the Riviera.

"Returning to London, I took over at the Café Anglais, and then went to the London Casino, where I had what I really consider my best band, with boys like George Melachrino, Freddy Gardiner, Cecil Norman, Billy Farrell, Reg Pink, etc., in the line-up. That was a terrific job; but just as war started I went over to the Café de Paris, where I finally decided to change my dinner suit into a uniform of a rather more drab colour."

I then asked him about his plans for the future, and he said:—

"Sidney Lipton and I were talking about the future only recently, and we were wondering if we would be 'forgotten men' of this business when we came out of khaki. We hope not; but, whatever the fight, I am going to get my band together again; and, from what I have seen of the hotels and restaurants in this town, I say that we have got to bring good music back to London."

Personally, I will do my best for the men who have been in the Services, and I say to the profession as a whole, in all sincerity, that the musicians who are coming out of the Forces have got to be looked after."

A sentiment with which we entirely concur, Bert!

STORIES of VE-Day in the musical profession are still drifting in from all over the place. One that has impressed me more than somewhat comes from Derby, where Sam Ramsden, proprietor of the Plaza, invited seventeen repatriated prisoners of war—nearly all of them Derby men—with members of their families, to be his guests on VE-Day.

The men were feasted in the ball-room café, and each was presented with 100 cigarettes, £2 "with which to celebrate VE-Day," and admission tickets to the Plaza for a whole month. This was during the week Ronnie Munro was there, and the gifts were handed over by Ann Rich.

Shortly before the official VE-Day, wild excitement was caused at the Plaza by the end of hostilities being prematurely announced in error. The scene that followed is one that Sam Ramsden is not likely to forget in a hurry.

TWO of the profession's unlucky invalids are in the news this week. Ex-Rabin drum star Bobby Richards, who has been ill for some months, has been transferred to the Sanatorium, Ventnor, I.O.W. He is as yet unable to communicate with his friends, but would much appreciate any letters or messages they may be good enough to send him—either direct to the Sanatorium at Ventnor or through his father, Mr. R. C. P. Richards, at Hyde Lea, Stafford.

The second unlucky one is vocalist-

trumpeter Geoff Watts. Still in hospital at Reading through a sudden breakdown whilst working a date in the Berkshire town, Geoff has made some improvement, but a continuation of treatment is imperative.

In view of this, it is hoped that it will be possible to move him to a London hospital near his home before very long. As soon as this takes place we will announce his address; and in the meanwhile we join with his many friends in the profession in wishing him a speedy return to better health.

Geoff has been visited at Reading by Mr. J. Feldman, father of Victor, and the M.U. are taking an active interest in Geoff's case and extending him their help to get him back to Town.

IT was enough to make anyone rush out and order a brand new zoot suit right away, and get in some hard "jitterbug" practice, as well, the way the band played at the new Carnival Dance Club in Archer Street last Saturday night.

Run jointly by Jack Conway and Syd Raymond, the club plans to cater especially for swing fans and "jitterbug" addicts. On week-nights, when there is no similar club open in Town, it certainly fills a long-felt want.

First band session on the club's opening night last Saturday (26th) was played by that sparkling little outfit the Swing Group from the Canada Show. Band was a little unlucky in having to play first, before things got "warmed up." It soon got cracking, however, and by the time these boys finished up a grand little session there was an "atmosphere" you could have cut with a knife.

This became thicker still, and the music sounded a more joyous note than ever when Jack Conway and Syd Raymond brought on their own "house" band, with Syd himself at drums; Russ Allen (bass); Freddie Clayton (trumpet); Jimmy Skidmore and Tommy Whittle (tenors); Derek Neville (alto and clarinet); and Charley Burton (piano).

In the session that followed the instruments must have got almost red hot (maybe the boys derived inspiration from finding themselves, after all these years, actually playing in Archer Street, so that perhaps their exuberance owed something to the traditions of the place!).

Derek Neville, in particular, blew and blew until he looked vaguely like one of those barrage balloons he used to look after in the R.A.F. (with a handsome face attached, Derek, old man, of course!). He played some wild, unrestrained alto that would have made a thousand-years-old granite statue jump for joy.

Let me tip Tommy Whittle, too, for one of the very foremost places in the future tenor saxophone stakes.

Current band at the club is not exactly like it was on the opening night. Teddy Wadmire is now on bass, and Johnny Lester plays piano. The club will not, for the present at any rate, be open on Sunday evenings.

It normally functions from 7.30 to 10.45 p.m., and you make inquiries about joining from Jack Conway at 12, Archer Street, Piccadilly, W.

A final bouquet for Cab Quaye. The club couldn't have chosen a better compère. I am sure Cab said some extremely bright and witty things, and sang some good choruses, because he always does, but so bad was the microphone on this occasion that I was never able to distinguish a single word. For the same reason Miss Julia Dowers did not warble at all, although the bills had announced in very large type that she would. (This bad-mike business is a point to which the organisers should give their immediate attention; they would also please non-dancing patrons much more by transferring the band to the centre of the room.)

I'M opening up this story by suggesting we give a very big hand to Jack Geller, pianist, and nowadays M.D. of the Royal Victoria Hotel, St. Leonards-on-Sea.

Jack has certainly earned it. By his coolness and presence of mind he saved the life of Caroline Mollison, the four-months-old daughter of Major and Mrs. T. Mollison, of St. Leonards. The child was out on the balcony of her parents' flat when, owing to some strange mischance—possibly a lighted cigarette carelessly dropped from above—the elderdown and clothes covering the child burst into flames.

Jack Geller, who has a flat in the same building, was the only one to see the child's danger. He dashed upstairs, hammered on the door of the flat, burst past Mrs. Mollison, who opened it, dashed on to the balcony, and rescued the baby from her burning pram, afterwards helping to put out the flames.

Little Caroline was rushed to hospital, but at the time of writing the child's condition is still serious, for unfortunately she was severely burned.

However, the situation would have been far worse but for the speedy work of Jack Geller, and we hasten to congratulate our old friend on his fine action. Now permanently at St. Leonards Jack will be remembered as the pianist with David Miller's Orchestra, and he has worked, at different times, with many of the leading London bands.

## "Swing Shop" Opening

FANS who remember the success of his last affair will be anxious to be present again at the next "Swing Shop" Concert which Sid Gross is organising to take place at Wembley Town Hall on Sunday, June 10 (8.15 p.m.).

Attractions already booked include the famous Parnell-Lewis "Jazzmen"; the Jack Parnell Trio; famous saxophone stars Derek Neville, Aubrey Franks, and Freddy Grant; and trumpet-ace Kenny Baker. Service duties permitting.

As before, Gross is planning an informal jam session which should be completely to the enjoyment of all swing fans.

Tickets are 7s. 6d., 5s., and 3s. 6d., and may be obtained direct from Wembley Town Hall, or from Sid Gross, at 132, Dollis Hill Lane, London, N.W.2.

# NEATH AND WEMBLEY CONTEST REPORTS

## 1945 SOUTH-WEST WALES CHAMPIONSHIP

Friday, May 25, at  
The Mackworth Ballroom, Neath.

**T**HE indication at Cardiff last April that South Wales has become a serious competitor to Lancashire for the distinction of being the country's keenest dance-band contesting centre was confirmed when, amid scenes of unsurpassed enthusiasm, this 1945 South-West Wales Championship was presented last Friday by Mr. Alun Thomas at his Mackworth Ballroom, Neath.

The entry list had been closed with the maximum permissible number of twelve bands some days before the event. But late applicants weren't going to let a little thing like that stand in their way. They turned up in the hope of being able to take the places of any bands that might have been forced to scratch at the last minute, and in this way two bands whose entries had originally been refused were able to take part in the contest.

The championship was a triumph for small bands. Combinations of six and less secured the first four places. The big bands of the district are frankly not up to standard. Even those which have pretensions to musicianliness have little understanding of the dance idiom. They play more like brass bands.

But the small outfits make up for this. They are good in any in any part of the country, and contain some exceptionally good soloists. That remark is inspired not only by the Jack Joseph Sextet, which won the contest, but also by Elwyn Davies and his Band, the runners-up, and, in fact, all of the first four bands, which, as Edgar Jackson announced, were so close that it wasn't any too easy to place them correctly.

And the dancers knew which were the best bands, too. Of the 800 and more who attended the contest—well above normal for the hall, although at 5s. at the doors admission prices were exactly double those usually charged—more than half refused to dance, but packed themselves solidly round the stand.

They good-naturedly gave a generous hand to the less accomplished competitors, but that they were able to pick out the best was proved by the terrific ovations these were accorded. By the time the results were announced excitement was running so high that practically everyone who had any reason to appear on the stand had to make a speech—including, of course, the organiser and the placed band leaders.

Much of the success of the evening was also due to the excellent way in which the contest was managed. So efficient were the band stewards and compère that although adjudication could not start until 8.45 p.m., owing to musicians being unable to get away earlier from their daytime tasks, the contest was completed by midnight, in spite of the fact that the "first on" band exercised its right to play a second time, and the judges called for a replay by Jack Joseph's Sextet (just to make certain they had won), making a total of fourteen performances judged and the prizes distributed in three and a quarter hours.

### JUDGES' REPORT

Adjudicators: Johnnie Marks and Edgar Jackson.

**S**INCE it is merely small bands, but all small bands featuring swing style (which, after all, is the only style through which small bands can exhibit the individuality that alone can make up for shortage of numbers), secured the first four places here at Neath, and in view of the not unexpected comments which some of the larger but less successful bands made on the fact we feel it essential to point out once again that the small bands did not achieve their success because they played swing music whereas the larger bands played "straight" dance music.

Our instructions are that it is less what a band does, and the more the proficiency with which it does it, that should be the governing factor, and while at this contest the small bands did unusually well what they did, no such praise can be given to the larger bands.

Even those which, because they played in tune, and with fairly good

tone, could be called musicianly in the general sense of the word had little idea of dance phrasing, and their attempts to play dance music in the legitimate idiom made their slow foxtrots sound like dirges, and their quicksteps more like jerky polkas.

**Winners: THE JACK JOSEPH SEXTET** (alto/clarinet, tenor, trumpet, piano, bass, drums). 87, Pentyla, Port Talbot, S. Wales.

**Individualists' Awards for:** Trumpet (Billy Bayes); Bass (C. Price). Hon. mentions for: Alto and Clarinet (Jack Joseph); Tenor (Wincent Hopkins); Drums (J. L. Joseph). Special award for best "small" band.

**T**HIS is the sort of band one would be pleased to engage for any dance in a hall not too large for reasonably intimate conditions.

Owing partly to the slight over-anxiousness at times of the drummer, the rhythm section was not always as relaxed or as clean as the better professional rhythm sections.

But that is about the worst that can be said of a band which, in featuring the swing style, always managed to be interesting without exaggerating, and never failed to play tastefully or with the neat confidence and competence which gave it a quite professional touch.

**Second: ELWYN DAVIES AND HIS BAND** (three saxes, piano, bass, drums). 34, New Road, Loughor, Glam.

**Individualists' Awards for:** Tenor (Elwyn Davies); Piano (Ronnie Taylor). Hon. mention for: Alto (Glyn Evans).

**I**F this band had played its waltz as well as it played its quickstep, it might have won the contest.

In a rhapsodic solo in the slow fox-trot to phrase them, and the worst that can be said is that his performances just lacked the drive they might have had had he been playing from his own heart instead of someone else's paper.

In the quickstep, too, the pianist, who had given more than minor signs of his ability in the waltz, came up as a grand little soloist, and although the sometimes "slappy" tone of the bass and some not very relaxed drumming did not help the rhythm section, the band gave the best all-round conception of a modern swing quickstep of any band in the contest.

Unfortunately, in the waltz which the band played first the saxes as a team were not so well in tune the tenor nothing like so good as a soloist, and the whole conception nothing like so imaginative.

**The Delta Five**, of Treorchy, who were placed third, won the Individualists' Awards for: Clarinet (Elwyn Wales) and Guitar (Terry Dyke), and an hon. mention for: Piano (Austin J. Davies).

**The New Mayfair Sextette**, of Cardiff, placed fourth, won the Individualists' Awards for: Alto (Bert Miller) and Drums (Bernard Frost), and hon. mentions for: Clarinet (Bert Miller) and Trumpet (Jack Julien).

**Miss Olwen Jones**, of Billie Coomer's Metronomes, won an Individualist's Award as Vocalist.

**William Page**, of the Embassy Five, secured an hon. mention for Guitar.

## 1945 MIDDLESEX CHAMPIONSHIP

Sunday, May 27, at  
The Town Hall, Wembley.

**T**HIS was the first contest ever to be held in London before a seated audience and, taken by and large, it proved to be a distinct success.

Generally speaking, it may be that while the bands which enter contests are more than capable of keeping a dance going with a swing, only a percentage of them are equally successful when it comes to what amount to concert performances. For one thing the type of music they are called upon to play is more suited to the ballroom, but it must also be admitted that few of them have the

stage presence so necessary to get a seated audience going.

But anything the competing bands lacked in this respect was more than adequately provided by George Shearing and his Hatchett's Quartet—augmented, incidentally, at the last moment to a quintet by the inclusion of Tommy Bromley on bass.

The way this little group set out in front of the tabs played, was so terrific that it got even the hard-baked stars who were judging the contest applauding as loudly as the swing fans who constituted a large proportion of the audience; and as if the brilliance of its music were not enough it showed in its quiet, unassuming way a stage personality that was at least as effective as any of the showmanship stunts which are considered to be essential adjuncts of stage bands.

But for all its brilliance, the Shearing group wasn't by any means the whole works.

The audience of over 600 thoroughly entered into the spirit of the contest, and the ultimate consensus of opinion seemed to be that, taken all round, the afternoon was well worth the money and the time spent on it.

### JUDGES' REPORT

Adjudicators: Harry Hayes, Johnnie Marks, Edward Pogson, Edgar Jackson (President).

**Winners: BILLY LAWRENCE AND HIS BAND** (five saxes, trumpet, piano, guitar, bass, drums, conductor). 16, Ruskin Court, Winchmore Hill, London, N.21. (Phone: PALMER Green 4773.)

**Individualist's Award for:** Clarinet (Gyril Rayner). Hon. mentions for: Alto (Gyril Rayner) and Drums (Harry Pole).

**F**EATURING the unconventional and now too easy to balance instrumentation of one trumpet against five saxes and four rhythm, this band gave a most convincing demonstration of what can be achieved by reliable musicianship carefully rehearsed and capably conducted.

It is true that in the quick-step the style was not above suspicion. Both the trumpet and the sax team got near to being what in musicians' colloquial parlance is termed "ta-ta-ta."

But even with this rather doubtful idiom the band—thanks to its all-round competent rhythm section, with its most capable drummer—at least achieved something of the neat, danceable lilt which had been features of its slow fox-trot and waltz.

It was, however, on its all-round polish that the band won the contest. Its intonation, balance and tonal quality left nothing to be desired, and its clean playing, and perhaps above all controlled, but effective sense of expression in tasteful arrangements, resulted in one of the most polished, tuneful and generally musically pleasing performance ever heard in a contest.

**Second: BILL COLE AND HIS CLUBMEN** (two saxes, trumpet, piano, guitar, bass, drums). All coms: Alex Poore, 22, Tredegar Road, Southsea, Hants. (Phone: Portsmouth 73833.)

**Individualists' Awards for:** Alto (Gyril Breake), Tenor (Ronald Bennet); Trumpet (Spencer Brown); Piano (William Cole); Guitar (Edward Piggott).

**L**AST-MINUTE absence, due to illness, of this band's lead alto hampered it rather seriously. It necessitated the 2nd alto playing lead, and the consequent absence of any 2nd alto in what should have been a three-piece sax team, with the result that an essential harmony was often missing.

Moreover, owing to the rather heavy way in which the otherwise excellent pianist (his solo in the quickstep was brilliant) pounded four chords to the bar with both hands made the rhythm in the slow fox-trot a little ponderous.

In fact, taken all round, it was not until the quickstep that the band produced its real form. But this number, with its good contribution from the excellent trumpet, was so outstanding that had the waltz and slow fox-trot been up to it, the band might even have beaten the very finished performance of Billy Lawrence's band. It certainly had one thing over the Lawrence band in its quickstep and that was style.

**Paul Heimann's Music**, from Acton, were placed third. They won the Individualists' Awards for: Accordion (Paul Heimann); Bass (Jimmy Borger); and Drums (Ronnie Castle); and hon. mention for: Piano (Gyril Wiseman); and the special prize for the best "small" band.

**Bill Le Sage**, of the Bill Le Sage Swingtet, was given an hon. mention for Piano.

# MELODY MAKER

Incorporating RHYTHM  
WEEK ENDING JUNE 2, 1945

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# U.S. Jive Jottings

**BENNY GOODMAN** has just been granted membership to A.S.C.A.P.—the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. Others admitted to the Society at the same time as Benny included Paul Baron, G.B.S. house conductor in New York, and Paul Bowles, the noted writer and jazz critic who used to review—the jazz discs for "View" magazine.

Several of the big-time U.S. bands are scheduled for an overseas spell entertaining troops, but not in this country, of course. Latest to make preparations for a tour under U.S.O. is **Shep Fields**, whose outfit is due to start off early in June. Fields is taking with him his usual 14-piece band, plus two singers and one girl harpist.

**Hal McIntyre's Orchestra**—newest sensation of the dance-band world—is also due for a camp tour, but is having trouble with the draft board. Reports state that medical exams, and the like have kept many top-line bands home in the past, including Benny Goodman's, Abe Lyman's, Al Donahue's and others, all of whom volunteered to go offshore but couldn't get sufficient men together to make up a workmanlike crew.

A Los Angeles news flash in "Variety" last month will stand reprinting verbatim: "Arturo Toscanini's first appearance as a maestro in this town was a musical and social triumph, except for his brief discord. When the L.A. Philharmonic Orchestra started playing Von Weber's 'Invitation to the Dance,' a gal in slacks accepted the invitation, hopped on the stage and terped until three minions of the law gave her the unclassical heave-ho. In the hoosegow she said her name was Katherine Kaviile, that she was a student hooper."

**Duke Ellington** has lately finished work on the music for a production called "The Wishing Tree," which will bring singers Josh White and Ethel Waters back to Broadway.

Upon the completion of the job Duke lost no time in starting on yet another. This time he is scoring a piece which will star **Nana Gollner**, of the Ballet Theatre. It is a ballet fantasy with a book written by Frank Tuttle, who will also collaborate with Duke on the lyrics.

**Ellington** recently made an interesting admission when he told **George B. Evans**, publicity man, that it was no longer able to play "Soda Fountain Rag"—the first tune he ever penned, back in 1917 or so.

One or two hearings of Duke's solo records are sufficient to convince a curious listener of Duke's ragtime heritage, as far as his own playing goes, even though most of his compositions are very far removed from that idiom. It is amusing to learn that to-day he claims the fingering of "Soda Fountain Rag" is too intricate for him!

A friend now in the States has lately heard the Ellington Band, which, he says, sounds really wonderful. To quote him:—

"I had a long chat with the Duke, who, in his own words, says: 'I'm delighted to meet anyone from England, because I shall never forget how well both myself and my boys were treated when we were in your country!'"

On the West Coast, this friend went around the spots with **Red Nichols**—looking very happy and blowing fine horn." It seems Red is very active again, engaged on radio transcription and recording work, besides a club job.

**Asch Records** have renowned pianist **Art Tatum** on six solo sides of jazz in that well-known Tatum tradition. Titles are "Fine and Dandy," "It Had to be You," "Ja-Da," "Where or When," "Sweet and Lovely," and "Danny Boy." They are shortly to be released in album form.

Other soon-to-be albums on the same label include "Sign of the Zodiac"—a set of 10-in. discs by **Mary Lou Williams**, accompanied by bass and drums, titles of which will obviously cover the twelve symbols—and yet another album of **James P. Johnson** music. This one will be all solo piano, with numbers ranging from his successful show hits and concertos to modern piano rags.

Here's the tale of **Billie Holiday's** experience at the St. Louis Plantation Club, where she played one show only before returning home out of temper.

Billie's story, according to Press accounts, is that she left the club with a white man whom she met in 1939, when in St. Louis with **Artie Shaw's** orchestra.

At the front door she was rudely informed that "she was not allowed to use that exit, and most certainly not with a white man." Used to the freedom of New York life, Billie hotly protested, her escort was forcibly ejected, but Billie triumphantly followed him out.

Returning for her second show, she claims she was again insulted and warned not to forget herself. Whereupon she promptly "forgot" the show, returned to New York, and sang to capacity crowds at 52nd Street's Spotlite Club.

## JERRY DAWSON'S NORTHERN NEWS

In this column a few weeks ago I requested that Ian Howarth, noted Manchester trumpet-artist, write me with his address, which I had mislaid.

In reply to this appeal, from two of his friends came the sad news that Ian had lost his life in a flying accident on April 27.

He was working at the time at a job concerned with aircraft in Hampshire, and had "hitch-hiked" a lift in the plane which was destined never to arrive at its destination.

A grand pianist, a good trumpet player, and an amateur expert on sound recording, Ian was a brilliant young man who would have made his mark in the career of his choice, whether it had been music or a commercial life.

His many friends and musical acquaintances in Manchester and district will, I am sure, join me in offering the sincere condolences of the profession to his bereaved mother.

Currently featured at the Plaza Ballroom, Manchester, is still another All-Ladies outfit led by a Stockport (Ches.) pianist, **Mary Gamble**.

With Mary are: **Bette Gaddy** (alto); **Cecily Evans** (tenor, fiddle); **Peggy Boosey** (bass); and **Frances Crowe** on drums.

The Plaza is, of course, under Mecca direction these days, and—who knows?—given the right encouragement Mary and her girls may yet tread the path of their auspicious predecessors on the circuit, Ivy Benson and **Blanche Coleman**.

Currently enjoying their fifth successive and successful year at the Capitol Ballroom, Leeds, are **Bert Noble** and his Boys.

Bert—whose name is a household word to all pre-war Isle of Man holiday-makers—played what was probably his hardest and most successful night on VE night, when the Capitol was packed to capacity with a very mixed crowd. To use the management's own words, "they were all there—local tipplers, Church assembly, old and young."

Towards the end of the dance—in the early hours of the morning—Bert and the boys moved out from the crowded ballroom into the more than crowded street, and there finished off the revels by playing old-fashioned dances and community songs to no fewer a number than 5,000 people.

Despite war-time limitations and restrictions, Bert has managed to keep his band well up to size, and with him currently are: **E. Maddock** and **C. Wyatt** (altos); **W. Butterwick** (tenor); **F. Argyle** and **C. Badrock** (trumpets); **E. Appleyard** (tmb.); **R. White** (gitar); **H. Hindle** (bass); **W. Moyfe** (acc.); **J. Hooley** (piano); and **C. Rix** (dms.).

Have heard again from **Frank Cocking**, one time leader of the R.A.F. "Futurists," who was recently transferred to the Fleet Air Arm.

Frank is stationed in the North-West, and would like to do a few gigs in his off-duty times.

If anyone can use a good-class trumpet man, I will be pleased to pass on any communications. Frank can comfortably manage work in the Manchester area or around Warrington, St. Helens, Wigan, Liverpool, etc.

# COLLECTORS' CORNER

by REX HARRIS and MAX JONES

**MAX'S U.S. SELECTION**  
"Comin' On With the Come On" (OA 028989-90), by Mezz Mezzrow and his orchestra. Originally issued on Bluebird 10085. Personnel: **Tommy Laddner**, **Sidney De Paris** (trumpets); **Mezz Mezzrow** (clarinet); **James P. Johnson** (piano); **Zutie Singleton** (drums); **Elmer James** (bass); **Teddy Bunn** (guitar). Recorded in New York City, November 21, 1938.

This is from another of the sessions supervised by Panassié during his visit to the States in 1938-9. We have had both the Laddner ork. records and one of the Quintet's issued here on H.M.V., and it is to be hoped that company will oblige by giving us this, perhaps the most exciting of all the records from the group.

I have said (in reviewing "Weary Blues" Corner, April 28) that Panassié aimed at making good jazz music patterned on the New Orleans classic style.

He was after the effect which music like that of Oliver's Creole Band would make, given the benefit of modern recordings. And to a certain extent he succeeded, despite that he was unable to employ a trombonist, since no suitable man was then available to him in New York.

So he made up his mind to do without the instrument, using only clarinet-trumpet in the Quintet sides; trumpet-clarinet-soprano on the Laddners; and here, two trumpets and clarinet.

Results have justified the step. Had he employed a trombonist unfamiliar with the style, the whole character of the music would inevitably have been destroyed. It appears, too, that Panassié wanted someone like Johnny St. Cyr on guitar, but was compelled to compromise by using Bunn. Happily, the latter is more solid on these records than is usually the case with him.

In spite of difficulties, then, results were magnificent. Side one is opened by a charming piano passage followed by a few bars of guitar. Of the six choruses, four are ensemble, and they are triumphs of collective improvisation. The fourth and fifth choruses have strong Mezzrow clarinet with de Paris growling away behind the former, and playing pleasant riffs with Laddner in the latter while Mezzrow embroiders the melody.

The second side is taken at a faster tempo. Through the first and second choruses Laddner's bouncing lead is exactly right, the other two voices filling out the harmony. Chorus three is dominated by de Paris while in the next two Mezzrow plays perhaps the finest clarinet of his life.

The tone—particularly its vibrato—recalls Dodds. The instinctive feel for this type of blues music reminds you that Mezzrow is all the way a jazzman.

Following choruses display a mounting tension until at the finish everyone is driving solidly. Many listenings tempt me to grade this performance among the most exhilarating ever caught on record.

Reasons for Panassié's high praise of Mezzrow become obvious after hearing these sides—it would be hard to select another white clarinetist as capable as he of playing the right part in this contrapuntal music. Laddner, too, is as wonderful as you'll have come to expect from his own records. As always, in these "U.S. Selections," I incorporate a plea for his early release over here, and, with recent lists in mind, I feel more hopeful than usual.

\* \* \*

### MORE ABOUT WEATHERFORD

Our recent piece about the late **Teddy Weatherford** elicited several letters. One of these, from **Fusilier F. Boycott**, of S.E.A.C., tells us: "I doubt if the band is carrying on as a whole at present, because there is a taboo on dancing at the Grand Hotel and Prince's Ballroom, where the band played regularly. Teddy was India's best-known bandleader."

Two other letters, from **Sinclair Trail** and **Elliott Goldman**, are worth printing in their entirety. **Sinclair** writes:—

"There is nothing much to add to your notes except that in the band which played the Taj Mahal, Bombay, **Teddy** used **Buck Clayton**, **Bill Colman**, **Geo. Washington** and **Rudy Jackson**. Previous to this **Buck Clayton** toured the East with a band called **Buck Clayton** and his **Harlem Gentlemen**. The band broke up in **Rangoon**, and **Buck** joined **Teddy**.

"**Buck's** band is supposed to have made some records for the Japanese **Victor Co.**, but I could never trace any of these."

The best record that **Teddy** cut in **Calcutta** was "Darktown Strutters' Ball"/"Birth Of the Blues" (India Columbia FB 40164). The blues (?) side is pretty dire, but in "Strutters" he makes a very good side a la **Waller**.

"When I first heard **Teddy** in **Calcutta** he had the most cosmopolitan band it is possible to imagine. His trombonist was **French**; guitar **Portuguese**; bass **Scotch**; trumpets, **Burmese** and **Italian**; one sax was a **Persian** and another an **Indian**; the rest of the band were pure **American Negro**."

\* \* \*

And **Elliott Goldman** writes:—

"There are a few gaps left open in your excellent obituary of this one-time great jazz pianist."

"**Teddy** came to **Chicago** somewhere around 1921 and played for some considerable time at the **Moulin Rouge** with various bands and as solo artist."

"He recorded for **Paramount** in 1923 with **Jimmy Wade's** orch. Titles were "Someday, Sweetheart" (1620-1), "Mobile Blues" (1621-2), **Para. 20295**, the complete line-up being **Jimmy Wade** (tp.); **Teddy Weatherford** (pno.); **Williams Dover** (tmb.); **Stomp Evans** (saxes); **Eddie South** and **Stanley Wilson** (violins); **Walter Wright** (bass); and **Edwin Jackson** (drums). For the discophile this record was also issued on **Puritan 11295** and **Harmograph 893**, possibly with different matrices."

"**Jimmy Wade** took **Teddy** for a trip to **St. Louis** early 1924, where their association ended. It is believed that **Teddy** cut some sides with **Charlie Creath** while in **St. Louis** for the **Okeh** label, but definite information and details are lacking. He returned to **Chicago** in the middle of 1925 and played at the "Vendome" with **Erskine Tate**.

"During this period it is thought that **Teddy** must have made several discs for the **Paramount**, **Okeh** and other obscure labels, possibly with blues singers. It will be a great help if other collectors could throw some light on this matter, and any details of discs containing possible **Weatherford** would be very welcome to yours truly, so that a more complete picture could be made of his career."

"The only example of **Teddy Weatherford** issued in this country is on "Static Strut"/"Stomp Off, Let's Go By," by **Erskine Tate's Vendome** orch. on **Oriole 1004**, which is now unfortunately unavailable. This shows **Teddy** to be a pianist of first mention, with the technique of **Hines** and the drive of **Jimmy Johnson**. It is hoped that **Brunswick**, who hold the rights, will reissue this record soon."

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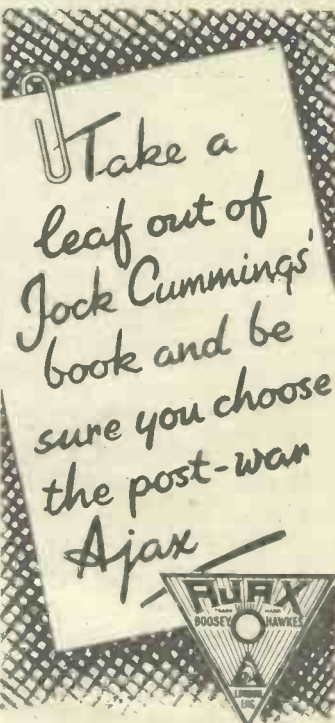
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