

VOL. 23. No. 705. JANUARY 25, 1947. EVERY THURSDAY. THREEPENCE.

# Melody Maker

INCORPORATING "RHYTHM"

## BANDLEADERS' BIG GUNS RANGED ON BBC!

### Low Stone is Elected President at DBDA Inaugural Meeting

WORKING UP FOR AN ALL-OUT ONSLAUGHT ON THE BBC. THE NEWLY FORMED DANCE BAND DIRECTORS' ASSOCIATION LAST TUESDAY (21st) HELD ITS INAUGURAL MEETING AT THE HOLBORN RESTAURANT.

"M.M." readers will recall that a decision to re-form the old pre-war bandleaders' association was made at a similar meeting held on December 5 last. At that time, an Interim Committee was appointed to proceed with the vital business of building up an organisation that, with the full backing of the Musicians' Union, would be in a position to rectify the existing conditions under which bandleaders are expected to work for the BBC.

#### COMMITTEE FORMED

Now, with the enthusiastic backing of all the big-names in the profession, the new DBDA has been born. Unanimously elected, the officers for 1947 are: **Low Stone** (president); **Billy Tennent** (vice-president); **Hardie Ratcliffe** (secretary); and a committee comprising **Sid Phillips**, **Eric Robinson**, **Lou Praeger**, **Victor Silvester**, **Billy Cotton**, **Harry Golo**, **Miff Ferris**, **Buddy Featherstonhaugh**, **Chappie D'Amato** and **Harry Leader**.

Among other matters, the committee has been empowered to negotiate directly with the BBC in an effort to obtain:

- (a) More dance-band programmes, and more popular listening periods.
- (b) Higher fees.
- (c) Responsibility for musical interpretation being vested in the bandleader himself.

At the meeting, chairman **Low Stone** read a message of encourage-

ment from **Wing-Commander Cooper, M.P.**—the man who first raised the question of the BBC bribery allegations in the House of Commons. He urged all dance-band leaders to take an active interest in the inquiry that is now proceeding, and to put forward their views on the administration of the BBC so far as it affected their interests.

#### JACK HARRIS DISCUSSED

Also discussed was the admission into Britain of foreign bandleaders. The MU's action in approaching the Home Office in an endeavour to prevent US bandleader **Jack Harris** from working in this country was approved by those present.

Endorsing point (a) above, a music-publisher was quoted in the "Daily Mail" on Tuesday as saying that the BBC has a potential audience of 10,000,000 and 12,000,000 between the peak hours of 7 and 10 p.m., but dance bands rarely get a look in at these hours.

They get most of their dates at 9 a.m., when they can only count on about 2,000,000 listeners, and 11 p.m. to 12 midnight, when the audience drops to about 900,000.

Substantiating claims for higher fees, clarinet-leader **Frank Weir** made a statement to the Press in which he said: "The BBC pays a 12-piece band £42 for half an hour's broadcast. Out of that the leader pays something like £30 for special orchestrations, and £26 on salaries, which leaves him £84 out of pocket."

## SID MILLWARD TAKING HIS "NITWITS" INTO VARIETY

THE thousands of listeners who regularly enjoy radio's number one crazy show, "Ignorance is Bliss," will be more than disturbed to know that the show is shortly to suffer the loss of **Sid Millward** and his "Nitwits," for the very simple reason that offers of theatre dates are coming in so fast that **Sid** can no longer ignore them.

Obviously, one air date per week is not enough to keep the band in existence, and having exhausted what few theatre dates he can cope with and still be on the air at 7 p.m. each Monday, **Sid** has little or no option but to take advantage of the offers which have been made to him by the various theatre syndicates.

Over the past six months or so, the "Nitwits" have been heard on no fewer than 48 "Ignorance" broadcasts (including repeats) and to-day they can claim to be one of the leading musical acts in public favour. Theirs is, of course, highly specialised work—almost every member of the band being a comedian in his own right apart from any musical accomplishments.

To replace them will present producer **Pat Dixon** with a number one headache, and he told the *Melody Maker* this week that he has, at the moment, no idea as to who will be their successors.

The situation would be much easier were the band able to record the show on Sundays, which both they and the BBC are understood to be willing to do, but unfortunately

the Musicians' Union ban on shows being recorded except for repeat airings, prevents this and, therefore, a break appears to be inevitable.

#### STAGE DATES

Next week (27th), the "Nitwits" are playing the *Empress*, Brixton, followed by *East Ham Palace of Varieties* on February 10, arrangements having been made for them to keep their Monday night "date" in each of these weeks. From the week of March 3, however, their theatre dates are such that they must leave the air show, for that week they play the *Empire Theatre*, Sunderland, followed by the *Hippodrome*, Wolverhampton (March 17); *Empire*, Swansea (31st); *Embassy*, Peterborough (April 14); *Empire*, Middlesbrough (21st) and the *Hippodrome*, Ipswich (28th).

The three chief theatre syndicates—*O.T.C.*, *Moss Empires* and *Stoll*—are all anxious to book the band, and **Sid Millward** would appear to be on the threshold of a long and profitable career in the world of Variety.

## HAYES QUILTS CHURCHILLS

AFTER fourteen successful months at the exclusive *Bond Street "Churchills"* **Harry Hayes** and his Band will leave on Saturday, February 1.

**Harry Hayes** told the *Melody Maker*: "I am leaving following a dispute with the management regarding working conditions. At the moment I have no other engagement in view with the band, but have an enormous amount of work myself, whilst I shall be glad of a rest in the evenings after over a year of nitery hours."

During its run at *Churchills* the **Hayes** band, apart from the impeccable alto of **Harry** himself, has featured the fine musicianship of, among others, **Norman Stenfalt** and **George Shearing** (pianos); **Stan Roderick**, **Danny Deans** and **Len Whiteley** (trumpets).

The band currently includes **Jack Nathan** (piano); **Leo Wright** (trumpet); **Tommy Whittle** (tenor); **Bert Howard** (bass); **Jan Smith** (saxes); **Joe Watson** (drums); and, of course, **Primrose Hayes** (vocalist).

## SALLY DOUGLAS LEAVES GERALDO

THE vocal side of the *Geraldo* Orchestra makes headlines this week, first with the resignation on Friday last (17th) of twenty-year-old contralto **Sally Douglas**, and next with the debut of Canadian vocalist **Denny Vaughan**, who took the place of **Dick James** in the orchestra on Tuesday (21st).

Behind the news of **Sally's** resignation, to take effect as from January 31, lies the news of her engagement to the well-known London public relations man, **Michael Saunders**.

**Sally** thus severs two and a half years' association with the *Geraldo* Orchestra.

Whether her two-and-a-half octave contralto will continue to be heard by listeners after her marriage is still undecided. Arrangements are now being made for her successor in the *Geraldo* Orchestra.

Twenty-five-year-old **Denny Vaughan** made an initial appearance with the orchestra on Saturday last, not as a vocalist but as swing pianist in a "Tip Top Tunes" programme.

He will be featured singing with the orchestra this Saturday (25th) at the *City Hall*, Sheffield; at *Harrogate Royal Hall* on the afternoon of the 26th, and at the *Rialto*, York, that same evening, all of which are the band's first appearances by special request.

THE "M.M." is sorry to learn that veteran *MD* **Debrov Somers** has been seriously ill as the result of an aggravated ankle injury. He is now responding well to treatment.

## JOE LOSS'S BEREAVEMENT

THE *Melody Maker* joins with the innumerable friends and admirers of **Joe Loss** in extending our deepest and most sincere condolences to him on the sad death of his mother, **Mrs. Ada Loss**, who passed away last Sunday (19th) after a short illness, aged eighty.

The funeral—which was attended by many professional folk anxious to pay their last respects to a grand old lady—took place on Monday (20th) at the *Edmonton Cemetery*.

Receiving news as he played his fifth and final week at *Green's Playhouse*, Glasgow, last week, that his mother was desperately ill, **Joe Loss** dashed down to London, leaving the band under the capable leadership and direction of violinist **Phil Silverstone**.

His mother's illness taking a fatal turn, **Joe**, of course, remained in *Town* for the funeral, and **Phil** also conducted the band on the stage of the *Glasgow Empire* this week.

## VERA AIRS AGAIN

FAMOUS radio vocalist of the war years and inimitable "Forces Sweetheart" **Vera Lynn** is making her comeback to the air in a big way.

On February 16 she reappears as the star of "Vera Lynn Sings," the new Sunday night series—at the peak listening hour of 9.30-10 p.m. (Light)

**Vera Lynn's** return to radio comes after a long absence, during which, as **Mrs. Harry Lewis**, wife of the famous ex-Ambrose saxophonist, she has become the proud mother of a daughter. Her reappearance is doubly interesting in view of the fact that her accompaniments for the new radio show are to be played by a concert orchestra under the accomplished baton of **Bob Farnon**.

Compeere of the new **Vera Lynn** show will be **Ralph Hurcombe**, and it is being produced by **Roy Spear**.



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## ROY FOX READY FOR VARIETY TOUR

SINCE November last, when, after several months' residence Roy Fox left the Milroy for a series of provincial dates and one-nighters, he has been building up his band in preparation for a Variety debut. Now, theatre-goers who have eagerly awaited the post-war reappearance on the halls of their bandleading idol will have their wishes gratified next week (27th), when, at the Palace, East Ham, Roy's fifteen-piece starts its scheduled nation-wide stage tour.

The band's full personnel now consists of Roy Fox leading Derek Hawkins, Manny Prince, Joe Simmonds, Derek Collins, Eddie Rock (reeds); Joe Richmond, Jimmy McCormick, Charles Evans (tpns.); Norman Broadhurst, Jimmy Wilson, Bill Moss, Fred Mercer (trmps.); Ernest Brass (pno.); Bill Stark (bass); and Jack MacHardie (drms.). Vocalists are Beryl Templeman, Bobby Joy and Jack O'Hagan.

Beryl, who came to this country from India, fills the key femme vocal spot. It is distressing that owing to the vagaries of the English climate, she has now succumbed to a severe bout of bronchitis and may not be able to open with the band. At present Beryl is recuperating in a London nursing home.

Roy Fox, under the aegis of the enterprising Will Collins Agency, is solidly booked for the remainder of this year.

After his East Ham appearance, immediate dates include the Empress, Brixton (February 3); Empire, Croydon (10th); Empire, New Cross (17th); Empire, Chiswick (24th); Metropolitan, Edgware Road (March 1).

## Edmonton is Seeking a Band

TO discover a band for their Municipal Dances (including the regular fortnightly winter dances, two summer dances and the Christmas and New Year's Eve balls), the Edmonton (London) Borough Council are staging an open dance-band contest.

The event, which is open to bands resident within five miles of Edmonton and consisting of not more than eight performers, will take place at the Edmonton Town Hall on the nights of Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, February 18, 19, 20, and 21 next.

Rules and entry forms are now available from the Entertainments Manager, Town Hall, Edmonton, N.9. The contest is approved by the Melody Maker, and bands may take part in it without prejudice to their right (vide Rule 4 of Standing Rules for 1947 "M.M." Contests) also to compete in MELODY MAKER-sponsored contests.

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## STAN KENTON BEATS DUKE IN "METRONOME" POLL

THE Ellington Orchestra, double winners of "Down Beat's" 1946 band ballot were decisively beaten in the "Metronome" All-Stars Poll, just concluded.

Heading the field with 545 votes came the Kenton band, followed by Duke Ellington (398); Woody Herman (357); and Boyd Raeburn (216).

In the small band section the invincible King Cole Trio again came through, this time with 737 votes against 280 cast for the Louis Jordan outfit. Joe Mooney (145) and Benny Goodman's Sextet (133) occupied third and fourth positions.

Among vocalists, Frank Sinatra holds the male throne securely, runners-up being Nat King Cole, Billy Eckstine and Bing Crosby, in that order. In view of "Father" Bing's undisputed popularity in America today, these results must be seen as an indication of how far he has strayed from the realms of pure dance music.

First pairs in other sections were: June Christy, Billie Holiday (female vocalists); Johnny Hodges, Willie Smith (altos); Benny Goodman, Woody Herman (clarinets); Coleman Hawkins, Flip Phillips (tenors); Harry Carney, Ernie Caceres (baritones); Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge (trumpets); Bill Harris, Lawrence Brown (trombones); Nat Cole, Teddy Wilson (pianos); Oscar Moore, Tiny Grimes (guitars); Eddie Safranski, Chubby Jackson (basses); Dave Tough, Gene Krupa (drums); Red Norvo, Lionel Hampton (miscellaneous instruments). Leading arrangers were Eddie Sauter and Ralph Burns.

## DICK JAMES IS A DADDY NOW!

LAST week is one that will forever remain a milestone in the memories of vocalist Dick James. He not only made seven broadcasts and appeared at a dance with the Woolf Phillips Orchestra, but on Saturday (18th) he terminated his fourteen months' association with the Gerardo Orchestra—and became a father.

Stephen Maurice was born to Dick's wife, Frances, at the Caerthillian Nursing Home, Cricklewood, between Dick's taking two vocals at Wimbledon Town Hall for Woolf Phillips—and Dick succeeded in greeting his newly born within a few minutes of its arrival into the world, before dashing back by car to Wimbledon for the second vocal.

Now handled by Music Artistes, Ltd., Dick left his day-and-a-half-old baby to appear in Leicester for a Sunday concert with Woolf Phillips. Yesterday afternoon (Wednesday) he made his initial broadcast with Stephane Grappelly and his Quintet in the Home Service. On Sunday (26th) he compères and sings on television with Mantovani and his Orchestra.

More news from the James camp is that, on February 1, Dick embarks on a series of high-class one-nighters when, in addition to singing and compèring, he will front his own seven-piece group.

## CONDE'S RUMBA RECORD

FOUR years' continuous work in London's smartest clubs and restaurants—40 broadcasts over one period of six months—52 consecutive Sunday concerts at number one theatres—such is the record of Francisco Conde and his Rumba Band, which is currently featured at Murray's Club, W., opposite to the Imeson Bros. Band.

Three months ago the band started at the Beak Street resort on a six months' contract, which last week was extended for a further six months.

For some obscure reason the boys have been very sadly neglected by the BBC since last April, but returned to the Home Service programme for one recent broadcast, with a promise of further dates to come.

Apart from the recent addition of a flute, the line-up has remained constant for a long time, and with Francisco on piano, the personnel is: Jack Davis (bass); Reg. Weiler (drums); Victor Parker (guitar)—all three of these boys are vocalists of differing types—Roy Davey (trumpet and vibes); Bill Godfrey (flute), and Renee, who handles all the usual Latin-American percussion instruments.

## EVANS BULLETIN

HERE is good news for friends of brilliant bandleader-arranger George Evans.

Although it is only since August that George, owing to the unfortunate illness which struck him down just as he had hit the musical peak with his unique ten sax orchestra, passed the baton to his brother Les, the "M.M." is glad to report the good tidings that George is now making excellent progress.

It may not now be necessary for him to have a second operation, and, if he continues to keep going ahead on the road to recovery, there is every indication that it will not be so very long before he is again well enough to take an active part in the direction of his band.

Meanwhile, under Les's able leadership, the George Evans' Orchestra is doing great business on one-night stands. Future dates include: Town Hall, Stoke Newington (to-morrow, 24th); Coronation Hall, Kingston (25th); Odeon, Warley (26th); Queen's Hall, Preston (27th); Devonshire Ballroom, Manchester (Feb. 3 and 6); Lido Ballroom, Sale (4th and 7th); Palais, Levenshulme (5th and 8th), these latter dates for Mr. Oliver Ashworth.

## CARR AT "KNOT"

ON Monday last (20th) Alan Carr opened at the Knot Restaurant in Leicester Square, W., with a five-piece in succession to Alan Mindel.

During his five years of war service Alan Carr was for a time stationed near London, and was featured with the Jack Jackson Band when the latter played some London dates in Variety in the early 1940's.

Demobilised early last year, Alan clicked for the summer season at the Cliftonville Hotel, Cliftonville, and it was due to the management of this hotel acquiring control of the Knot that Alan was asked to succeed Alan Mindel.

Primarily a bass player, Alan Carr also plays piano and guitar at the Knot, and with him there are Harry Field (piano); Jimmy Stein (who handles the rather unique double of drums and baritone sax); Arthur Taylor (trumpet); and ex-Nat Allen tenor man Freddy Taylor, who also plays fiddle.

GERRY MOORE, perennial pianist, writes from Merrie's Club in Baker Street to give us the news that his pianists there get very able assistance from Dave Fernie on drums. The Club has been continually open since 1933, and has a membership of close on 10,000.

## Squads Score at Sunday Show

IF the show which the Squadronaires did at the National Sunday League concert at the London Casino last Sunday (19th), is the one they propose to take out on tour starting at Chiswick Empire on February 10, they are going to be a cinch all the way (writes Chris Hayes).

Even the hardest person to please could not fail to rise to their attractive performance, starring the Quads, the George Chisholm Swing Group, Ronnie Aldrich, Joek Cummings, Sally Brown, Doreen Stephens and the neat direction of personable Jimmy Miller.

Another sensation in a terrific show was the superb vocal-quartet, the Radio Revellers, whose act is an absolute wow, especially their vivid vocal mimicry.

For this Sunday's NSL Concert at the Casino (26th), Bob Luff has lined up Teddy Foster and his Orchestra, Harold Berens, Dickie Murdoch, Harry Robbins, etc.

The two dates which the Squads are due to play in Scotland next week have been rearranged and finalised as follows: A charity dance at the Salutation Hotel, Perth, on Friday, January 31, and a gala dance at the Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen, on Saturday, February 1. They will be broadcast from the Aberdeen studios from 11.30 a.m. to 12 noon on Saturday, and BBC commentator Gerry Wilmott will be with them on all these engagements.

## Harmonica Virtuoso at the Albert Hall

AN unusual tribute to the once-maligned instrument, the harmonica, takes place on Saturday evening next week (February 1) at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

Ronald Chesney, the brilliant harmonica-player, is to give a solo recital lasting nearly two hours, during the course of which he will play classical numbers that will demonstrate his uncanny versatility on the instrument.

The concert is being presented by Harold Fielding and is a climax to the tremendously successful series of concerts all round the country which Ronald has been playing for the same impresario.

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As we enter 1947, the celebrated Gerald guitarist, IVOR MAIRANTS, member of the London District Council of the MU and indefatigable worker in the interests of musicians, takes stock of British dance music today and, in the first of three articles, asks—

# What's Wrong with the West End?

and four rhythm. It was also considered good musicianship to play quietly most of the time, although it did irritate the brass. Nevertheless, it was felt that one chorus saxes, one chorus brass, then a

**Q**UITE recently, during the visit of Gerald to the States, something of a storm blew up over here as a result of what turned out to be no more than a New York reporter's eagerness to turn in a sensational story. He reported Gerald as stating that, compared with American dance musicians, we over here are lazy and lacking in incentive.

Without wishing to drag up this unfortunate affair all over again, all of us in the profession must agree that we were given cause by it to think over the present state of affairs in which we find ourselves, and ask ourselves if there were really any truth in such a contention.

Many things cannot be taken at their face value, and that is very true of the section of our profession that is known as "the West End." And it is the West End musicians to whom I'm going to confine myself here.

Would you think it true to say that there are dance musicians playing at the smartest clubs, hotels and restaurants in London's West End who spend most of their time grumbling at the music they play? That they are in it solely for the money, and live for the day when they have saved enough money to start a business venture ranging from a hotel or

the Grade A establishments in the West End force their bands to play down to their most influential customers, not to the customers who want good dance music?

Would you think that this state of affairs is demoralising more than one well-known band?

I do not have to ask the musicians concerned—they know. But what about you others who cover these household names with glamour?

Perhaps you think I have fallen in line with those who take pleasure in throwing out unjust accusations. Perhaps you think I am trying to keep newcomers out of the West End by trying to be a Jonah.

Not at all. Decent wages always attract those who labour by hand or brain, or both. And—one must live! But one should not resign oneself to an existence of becoming a non-stop churning machine for thirty-two bar choruses.

Should a band be a human addition to the decorations or attract notice to itself by the music it plays?

What should the bandleader do? Should he accept the challenge from the musicians and play good music? This may challenge the management,

boarding-house to a tobacconist's or music store? Conversely, that there are many who really enjoy their work?

Do not think I am posing a lot of silly questions in order to be cynical. I am no cynic, and these are questions which many musicians will recognise as something they themselves have asked without finding the answer.

Let me say right now that I am offering no quick solution or ready answer. I am simply posing the problem because musicians will agree that the problem exists; but only the realisation of its existence will hasten its solution.

who may fear a challenge from the influential customers who may have more money than youth or taste in dance music.

Let me say right now that I am offering no quick solution or ready answer. I am simply posing the problem because musicians will agree that the problem exists; but only the realisation of its existence will hasten its solution.

Let me say right now that I am offering no quick solution or ready answer. I am simply posing the problem because musicians will agree that the problem exists; but only the realisation of its existence will hasten its solution.

**I** REMEMBER how wonderful it seemed to me, years ago, to come into the thickly carpeted and tapestried West End restaurant through the service door, leaving the stone steps, the toilet and garbage smells behind. The smells, now turned into seductive perfumes given off by the patrons, made one feel at one with this luxurious atmosphere, and for one hour of non-stop playing the stink, discomfort and stone floors were forgotten.

Here and there celebrities were pointed out by my colleagues and our stare would follow them round the dance floor during a popular number which had been played so often that it was no longer necessary to read the music for the 32 bars.

The glamour side, no doubt, still attracts the newcomers, but there is a very big difference, and the change is in the place the West-End bands hold in relationship to the dance band part of the profession.

Up to ten years ago it was still considered fine to play in a band consisting of two trumpets, two trombones with three or four saxes

solo or vocal chorus followed by a tutti chorus with the clarinet filling in a la Danny Polo, was quite stylish. Further, the hall-mark of a good band was playing the first-time bar with precision.

Quite often a good American printed arrangement was included, and all the best bands followed this pattern with, of course, personal variations, and could be heard in the bands of Ambrose, Jack Harris and Lew Stone, Roy Fox, Ken Johnson, Carroll Gibbons, etc.

These bands all played in West End restaurants or clubs, and these jobs were the best regular ones in London.

Therefore (excluding the freelancer) the musicians in the jobs considered best because of the pay and the music took it as the accepted thing to play in this fashion. Although things were not always perfect, these bands set the standard in this country.

Are things the same to-day? Where are the dance music enthusiasts found? In the West End, or in the dance hall or on the radio? Whatever you may say about the young dancer, jazz fan or radio listener, you cannot say that the restaurant-goer sets the pace in expecting the best in dance music.

Again, you may ask: Why not? All right, let us come up to date and see the changes that have occurred, both with the bands and the people.

The bands are larger, have seven or eight brass, five saxes, sometimes carry a string section, and they appeal to a larger public than is confined to a West End club or restaurant.

During the war, dance music was dispensed right amongst the public. Right in the factories, at public concerts, and taken to the Forces. All the best dance bands played directly for the masses, and amongst the masses there grew up a public who, come what may, are willing to back their fancy by supporting the best dance music that comes to the local dance hall, concert hall or theatre.

Take some of the best-known bands of to-day. The Squadronaires, Sky-rockets, Ted Heath, Gerald, George Evans, Teddy Foster, the Blue Rockets, Lou Preager, and (dare I mention it?) Victor Silvester.

Do they play in the West End? No. There is the glaring difference!

To-day, the West End bands are no longer the acknowledged leaders of dance music; the best bands draw their support from the wide public, not from the few rich patrons to whom musicians supply the necessary amount of droning required for their conversation and floor crawl.

Next week, Ivor Mairants gives an intimate glimpse into conditions obtaining among the West End bands of today.

## "MOTHER OF THE BLUES" IS DEAD

**A** **N**OTHER great Smith has fallen . . . Mamie Smith's gone! These words, printed in a recent American jazz publication, gave notice of the death of the woman whose early recordings put Negro blues on the commercial map back in 1920.

Mamie Smith, one of four great women blues singers with that surname, was born in Cincinnati. She was never well known in this country, and almost forgotten in the United States when she died recently in a Harlem hospital after a long illness.

But Mamie had enjoyed success in the early 'twenties on records and in vaudeville, and she was the recognised doyenne of recording blues-singers. Her first records sold thousands of copies weekly (the first jazz recordings to be made by a coloured singer, they were issued as the Okeh Company's answer to Sophie Tucker), and convinced the record concerns of the existence of a huge market for blues among America's coloured people (writes Max Jones).

One title in particular—"Crazy Blues," backed by "It's Right Here for You," on Okeh 4169—continued for some while to sell several thousand weekly. It is not in the "classic" tradition of Bessie Smith's blues songs, and there are critics who declare that Mamie never rated with the other famous Smiths—Bessie, Clara and Trixie. (There have been six Smith women in the realms of blues. The fifth was Laura—none of these five was related to the other—and the sixth, Ruby Smith, said to be a niece of Bessie, whose few recordings have been released on the Vocalion and Bluebird labels.)

Whatever her merits as a blues singer may have been, Mamie waxed scores of sides for Okeh and Columbia which have earned her a permanent place in jazz history. Her early success paved the way for Ma Rainey, Ida Cox, Bertha Hill and the rest of the Smiths; on her sessions she employed many famous jazzmen like Johnny Dunn and Perry Bradford, and before 1920 she gave a start to

saxophonist Coleman Hawkins as a member of her "Jazz Hounds."

During her heyday Mamie Smith was one of the wealthiest of coloured artists. After the Depression, which put an end to the boom in blues recordings, Mamie went on with her vaudeville career and continued to be a relatively good draw with Negro audiences in the middle 'thirties.

Little has been heard of her during the past few years, but it is reported that she was returning to the theatre last summer when ill-health caused a cancellation of her plans.

Only one of her recordings has featured in the English lists ("Jenny's Ball," Parlophone R.1195), and that shows her to have been a forthright singer in the Negro vaudeville manner.

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**S**ISTER of Triss Henderson, with whom she made the famous Henderson Twins act, Winifred Henderson is now back in England and in the profession again. Yorkshire-born Winnie will appear as special guest artists at the Feldman Bros.' swing concert at the Guildhall, Southampton, on February 2 at 3 p.m., on a bill composed of the cream of the West End swing talent. It is also announced that the noted Windmill Theatre trombonist-comedian Jimmie Edwards will take part in this musical feast.



### Jerry Dawson's "GOSSIP"

**P**ROVINCIAL contact man for Cosmo Music for some time past, Bradford pianist Alan Helgate is now domiciled in London, where he is working for Cosmo's parent company, W. Paxton and Co., Ltd.

Maurice Davies (trumpet) has not joined George Evans after all. Is remaining at Harpurhey Baths Ballroom with Geo. Worthington's Band.

Jazz trombone Ken Wray now with Bill Edge at Levenshulme Palais, Manchester. He replaces Jack Green, who left some weeks ago.

Sunderland's Albert Flush is a happy man. Wife recently presented him with a strapping son weighing 9½ lb. Likewise, Manchester leader Morris Mack, who welcomed a baby daughter last Tuesday week.

Glyn Douglas has left Ambassadors Club, Bangor. Trumpet man Hughie Granville now leading.

Percy Warden, Brighton M.U. secretary, has more than trebled membership of the branch. This makes Brighton almost 100 per cent. M.U.

Sammy McLean, 38-year-old Scottish bandleader, sails from Southampton January 29 aboard "Queen Elizabeth," bound for Southgate, near Hollywood. Will join 35-piece outfit led by pianist/cousin Lesley Stapleton.

Facilities for dancing in Edinburgh will be greatly enhanced with the opening-up of a swank dinner-dance club in Queen Street. Approval has been given for conversion of the premises at a cost of £8,000.

Tommy Gusty, who enjoys the reputation of being the most-sought-after pianist in Scotland by London bands, is still a home bird. He has joined Maurice Sheffield's Band at the Edinburgh Palais, and his piano work is being featured.

Ex-Rabia vocalist Roy Edwards in hospital with sinus trouble. Would like to hear from fans and friends at No. 3 Ward, Eye and Ear Hospital, Myrtle Street, Liverpool.

Ex-George Evans tenor star Jack Elder available for gigs around Manchester. Address is 13, Reddish Vale Road, Reddish.

Nice tea dance broadcast by Jack McCormick last Friday via North Regional, with trumpet, five-sax, three-rhythm combo.

Northern band requires slick compère for concerts. Will pass on any applications.

First-class lead alto required by Billy Forrest at the Empress Ballroom, Wigan. Must be good jazz player.

Congratulations to ex-Joe Daniels pianist Johnny Roberts, who took over last Monday as assistant to Jimmie Green at Irving Berlin Music.

NORTHERN OFFICE:—2/4, OXFORD ROAD, MANCHESTER, 1

## PROVINCIAL PAGE

### Sheffield's Moorhouse at Brighton: North Reg. Audition Scheme: Southern Turns Pro.

**S**HEFFIELD impresario Ken Moorhouse, M.I.D.M.A., who with Bernard Taylor took over the running of dances at Sheffield City Hall and made a terrific success of what had previously been a white elephant, has shifted his activities to Brighton.

He has taken over the lease of the famous Aquarium, where he and Bernard will run dancing and entertainment throughout the summer.

Ken is by profession a builder, and one of his jobs is to redecorate, renovate and thoroughly overhaul the Aquarium. But, at heart, he is a dance band fan, and he has so arranged the building side of this very heavy undertaking as to make it possible for all his scaffolding to come down inside the ballroom every day to permit of the band carrying on for its regular sessions.

The lucky band is that of Howard Lee, which will remain in residence and will feature as guest star each Saturday no less a personage than Denny Dennis.

There is to be a formal opening ceremony by the Mayor of Brighton (Mr. C. R. Morris) and a civic function, on May 21, when all the amenities of the restaurant and the aquarium will be in full swing for the summer season.

Howard Lee is very popular at Brighton, and the full personnel of his band comprises himself conducting Don Reeves, Harry Connick (altos); David Lindup, Stan Goring (tenors); Eric Morris, Peter Wimslow (trumpets); George Thorne, Dennis Thorne (trombones); Dennis Delaney (drums); Bill Brooks (bass and vocals); Les Appleton (piano); and Jackie Taylor (vocals).

#### BRADFORD

**S**TANLEY NORTH, Bradford's "live-wire of dance music," reports one of the busiest Christmas periods of his career, when he had no fewer than 14 bands working over the holidays, including such first-class engagements as the Royal Crescent Hotel, Piley, and the Southcliffe Country Club at Scarborough.

Stanley's No. 1 band is now entering on its 14th season as resident band at the Windsor Hall, Bradford, and is led by George Irwin (alto-sax), with Reg. Boys (2nd alto); Bill Tugwood (tenor); Larry Jones (tpt.); Frank Sunderland (piano); and Laurie Greenwood (drums and vocals). Record crowds are the rule here.

In addition to his busy gig connection, Stanley reports good business at his Jolly Roger Dance Club in Bridlington.

#### CORNWALL

**C**URRENTLY featured at the "Blue Lagoon" ballroom, Newquay, is altoist Bill Harding and his Music.

With Bill are Bill Pearce (tenor); Geo Roberts and Dennis Mallett (tpts.); "Dank" Flambank (drums); Frank Toy (piano); and Jimmy Minton (bass); plus vocalist Pat Veal.

For next season Bill is fixed to provide music at both the Tolcarne and Cliffdene Hotels.

#### NORTH REGIONAL

**W**ITH over a hundred dance bands on the waiting list for audition, North Regional Variety chief, Bowker Andrews, has evolved a scheme to give all these bands a chance.

Every Wednesday, for an indefinite period, a specially selected committee will audition those bands which have already made application. All bands which show the necessary promise will be called upon to pass a further audition at some future date, from which final auditions half a dozen or so will be selected to go on to the North Regional Dance Band Rota.

Obviously there is nothing like enough air-time for all ambitious bands to be given dates, but this scheme will at least give them all a hearing and an equal chance of being amongst the finally selected few.

#### SOUTHEND

**F**ROM Monday, January 6, the Mecca company will be using, contrary to its usual policy, only one band at the Olympia Ballroom, Southend. In addition, weekday afternoon sessions are now cut out. For this reason Stan Pearce has augmented his trio with the addition of George Haworth (tenor clarinet, violin) and Bert Dyke (trumpet), two of Johnny Birks' Band.

Johnny Birks has left the Olympia and will now concentrate on the ambitious plans he has been formulating for some time to present a new style Latin American band. The name of "Birks" should be equally popular under its new title—Johnny Kerrison and his Music. Johnny may be contacted at 41, Farnborough Road, Earl's Court, S.W.10.

#### NOTTS.

**C**OMMENCING operations in 1939 with a four-piece band at the Underwood Institute, Jack Hargreaves and his Band is now seven strong, and for the past three years has been playing several nights per week at the Bentinck Welfare Ballroom.

Jack leads on trumpet, and with him are Jack Ward (trumpet); Fred Bingley and Ted Short (altos); Chas. Wykes (tenor); Len Soothern (piano); Jack's father, Tom Hargreaves (drums), plus vocalist Freddy Slater.

#### PLYMOUTH

**W**ELL known in Plymouth, and one of the busiest gig bands in Cornwall and Devon, the "Blue Notes" are featured at the Corn Exchange, Plymouth, each Saturday night.

The band comprises: Les Colmer (trumpet); George Pawby (trombone); Jack Horne and Bert Bartlett (altos); Ken May (piano); and Fred Cliffe (drums).

Municipal dances—they call 'em "Proms"—at the Corn Exchange are in the more than capable hands of Ted Coleman and his Waldorf Orchestra.

#### KIDDERMINSTER

**F**OLLOWING a term at the Gilder-drome Ballroom, Philip Cooper and his Orchestra is now playing two or three nights per week at the Baths Ballroom, Kidd.

Led by Philip Cooper on alto, the boys are: Trevor Jones (piano); Geoff Wedley (bass); Len Tyley (drums); Stan Williams, Jim Smethem and Will Hardiman (saxes); Reg Postan and Brian Danks (trumpets); Frank Price and Ron Capewell (trombones); and vocaliste Beryl Turner.

#### LEAMINGTON SPA

**W**ELL-KNOWN in MELODY MAKER contesting circles, Jack Southern and his band, currently resident at the Palais, Leamington Spa, have recently assumed full-time professional status—this since their appearance in last year's "All Britain" at Blackpool.

With Jack leading from piano the boys are Bob Bentley and Freddy Dickens (altos); Johnny Clark (tenor); Ron Adams (tpt.); Frank Wright (drums), and Ron Bailey (bass).

Bob Bentley is the brother of Ted Heath's Jack Bentley, whilst Ron Adams recently joined the band from Joe Daniels' "Hot Shots."

## SCOTLAND

#### GLASGOW

**T**ALK of the week has been the news that Matt Moors is leaving the Plaza almost immediately to take over at the Lyceum, Strand, London. His place will be taken by George Colborn and his Band, who come from the Locarno at Streatham, this being the job played by Matt prior to his coming to Glasgow about 15 months ago. Full details are not yet available, but it is understood that most of the present Plaza line-up will go South.

It was not necessary for Joe Lown to do the usual Playhouse-Empire double, as his Empire appearance takes place this week following a really hectic season at Green's, with attendance figures which would prove that Joe is still the No. 1 draw in these parts. The keyboard job with Joe would appear to be a Glasgow monopoly for keeps, as brilliant young Billy McGuffey is proving a worthy successor to fellow-townsmen Albert Gordon.

#### ARDROSSAN

**P**LAYING with the Louis Freeman Band at Ardrossan, led by Joe Lumbie, is bassist Phil Davis, who played for some time with Jack Chapman at the Albert. Difficulty in filling a sax vacancy rendered necessary a change of instrumentation, and the "doghouse" is now a fixture.

#### DUNFERMLINE

**D**ANCERS in Dunfermline are well served by the Kinema Ballroom, where a change in band arrangements took place the other day. Succeeding Fred Orr and his Band is the "Top Notchers," led by Cecil Hunter, who plays bass. With him are Billy Hunter (trumpet); Jack Richardson (alto); Dave Kilpatrick (piano); Tom Wallace (drums); and "Jean," vocalist. The MU has been doing some good work in this district recently, and there are now two branches—at Kirkcaldy and in West Fife.

#### NEWCASTLE

**S**AXOPHONE soloist and leader Claude Cavalletti has numerous dates booked for his ten-piece band, these including a concert this Sunday (26th) at the Odeon, Newcastle, to be followed immediately by a week's playing for dancing at the Seaburn Hall, Sunderland.

Band features the singing of Dorothy Barrens.

Upon his return, Claude will be featured each Wednesday with his band at the Coronation Hall, Kingston-on-Thames. His next broadcast "solo" will be on February 17. Claude has already fixed up to return to Scarborough for a four and a half months' stay next summer, following his successful 1946 season there.

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# "BUNK" STILL HAS STYLE

Edgar Jackson's Record Review

## BUNK JOHNSON AND HIS NEW ORLEANS BAND

\*\*I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate (A. J. Piron) (Am. Victor D5-VB-886).

\*\*One Sweet Letter from You (Lew Brown, Sidney Clare, Harry Warren) (Am. Victor D5-VB-889). (H.M.V. B9517—3s. 11½d.)

Willie "Bunk" Johnson (tpt.), with George Lewis (clart.); Jim Robinson (tmb.); Alton Purnell (pno.); Lawrence Marrero (bjo.); Alcide ("Slow Drag") Pavogau (bass); "Baby" Dodds (dms). Recorded December 6, 1945.

PLEASE, once again, may I point out that the amount of space I devote to any record must not necessarily be taken as a reflection of my opinion of it? This remark is prompted by some of the letters I have received following my full-page review last November of the first Bunk Johnson sides to be released here. Many of the writers say they can see nothing to the band and want to know what all the excitement is about.

As far as I am concerned, the "excitement," if you can call 1,500-

**PICK OF THE WEEK**  
(for Everybody)  
"SKYROCKETS"—"All By Myself" and "Five Minutes More" (H.M.V. BD5955).

odd words excitement, was certainly not created by any merit or demerit there may have been in the records as such.

It was merely due to the fact that I thought the first musical introduction we were being given to one whom Louis Armstrong had spoken of as "the man they ought to talk about" would be a good peg on which to hang his life story.

### "BUNK" AT SIXTY-SIX

After all, Bunk Johnson has for long been spoken of as one of the "greats" who helped to create jazz when it was in its first evolutionary stages in those now legendary New Orleans days of the earliest 1900's; and your "M.M." would have been failing in its duty had it not given you his story, not merely for use as a background to help you appraise his records, but also as one of the chapters which go to complete the history of jazz.

But many people seem to have thought that because I dealt with Bunk Johnson's life, and the lamentable conditions it revealed, at some length, this must mean that I thought his records wonderful.

Actually, nothing could be farther from the truth.

For one thing, those records—and the same applies to the second two sides issued this month—give us Bunk not as he was when he was young and at the top of his form, but as he is to-day, an old man of sixty-six.

So at the best we hear a man who has lost not only much of his technique, but also most of his power to blow.

But for those who understand—and judging from letters I have received from them also there are a goodly few who do—there is still something to be found in Bunk's playing by those who know how to look for it and can recognise it when they find it.

That something is style—the old-time New Orleans "approach" and phrasing which were the essence of the original New Orleans jazz. It is impossible to attempt to define it even briefly in words. But it was something very real and very original and often most exciting. It was that something in the original jazz which once present could not be obliterated by such things as crudity or naiveté, and went far to offset these shortcomings for those who recognised and were thrilled by the true jazz idiom.

Listen carefully to Bunk's playing, and behind the din of what is otherwise only little better than a rather sad attempt by a pretty raw band to play New Orleans jazz, you will find traces, and at times even brilliant flashes, of that style which earned Bunk Johnson an apparently deserved reputation in the old days, but which has become too shadowy to enable him to do more than trade on without living up to, that reputation to-day.



Following her successful air series with Harry Farry, vocalist Dinah Kaye (pictured above) has just joined Cyril Stapleton's Band at Fischer's Restaurant and is now heard on all his Tuesday-night broadcasts from this spot.

## CALL SHEET

- (Week commencing January 27)
- Carl BARRITEAU and Band. One-night Stands, Midlands.
  - Billy COTTON and Band. Her Majesty's, Carlisle.
  - Leslie DOUGLAS and Band. City of Varieties, Leeds.
  - George EVANS and Band. One-night Stands, North and London.
  - Teddy FOSTER and Band. One-night Stands, North.
  - Roy FOX and Band. Palace, East Ham.
  - Morton FRASER and Harmonica Rascals. Hippodrome, Eastbourne.
  - Henry HALL and Band. Empire, Finsbury Park.
  - Joe LOSS and Band. Empire, Nottingham.
  - Felix MENDELSSOHN and Hawaiian Serenaders. One-night Stands, North, Midlands.
  - Syd MILLWARD and Nitwits. Empress, Brixton.
  - Fred MIRFIELD and Band. Savoy, Scunthorpe.
  - Oscar RABIN and Band. One-night Stands, Midlands.
  - Charles SHADWELL and Orchestra. Palace, Leicester.
  - TROISE and Mandollers. Hippodrome, Norwich.
  - Eric WINSTONE and Band. Green's Playhouse, Glasgow.

MUSICAL Director Hal Tauber asks us to make it clear that he is not in any way to be confused with a Maxwell David Tauber, described as a bandleader, and recently involved in a motorist court-case.

IN last week's notes of the line-up of Felix King's Band for the Nightingale niterie, the trombonist, whose name was given as Schneider, is Northern slip-horn stylist Ronnie Snyder, who has been working around the West End since he was posted to London during his term in the Forces.



Here is Anne Weaver, who adds the vocal qualities of her native Wales to Howard Lucraft and his Music, whom she has just joined, and with whom she will be featured at Seaburn Hall, Sunderland, during the week commencing February 10.

## TACTLESS TOPICS EXCURSION in ETYMOLOGY

by Claude Barapton

THIS week it's etymology. No, words, not butterflies; at any rate, that's what my dictionary says; the science and origin of words.

And as you know, many of our words in music are of Italian origin, many of them just ordinary Italian words with quite ordinary domestic meanings.

Should you ever see a little dog wagging its coda, you will get the idea, for this one means tail, or that which comes at the end... similarly, *pianoforte* a coda would refer to a grand piano, and its prominent posterior, as opposed to the less shapely, less attractive, *pianoforte verticale*.

Split the word *pianoforte* and we have two words of considerable interest to the musician who takes his instrument, section, and band, anything like seriously.

*Forte*, of course, we read as meaning loud... usually very much too loud, but loud nevertheless.

*Forte* also means strong point; but those energetic ones who make a strong point of blowing their heads off all evening overlook the fact (being of course far too stylish and swifty to worry about such trifles) that Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, and artists of similar distinction, have the usual seven colours in their particular rainbow, namely, *ppp*, *pp*, *p*, *mf*, *f*, *ff*, *fff*.

And they don't put the cart before the horse.

However, as this is not a music lesson, but instead a brief excursion in etymology, *forte* means, also, strong, powerful, mighty, vigorous, lusty, stout, and sturdy.

"Ah...!" say the blow-hards.

"That adds up to solid."

But there is something of a difference between a solid band and a solid mass.

And *forte* means, also, thick and dense.

And heavy, laborious, and difficult. So if the walls of your cranium are as thick and hard as the walls of Windsor Castle, yes, a fortress, by all means throw your technique away—always, of course, provided that there's any to throw.

Tone, flexibility, control, accuracy, articulation, intonation, speed, fluency, dynamics, nuances... these, naturally, are of relative unimportance if you aspire only to the delicate sensibility of the wind-bag of a bag-pipe, or the bellows of the good old Village Blacksmith.

And the excitement which comes from a solid band, if you care to listen and look, is to be found in the ease and relaxation which controls the light and shade, the come and go, the rise and fall... the superimposition of accents as well as the noughts and crosses of the brass, the skilful, artistic building of the climax within a phrase, in every phrase, from the top left-hand corner onwards, the blending of colours upon the smooth, even surface of their canvas.

And smooth, even, level, according to the etymologists, are primary meanings of the word *piano*... surface rather than sound. When I lived in Italy, for example, my flat was on the *secondo piano*, that is, the second floor.

*Piano*, *p*, as we know, also means softly and gently: *piu piano*, *pp*, more softly, more gently.

Also, in case you'd like to know, it means clear and intelligible. We could leave you, perhaps, with that happy thought, but just by way of a *codetta* we'll have a last look at *forte*.

The Italian word *forte* came from the Latin word *fortis*, originally *fortis*, derived, as far as my slender intelligence can perceive, from an older word, *fero*, or "One that can endure much."

Hence, I suppose, the origin of that really solid, bang-up-to-date term... *ferro-concrete*.

Not to mention ferocious.

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**ROUND THE CLUBS**  
By Clyde Clark

I WAS down to New York October 12 to 20 with a couple of days out for side trips to Wilmington and Atlantic City. On Saturday I heard the first Condon Concert of the season, with Maxie, Ohms, Ward, Schroeder, Lesburg, Slavy, Wetling, Cannon, Hackett, Bechet, Lee Wiley and Joe Sullivan. Bechet was marvellous; Wetling was fine; Maxie was very good; Wiley, Sullivan, and Schroeder were all right; the rest were nowhere. Bash really brought down the house with a beautiful blues (about ten choruses) on clarinet and a fine "Jellyroll" on soprano with Slavy, Lesburg, and a very exciting and gaudy Wetling backing.

That night I went up to Ryan's, where Brown and Parents were carrying a bunch of boys who try hard anyway. Brown was really having a ball—singing, dancing, joking, talking—even playing! What a drive he gave! A humorous tribute to Ryan's, "Panama," "Sister Kate," a sweet melody for the dancers, "A-Plenty," and "High Society" made up the set, with the band marching round the "jerk" during the last.

From Ryan's I wandered over to the Old South, where Art Hodes' group (Henry Goodwin, George Lugg, Cecil Scott, Pops Foster and Baby Dodds) held sway. The band plays in a very subdued fashion, in keeping with the lighting of the place, with Hodes taking most of the solos. A slow blues, a mousy Ellingtonian opus, and "Organ Grinder Blues," all featured sustained chords from the band behind Hodes' simple but effective piano.

At the end of the set I learned that a vibro-guitar trio and a rhythm band would precede Art's next appearance, so on I moved. At Nick's, Spenser, Mole, Pee Wee, Quenser, Palmer, and Grauso played lockadically through "Found a New Baby" and one of Mole's beloved sweet things, and then woke up to play well on "Black and Blue" and "Fidelity Feet." Pee Wee was playing clearly, Muggsy was his usual, and Mole was (thank God!) less technical than I have heard him. Quenser plays Schroeder-style piano in adequate or better fashion, while Grauso sounded better in person than on records.

Sunday night, October 13, we had dinner at Nick's, and a very good dinner, too! Once again the band started poorly with a mediocre "At Sundown" and then woke up. Pee Wee missed a break on "Livery Stable" and the ensuing kidding seemed to put the men in a good humor. As a result they tore into "Changes Made," "Minkrat," "Way Down Yonder," "Sweet Sue" and others. Muggsy, as others have remarked, plays with beautiful tone, impeccable technique and perfect taste, but his ideas are far from brilliant.

Monday night found my wife and I eating a late supper at Nick's. I wanted to inquire about the Condon concert tour and the possibility of Toronto being included in the bookings, so we dropped into Condon's first. Eddie wasn't around, but was expected at any minute, and he was

supposed to be bringing Mr. and Mrs. Jess Stacy and Hackett with him. Eddie was leaving town early the next day to begin the concert tour, so we decided we'd wait to see him.

The band personnel was similar to that which opened the Condon Concert two days before—Maxie, Ohms, Ward, Schroeder, Lesburg, and Tough—with Maxie and Gene playing well and Tough lousing things up with his omnipresent cymbal and high-hat work. They played "I Can't Believe" and "Cherry" in an aimless sort of way and then, seeing Joe Sullivan wander into the bar, drove through a relaxed but rhythmic "Indiana."

That didn't last, however, and "Jazz Band Ball" and their blues theme were back in their original groove (rut?). Much to our surprise, Joe Sullivan took over the piano at the intermission, a very long intermission, in which he managed to squeeze seven tunes. A fast boogie-woogie, a slow blues and a racing "I Know That You Know" found Joe as complex, rhythmic, and exciting as ever. He also played four sweeter tunes, "Cabin In The Sky," "Way Down Yonder," "Rose Room," "Sophisticated Lady," taking a richly melodic and harmonic first chorus, a stomping second, and a wild, thundering third.

The band came back for a fine "It's Been So Long" and a poor version of "Sometimes I'm Happy" and "Rose Room." Eddie hadn't shown up, and we were getting hungrier every minute, so we regretfully left and taxied over to Nick's, where exciting jam was being provided by a Phil Napoleon-led bunch. I've never had much use for the recorded work of the New York boys, but Phil, in person, proved a much better jazzman than I had ever suspected. His enthusiasm, gutsy (even dirty) tone and endless ideas contrasted markedly with his work on recent records.

Equally surprising was Frank Castaldo (Lee's brother), whose rough-toned trombone would make a splendid addition to either the Spanier or Condon groups. Signorelli, Tony Spargo, a bassist whose name was unknown to the rest of the band, and Frankie Gentile on clarinet, completed the group when we came in, although Sai Franzella replaced Gentile later. The boys were in a good mood—playing all requests—and they really ripped through a fine bunch of tunes—"Exactly Like You," "Black and Blue," "Memphis Blues," "That's a Plenty" (Spargo kazoo solo on that one), "Shine," "Sister Kate," and many others. They even made "Happy Birthday" sound good!

Later I went down to Swing Rendezvous to hear Harry Dial's Quartet, with Ruben Reeves on trumpet. Their playing was competent but unimpressive, and although Reeves is very good technically, he plays too much stuff that just "lies in the horn" to please me. The night before we left we wound up at Ryan's, naturally, to hear "Panama," "Ugly Chile," "Mood 'Indigo" (!), and "Baby Won't You." How I hated to leave!

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**BRIGHTON DEAN'S  
20th AIRING**

CURRENTLY enjoying a happy sojourn at the Regent Dance Hall, Brighton, ex-Astoria maestro Syd Dean, on Monday last (20th) carried out his 20th broadcast since last July—an enviable record for an out-of-town band.

Syd and the boys also had the pleasure of playing—on January 2—the first of the new BBC series of fifty-minute broadcasts.

He has a very happy bunch with him down at Brighton, including Bill Cook and Bill Seal (saxes); Sammy Lambert and Les Williams (tenors); Johnny Woodhouse and Harvey Evans (trumpets); Buddy Lee (trombone); David Mason (piano); Freddy Graig (bass); Bert Cook (drums); and vocalists Joyce Shepherd.

Arranger-in-chief to the band is the tenor man, Les Williams, whose efforts contribute in no small manner to the band's popularity with dancers and listeners.

**TEACHER WEIR**

STUDENTS of the instrument will be interested to know that virtuoso Frank Weir is writing a treatise on the subject, which will be published by Charles Day and Hunter.

Frank tells the "M.M." that he is prepared to take on a number of pupils for personal and postal tuition. Those interested should contact him at 13, Fernside, Holders Hill Road, Hendon, N.W.4. (Phone: FINchley 5049.)

THE dance-band contest at the Lydney (Glos.) Town Hall on Thursday, April 17 next, being in aid of the Lydney and District Hospital, is sanctioned by the MELODY MAKER. Bands may therefore take part in it without direct application to us, and will not forfeit their right to compete also in MELODY MAKER-sponsored contests.

CONGRATULATIONS to the Sky-rockets and everyone else at the London Palladium on the occasion of the 500th performance of "High Time," reached on Wednesday last, January 15.



# CHATTER CHRIS HAYES

**A**FTER playing trumpet with the George Evans Orchestra right from the start, and taking some of the vocals since George fell ill, Eric Durgess has returned to Oxford, where, at the Caxton Assembly Rooms, he has rejoined the Blue Star Players, whose lady vocalist is now Ruth Howard, late of Gerald and Billy Tennant.

Bringing Peggy Poulton and her Band down from London every Thursday and Saturday, Horsham race-horse-owner Mrs. Boxall is well pleased with the attendance at her Court Royal, decorative dance hall shaped out of a derelict cinema. Vocalist and piano-soloist Peggy employs her manager-husband, Bert Green (trmp.), Ivor Beynon and Sid Lenton (allos), Colin Brady (tr.), Freddy Cornell (pno.) and John Blanchard (drums).

Shrewd bandleader and radio-engineer Teddy Wallace has entrusted the management of Wallace Orchestras to his Army chum, Phil Phillips, now released after soldiering for 24 years, conducting at home and overseas the Buffs 1st Bn. Military Band, which he re-formed twice himself and a third time with Bandmaster Salmon, under whom he played tubas and string-bass until demobbed.

Ambitious Islingtonite Derek Deon has built and exhaustively rehearsed a twelve-piece all ex-Service semi-pro dance band with an up-to-date library. But, unfortunately, nobody wants to know. He conducts Maurice Golding, Johnny Jenkins, Don Campbell, Luke Irvin (saxes), Ted Brown, Terry Pembroke, Jack White, Harry Barber, Jack Webb (brass), Dougie Pemberton, Pete Seaman, "Dids" Gummins (rhythm). Who'll offer them an audition?

Welcome home from war service to stage and dance promoter Marcus

C. J. Cunner, of "Glendernel," St. Dunstan's Close, Worcester, who resumes in show business with a new agency labelled Cunner Theatrical Productions.

Week-end dance music at the Twyford Country Club, Bishop's Cleeve, has been supplied by the rhythmic Vince Cavell Quartette for over three months. London drummer Vince (photo inset) leading Jack Woodhouse (allos, tr.), Wally Hale (vibes, trmp., acc.) and Johnny Robins (piano).

At the Sounds-Skyrocks dinner and dance, Dorcas Lundy introduced me to her musician-and-midwife mother, who, as Bridie Hughes, was official pianist to the 1st Bn. Lincolnshire Regt., and led a dance band in Belfast for eight years, until Dorcas was born in 1926, when she took up nursing! On the day of the dinner she delivered four babies and had another due at 3 a.m.!

The International Jazz Union, which is run by Nils Jacobsen, head of the Norwegian Rhythm Clubs Association, exists for addicts who wish to exchange records and magazines. A small fee entitles members to many advantages, outlined in a monthly bulletin. Write Nils Jacobsen at Schweigardsgt 89 III, Oslo, or his London contact, Miss Jacqueline Potter, at 28, Emu Road, S.W.2.

Released from munitions, Norfolk leader David Norris has all his boys out of the Forces and is back to full strength, playing at the Lido, Norwich, and other local halls, where dancers are showing their old affection for his entertaining outfit, which won enormous popularity all over East Anglia before the war.

Keep an eye on: Twenty-year-old John Blanchard, impressive drummer with Peggy Poulton. Coached by Max Abrams, John went from the Harrow ATO to a West End club when 14, met Peggy at P., D. and H., was excused military service through ill-health, toured with Clarkson Rose's "Twinkle," went to Italy and Egypt with Arthur Rosebery, and received an offer from Peggy while in Rome.

West End musicians keen on playing football, please write to me... West of England favourites Eddy Purnell and his Orchestra play every Thursday at Westwood Ballroom, Bradford-on-Avon, every Saturday at Avon Social Club, Melksham, and every Monday at National Hotel, Corsham... Bassist with Ronnie Pleydell at Ballerina, Bournemouth, is Frank Donnison, not Frank Downison.

## Your Queries

**T**RUMPET queries from readers are here answered by the Geraldine first trumpet star, Ails Neakes:—  
H. C. Watts, Kingston, Surrey—It is a strange thing, but on most trumpets there is one note, and sometimes others, that are slightly out of tune with the rest of the horn; so your middle E is nothing exceptional. And if you try to tune it with the slides, you'll put the rest of the instrument out of tune. You ask my opinion on the best makes of trumpets. I would suggest Olds, King, Conn, Besson (new model), Buescher.

Douglas Russell, Clarkson, Renfrewshire.—You really are in a bit of a pickle in your band, since the first trumpet is a corporal! But, though the whole section tends to overblow, there is no need for you to do so. It is wrong and will do you harm sooner or later. May I suggest you have a friendly talk with your bandmaster? Explain what the trouble is and inform him that you have been advised by a professional not to overblow. Balance in a brass section is essential, and it sounds as if your first trumpet has no idea of balance. Naturally, if you are all overblowing, your lips will go half-way through a show. Try to straighten it out among yourselves, with the help of the bandmaster. After all, he is the boss. Your mouthpiece sounds all right, medium bore is correct, and the fairly deep cup. Is your rim comfortable?

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## CONTEST FIXTURES

- LONDON AREA**
- LEYTON.**—Wednesday, February 12 (7.30 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at the Leyton Super Baths, High Road, E.16.—The 1947 South-West Essex Championship.  
Organisers: Entertainments Committee of the Borough of Leyton, Town Hall, Leyton, E.16. (Phone: LEYtonstone 3650, Extn. 210)
- EPSOM.**—Wednesday, March 5. See Provinces.
- PECKHAM.**—Tuesday, March 11 (7.30 to 11.30 p.m.), at the Co-operative House, Eye Lane, S.E.15.—The 1947 South-East London Championship.  
Organisers: The MELODY MAKER Greater London Area Contest Organisers' Committee. All coms: The Area Secretary, 154, South Norwood Hill, London, S.E.25. (Phone: LIvingstone 1547.)
- PROVINCES**
- BIRMINGHAM.**—Tuesday, February 18 (7.30 to 11.45 p.m.), at the New Baths Ballroom (Thimblemill), Smethwick.—The 1947 Birmingham District Championship.  
Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell, 38, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leics. (Phone: Hinckley 563.)
- IPSWICH.**—Wednesday, February 26 (7.45 p.m. to midnight), at the Baths Hall.—The 1947 Suffolk County Championship.  
Organiser: Mr. T. W. Geary, Baths Superintendent, Exchange Buildings, Lion Street, Ipswich, Suffolk. (Phone: Ipswich 4351.)
- HULL.**—Monday, March 3 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at the Beverley Road Baths.—The 1947 East Yorkshire Championship.  
Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 28, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs. (Phone: Ainsdale 78238.)
- EPSOM.**—Wednesday, March 5 (7.30-11.45 p.m.), at the Municipal Hall.—The 1947 Southern Counties Championship.  
Organisers: The MELODY MAKER Greater London Area Contest Organisers' Committee. All coms: The Area Secretary, 324b, Brixton Road, London, S.W.9 (phone: Brixton 4841.)
- DERBY.**—Wednesday, March 12 (7.30 to midnight), at the King's Hall.—The 1947 Derbyshire County Championship.  
Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell, 38, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leics. (Phone: Hinckley 563.)
- Rules and Entry Forms for all the above now available from their respective organisers.



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