

Harry Singer's GUIDE TO ARCHER STREET

No. 1—The Hairdressing Establishment

THIS shop has a little window for sales which is very handy for spotting the character who owes you money and has dodged inside to evade you.

This genial personality knows a lot about musicians, too. He is, thus, a strong advocate of birth-control. He has also introduced to Archer Street the successive fashions in gent's hair styles from the ragtime bob to his latest re-pop haircut.

Seriously though, one must give credit where it is due, and he even manages to get my hair to lie down in good order, thereby creating a precedent.

If you're fond of Rabelaisian humour, you should always go there for a haircut. In the afternoon it is usually full of musicians, so if you wish to avoid their company, go in the morning.

The other afternoon I was steaming under a hot towel when a variant was introduced to the conversation. I actually heard a bandleader book a musician for a job!

Although it was only a gig, the whole place was awed into a reverent two-minute silence, finally broken by catty remarks directed at the lucky musician. However, he requested more oil, with which he was duly anointed, and emerged from his cocoon looking the bright boy of the place, and even tipped sixpence—at which many jaws dropped.

The Facts behind the SLUMP

A powerful and revealing article specially written for the "Melody Maker" by FELIX MENDELSSOHN

IS there a slump or isn't there? There seems to be an unaccountable difference of opinion between certain sections of the profession on a matter which, to me, is as clear as daylight.

For only by facing up to facts and examining them can we bandleaders hope to restore our position in the world of Variety and save ourselves from disaster.

And what are the facts? They are that: (1) The dance band on the Variety stage is no longer the draw it was; (2) Sunday concerts are no longer a remunerative proposition from the bandleader's point of view; (3) film work is negligible; (4) record sales are restricted by lack of supplies; (5) broadcasts do not and never did show a financial profit; and (6) the public is getting sick of dance music in its present form.

No? Let me give you some more facts. The average takings at Variety halls have dropped during the past six or eight months from between £500 and £800 per week. The fuel crisis, the freeze-up, the transport strike, the heat wave have all, in turn, been blamed for this. I say they are incidental factors which, normally, any bandleader would have weathered without serious difficulty.

Far more serious, in its long-term effect, is the increased tobacco tax, which has resulted in a preference for twenty cigarettes rather than a seat in the stalls to listen to dance music—and Variety in general—which no longer have very great appeal.

But more serious still, though happily a factor that could be

remedied by far-sighted members of the Variety profession, is the system under which touring bands have to work: the system which forces the bandleader to top the bill to take over the supporting acts supplied by the agents booking the theatre.

The cost of these supporting acts is nowadays becoming prohibitive. For a Number One theatre their combined salaries are anything up to £375 per week; for Number Twos, between £180 and £275; for Number Threes, the cheapest bill runs to about £150.

The Cost

These must be paid. So must the members of the orchestra. In my case, with 25 artists to pay, the weekly pay-sheet amounts to well over £300. This does not take into account the cost of renewing scenery and costumes, cartage to and from theatres, increased railway fares, contra account (posters and handbills), tips to doorknockers, front-of-house messengers, electricians and local stage manager, stage hands' in-and-out money (10s. each), long-distance phone calls from the provinces to the London office, entertaining in the interests of publicity, and, of course, agents' 10 or 5 per cent.

It is obvious from this that one must play to big figures. And, alas, the days of the packed house are gone so far as stage dance bands are concerned. At the most, I would say, there are six provincial theatres where a bandleader now stands to make real money. Elsewhere, it is a toss-up whether he makes £50 to £500 or loses between £200 and £400 on the week.

He can think himself lucky if, on an average good week, he finds £20 in his pocket at the end of it. A bad Monday and Tuesday can soon put an end to his hopes of even this.

You will probably say: "Then why not cut down the size of the band?" Audiences will then say: "Oh, it's not so good as it was last time they were here." And their friends will stay away.

The bandleader trying to cut his losses by cutting his personnel is, in fact, cutting his own throat. So he tries Sunday concerts between £100 and £200 can be earned here. But to get to these dates, fares up to £50 must first be met, extra salaries at the union minimum of £3 3s. per man and agent's commission 5-10 per cent. take a bit more—and the bandleader in luck comes away with an extra five and an extra grey hair or two.

What has caused this depression? Why, most significant of all signs of dwindling public interest, no fans around the stage doors these days? Why, in short, this falling-off of public interest in dance bands?

The Cause

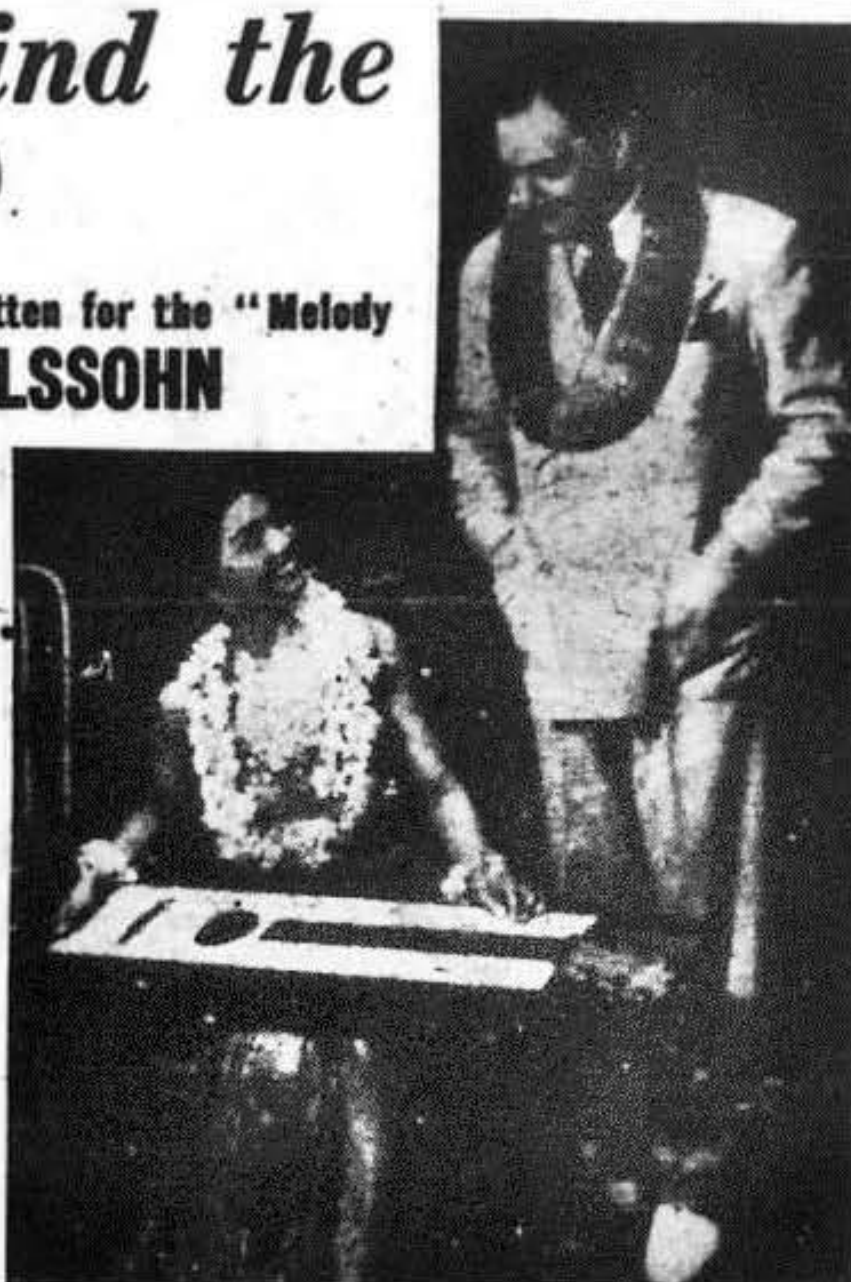
I lay the blame in two directions. On the B.B.C.—and on the dance bands themselves. More than any other factor, the B.B.C.'s policy in regard to dance music has whittled away the major drawing power of any dance band—its personality.

Irregularity of broadcast dates, the ban on leaders making their own announcements, the suspension of late-night (ten till midnight) broadcasts, interference with the style of music played—these, more than anything else, in my opinion, have emasculated British dance music.

What present-day top-line Variety band has built its reputation with the public through the B.B.C.? Every one of them—Cotton, Hall, Roy, Loss, etc. to name only a few—established its name in the comparative hey-day of pre-war broadcasting.

But, side by side with this, blame must be laid at the door of the "wide" bandleaders who rushed on to the stage during the war years, when practically anything went, and cleaned up at the expense of those trying to put over a good show today.

Blame must also be laid upon certain present-day bandleaders whose lack of personality and stagecraft are a travesty of the Hyltons and Paynes who paved the way for dance bands to enter the Variety lists at all.



Felix Mendelssohn is here seen with Louisa Reynolds, featured singer and dancer with his Hawaiian Serenaders.

ber Maxie Bacon's "Tiger Rag," Nat Gonella's "Georgia," Tiny Winters' "Little Nell," etc.). Recreate, in brief, public interest in dance music and its players.

Next, intending stage bandleaders must realise that if they are to top a Variety bill they must be prepared to put on a big spectacle, fully rehearsed, able to stand comparison with the other (fully rehearsed and playing always at concert pitch) acts upon the bill. Small bands are lost on the average stage, and you will never be more than a co-top without a big band.

Thirdly, the system of forcing leaders to take over the costs of the present-day highly paid "rest of the bill" must cease. Bands must be booked as a single act, without adding further to their leaders' already considerable burden.

If these three moves are made, then, maybe, bandleaders will stand a chance of restoring themselves and their music to popular favour. If they are not, dance bands will continue on the downward path until more than an occasional top-rating Variety date will be wholly out of the question.

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Eight years old, but still perfect jazz

Edgar Jackson's Record Reviews

BARNEY BIGARD AND HIS ORCHESTRA. "Barney Goin' Easy" (Barney Bigard) (Am. Master WM-1039) and "Just Another Dream" (Barney Bigard) (Am. Master WM-1037) (Parlophone R.3029-3s. 11d.)

Goin' Easy "I leave you to decide. But I am convinced of one thing: that when you hear this record you will have a happy surprise; for, judged by any standarda or period, it comes well-nigh to being the most perfect example of small band jazz your humble critic has ever had the pleasure of hearing."

To some extent this may not be surprising, for, following Irving Mills's practice of presenting small sections of the full band under the names of its most outstanding soloists, Barney

PICK OF THE WEEK For Everybody. JIMMY DORSEY, "One More Kiss" and "If I'm Lucky" (Brunswick 0288). DINAH SHORE, "Don't What Comes Naturally" and "I Got Lost in His Arms" (both from "Annie, Get Your Gun") (Columbia D.B.2209).

Bigard and his Orchestra is just another name for a contingent from the Ellington aggregation, and the more the years pass, the more is one forced to the conclusion that the music of the Duke and his satellites cannot date.

But this side is good corn even for the Ellington musicians. The piece has the simple tunefulness that one associates with so many of Ellington's best recordings. But even the composition has to take second place to the performance of it.

No one ever raises his voice above the mildest mezzo forte. The playing is perhaps the most relaxed and easy that has ever been heard. Nevertheless, the record rides deliciously. But perhaps the feature of the whole thing is the taste and artistry with which it deals with the jazz idiom and all that the words imply.

Over the Ellington rhythm section, swinging with a neatness that is an end in itself, Bigard, Rex Stewart and the Duke play the most entrancing solos. But this is by no means just a soloists' record. What goes on behind the solos is, in its finished, unassuming way, just as intriguing—right from the comments in Barney's first chorus to the last, where the rest of the front line supplies the most coaxingly sympathetic answers to the more forthright Barney's phrases.

In fact, for sheer charm and economy of means and method made irresistible by the subtlety of approach, this record almost has to be heard to be believed. And not very far behind it is "Just Another Dream."

There are moments when I felt that pleasant as this slow tune is, it had not proved quite the inspiration to the group that it should have proved. Also, my white-label hand nrewing is a bit of a swinger, and that makes Barney sound slightly off pitch at times. But this is the worst I can say of another terrific and very appealing record in which Barney Bigard's artistry is again fascinatingly exemplified

C & C's NEW ORCHESTRATIONS. NEW ARRANGEMENT OF A GREAT EVERGREEN. STARS FELL ON ALABAMA. THREE BAND FAVOURITES. DROP ME OFF IN HARLEM. ONE SWEET LETTER FROM YOU. POMPOTON TURNPIKE. AN IMPORTANT ADDITION FOR YOUR LIBRARY. RIO (SAMBA). FEATURED BY ALL THE LEADING RUMBA BANDS. ALL ABOVE SETS 3/6 EACH. A BRAND NEW ORCHESTRATION FOR SMALL BANDS. MORE THAN YOU KNOW. COMPLETE SET 2/6. CAMPBELL, 19, DENMARK STREET, LONDON, W.C.2. CONNELLY & CO. LTD., 11, BAR 1663



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What's New in Radio

THE war put a temporary stop to new radios, radiograms, amplifying equipments and similar things of interest to all dance music enthusiasts, both in the home and on the stand. But although manufacture was suspended, research was not. Even bombs cannot stop people thinking, and the results of their ideas and what was discovered in the production of special wartime radio equipment and other munitions are already beginning to show up in the new post-war radios, radiograms, records, etc., which are at last reaching the market. Not the least of the innovations are those which are to be found in the "Decola"—a super record-reproducer made by Decca.

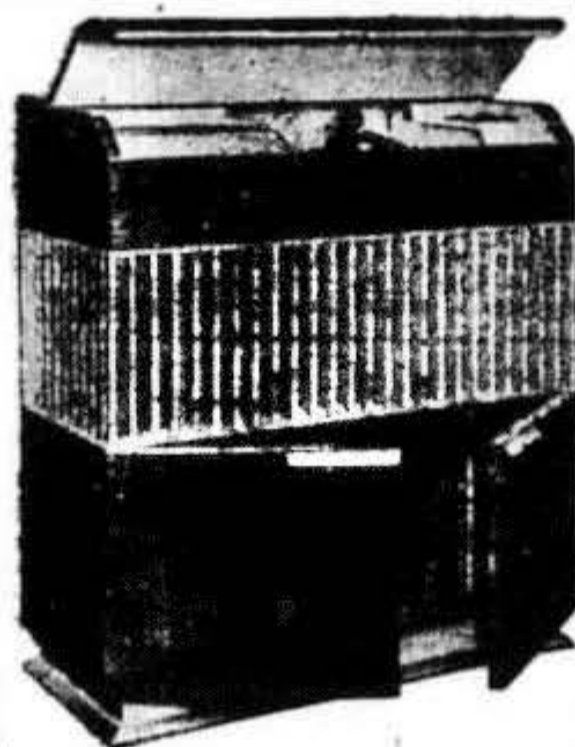
But before telling you about the "Decola," it is necessary to consider for a moment some of the factors which have had to be taken into account in the production of what is the best—and most expensive—gramophone it is possible to buy as a complete unit, as distinct from one built up of separate component parts which can only be put together by those with the necessary technical knowledge. These factors do not stem at the various components used in the "Decola" or the instrument used in the design of the instrument per se. They include also the records it will play, for no reproducer can make a bad record sound good. In fact, the better the reproducer, often the worse a poor record will sound on it, because the more sensitive a reproducer may be the more it will show up any

"Dabbler," our not-too-technical expert, whose contributions were temporarily suspended by the war, is now back to keep you informed regarding the new Radios, Radiograms, Amplifying Sets, Components, etc., as they become available.

to the inadequacies of any one of the links in this recording-reproducing chain. Before the war the frequency range of the ordinary domestic gramophone record was at best only about 50 to 7,000 c.p.s., therefore all the harmonics from 7,000 to 35,000 c.p.s. which help to give sounds their identity and quality—enabling you to know whether it is, for instance, a "cello" or a "tenor saxophone" that you are hearing—were missing. But as even the better pre-war radiograms and gramophones reproduced frequencies only from about 100 to 3,500 c.p.s., it would not have made much difference even if the range of the records had been greater. Then, towards the end of 1945, Decca announced that they were recording from 30 to 14,500 c.p.s. They described it as "i.f.r." (full frequency range recording).

As Edgar Jackson explained in a most lucid article on the subject ("M.M." 12/17/1946), this was a great step forward—provided one had a gramophone capable of doing justice to it. But what he did not say was that this extension of the frequency range was by no means the only problem to be solved to improve records. Equally important is "surface" noise. Far from having been overcome, this business remains. Due mainly to the materials and methods used in the electroplating, which is part of the process employed in the manufacture of records, surface hisses, that "frying sausages" effect, and another phenomenon technically known and adequately described as "clicks," are prevalent in varying degrees in far too many records, especially those of American origin; and it is an unfortunate fact that the more capable any gramophone may be of doing justice to the increased frequency range of the recording, the more it shows up, of course, these unwanted "noises."

The New "Decola"



THE "Decola" was the first of the new post-war electric super-gramophones to make its appearance on the home market. It has been provided for the subsequent fitting of the necessary additional unit to receive radio programmes. But until Decca produce this (and I understand they intend to do so within the next few months) the instrument can be used only for playing gramophone records. The price is £216 11s. 3d. (including Purchase Tax)—a lot of money even in these days. But for the quality you get, at least the best and handiest electric gramophone that has yet made its appearance as a complete unit. It has an eight-record (10-in. and 12-in. mixed) auto-record changer, to which is fitted the new Decca lightweight sapphire pick-up. A feature of this in all respects unusually good pick-up is that when the sapphire wears out after playing anything up to 1,000 sides it is an easy and inexpensive matter to replace it with a complete new stylus. Also, as the rubber damping is an integral part of the stylus, on fixing a new one one also renews the damping rubbers—a useful innovation, because the small, soft rubber pads tend to lose their resilience with time.

SOUND-SPREAD

I don't propose to burden you with full technical details of the amplifier. If you are interested you can obtain them from the Decca Record Co., Ltd., 1/3, Brixton Road, London, S.W.9. Sufficient to say that finishing up with two PX25 valves in push-pull, it has separate treble and bass controls, giving between them nine different tone settings, and is a first-class piece of work. The "Decola" has three 12-in. high flux permanent magnet speakers. They are set at angles to each other, and this, together with a grille system of tone-directing louvres, helps to spread the sound evenly throughout an arc of 180 degrees, thus eliminating the effect one gets in most

other radios and gramophones (known as high frequency beam effect) that the further to either side of the set one moves, the weaker the high and the stronger the bass frequencies become. The "Decola" has a quality of tone and a degree of realism I have yet to hear outside the very best privately hand-built sets. What it can achieve with a well-recorded i.f.r. record is something which those who know only the pre-war gramophones playing the old pre-war recordings will have to hear to believe. Subtleties of tone and execution come out on the "Decola" in a way that is quite startling. In fact, about the worst one can say of it is that even its three speakers acoustic system does not produce quite the same effect of audibility that one gets with a horn-loaded speaker, such as the Voigt, and the designers have not yet quite discovered how to overcome the thinning and blanketing effect that turning down the volume to a level suitable for a small room has on the higher frequencies.

But there have been great strides in pick-ups. Even before the war the heavy-weight pick-up was being replaced by the lightweight (N.M.V. fitted one to all their better radiograms), and today the heavyweights, even the crystal models, have become almost as obsolete as the horse bus. One of the advantages of these lightweight pick-ups is that they do not wear the records anything like so heavily as do the heavyweights. But an even greater advantage is that their very much smaller and lighter needles, or semi-permanent sapphires with which many of them are now fitted, have a much lower inertia than the old and comparatively large and heavy needles used in the old heavyweights. This enables them to follow the modulations of the record much more accurately, resulting in much more clearly defined and generally better reproduction, especially in the higher registers. All of which will, I hope, enable you to appreciate more fully not only the report herewith on the new "Decola," but also the reports I shall from time to time be giving on other new gramophones, radios and components.

CONTEST



FIXTURES

LONDON AREA
CHINGFORD—Wednesday, next week, July 2 (7.30 p.m. to midnight), at the Royal Forest Hotel.—The Mid-East Counties Championship. Organiser: The Melody Maker Greater London Area Contest Organiser's Committee. All sones: The Area Secretary (Mr. Len Morgan), 39, King's Gardens, West End Lane, N.W.4. (Phone: Maids Vale 3035.) (Entry list full.)
PROVINCES
ACCRINGTON—Tomorrow, Friday, June 27 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at the Majestic Ballroom.—The 1947 Rosendale Championship. Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley, 25, Carr Lane, Birkdale, Southport, Lancs. (Phone: Altuda 7228.)
FOLKESTONE—Tuesday, next week, July 1 (7.30 p.m. to midnight), at the Law Club Hall.—The 1947 Kent Counties Championship. Organiser: The Melody Maker Greater London Area Contest Organising Committee. All sones: The Area Secretary (Mr. Ed. Waller), 154, South Norwood Hill, S.E.25. (Phone: Livingstone 1867.)
LIVERPOOL—Friday, next week, July 4 (7 p.m. to midnight), at the Grifone Rooms.—The 1947 Merseyside Championship. Entry List Full. Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley. (See Accrington.)
LEICESTER—Friday, July 11 (7.30 p.m. to midnight), at the de Mansfield Hall, Leicester.—The 1947 Midlands Counties Championship. Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell, 32, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leics. (Phone: Hinckley 56.)
BRIGHTON—Wednesday, July 15 (7.30 p.m. to midnight), at the Victoria Rooms.—The 1947 Gloucester Counties Championship. Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley. (See Accrington.)
HARTLEPOOL—Friday, July 18 (7 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at the Borough Hall.—The 1947 Durham County Championship. Organiser: Mr. W. Morris Marshall, Entertainment Manager, Borough Buildings, Hartlepool. (Phone: Hartlepool 6186.)
SHEFFIELD—Friday, July 18 (7 p.m. to 11 p.m.), at the City Hall.—The 1947

All MELODY MAKER Contests are approved by the Musicians' Union under a special agreement with the "M.M."
South Yorkshire Championship Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley. (See Accrington.)
BRIGHTON—Monday, July 21 (7.30 p.m. to midnight), at the Priests Ballroom, Brighton.—The 1947 Sussex Championship. Organiser: The Melody Maker Greater London Area Contest Organiser's Committee. All sones: The Area Secretary (Mr. Bill Waller), "Red Ridge," Epsom Downs, Surrey. (Phone: Burgh Heath 4476 and Brixton 2711.)
CAMBRIDGE—Wednesday, July 23 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at the Gaiety Hall.—The Cambridgeshire Championship. Organiser: Musicians' Union (Cambridge Branch). All sones: The Secretary (Mr. V. V. Wright), 15, Orchard Estate, Cherry Hinton, Cambridge.
BOGNOR—Thursday, August 7 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at The Pavilion.—The 1947 South Coast Championship. Organiser: Mr. Billy Stone, 25, Links Avenue, Morden, Surrey. (Phone: Liberty 612.)
NEW BRIGHTON—Friday, August 8 (7 p.m. to 11.45 p.m.), at the Tower Ballroom.—The 1947 Wirral District Championship. Organiser: Mr. Lewis Buckley. (See Accrington.)
COLCHESTER—Thursday, August 14 (7.30 p.m. to 12.30 a.m.), at The Crown Exchange.—The Eastern Counties Championship. Organiser: Mr. Les Parish, 1, Oatlands, Elmstead, Colchester. (Phone: Wivehall 291.)
YEovil—Friday, August 15 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at venue to be announced. The 1947 South-West Counties Championship.—Organiser: West of England Entertainments Co., Prince Ballroom, Yeovil, Somerset. (Phone: Yeovil 1040.)
RAMS-GATE—Friday, August 15 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at The Coronation Ballroom.

SCOTLAND
BUNDEE—Sunday, August 17 (2 p.m. to 5 p.m.), before a seated audience, at Caird Hall.—The 1947 Mid-East Scotland Championship. Organiser: Mr. Les Ayling, on behalf of Duncan Dance Enterprises, Ltd., Express Bazaar, Dock Street, Dundee. (Phone: Dundee 331411.)
INVERNESS—Monday, August 18 (8 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at Northern Meeting Rooms.—The 1947 South of Scotland Championship. Organiser: Mr. James W. Harper, Northern Meeting Rooms, Church Street, Inverness. (Phone: Inverness 1483.)
FAISLEY—Tuesday, August 19 (7.30 p.m. to 1 a.m.), at the Town Hall.—The 1947 Kentfrewshire County Championship. Organiser: Messrs. Stewart and Jack, 51, Moss Street, Paisley. (Phone: Paisley 4904.)
LEITH (EDINBURGH)—Wednesday, August 20 (times to be announced), at Eldorado Ballroom.—The 1947 Edinburgh District Championship. Organiser: Mr. H. Magoury, Eldorado Ballroom, Leith.
GLASGOW—Friday, August 22 (7.30 p.m. to 1.30 a.m.), at St. Andrew's Hall.—The 1947 Glasgow and District Championship. Organiser: Mr. Chalmers Wood, 72, West Heriot Street, Glasgow. (Phone: Glasgow, Douglas 422.)
GOOROCK—Sunday, August 24 (7.30 p.m. to 10 p.m.), at Craggan Pavilion, Goorock, Renfrewshire.—The 1947 Fifth of Clyde Championship. Organiser: Mr. Charles Leval, Craggan Pavilion, Goorock. (Phone: Goorock 376.)

VOU-TALK IS SWEEPING THE STATES

JAZZ and swing have for long been linked up with the intriguing slang invented by New York's coloured musicians and known as *Marlannese*.

But now a new dialect belonging entirely to swing appears to have arrived on the American scene.

It is known as "Vout," and has been invented by Slim Gaillard.

In fact, according to Al Brackman, of Irving Mills' Royal Records concern, Slim's "Vout" language, once the prerogative of Gaillard devotees, is now spreading nation-wide and has become the language of numerous jazz fans throughout the States.

According to a recent issue of "Life" magazine, it has a large following at Tulane University, where the Voutians (pronounced voutheens) number over 200.

The increasing popularity of Gaillard's "Vout" talk coupled with his success as a swing man, has enabled his stock in the entertainment world to rise steadily.

Gaillard, who speaks a dozen languages, including Arabic, Syriac, Hebrew, Spanish, and several West Indian dialects, says that Vout is a form of African pidgin.

He claims that by adding

"grooney" or "oreenie" to any word anybody can speak basic Vout. For instance, *steakoreenie* is a good steak (if you can remember what a steak is), and *steakoreenie* is a better steak.

Recently the students at Tulane University presented "SLIM" GAILLARD. — Born Detroit. Attended Case College, where he graduated in linguistics. First touring in 1936, when he performed as "Slim" Stewart in such records as "Flat Foot Floogie," which he wrote. On his recent return from the Army he formed a new trio. Among his most recent song successes is "Concrete Mixer." His main instrument is guitar, but he'll have a crack at most others, and it was he who played the Nevochard in the record of "Yee Roc Horest."

Shakespeare's "Romeo and Juliet" in Vout.

Apparently Gaillard's recently issued record of "Yee Roc Horest" (Parlophone R.3035), which so puzzled our Edgar Jackson when he reviewed it on May 17 last, should not be mistaken for Vout.

This particular song was inspired by Slim's partiality for Syrian cooking and the "lyrics" are "adapted" from a Syrian

restaurant menu. The words are actually the names of various Syrian dishes and the "lyrics" refer to his favourite dish, "Yee Roc Horest"—which consists of lamb, rice and vegetables rolled in grape leaves.

When the "Yee" record first came out in America people thought that at the best it was some form of gibberish.

At the worst... well, the suspicious censors at a Californian radio station demanded a translation before they would allow it to go on the air.

Even Gaillard's explanation about the Syrian dishes refused to satisfy them. They demanded an authoritative confirmation.

So the publisher contacted the University of California, only to be told that they did not speak Arabic. Further inquiry in Los Angeles revealed no Arab consulates there.

Finally someone found an Armenian restaurant in the city, and it was only after the proprietor, a Mr. Harook, who was familiar with Arabic, had confirmed Gaillard's statement by attesting that Yee Roc Horest was a speciality of his café that the radio station officials allowed the record to be broadcast!

New POST-WAR

"IMPERIAL" TROMBONE

by BOOSEY & HAWKES

Completely new design with outstanding new features




Can't You Play— Just That?

"WELL," said the Bandleader, "come on! Play it!"

Mr: All right, just a minute, give me a chance. I've got to find the correct sticking, you know. You can't just play these things right away, you know.


BANDLEADER (sarcastically): Can't you? All right, boys, take it four bars before the drum break. Ready? Three-four! I play four bars rhythm, and then:—



(nothing)

BANDLEADER (irritably): What are you doing? Play what's on your part. Mr (staring at the part): Yes, I know. I wasn't ready.

BANDLEADER (sarcastically): Right! Take it from the drum break. Three-four! I play:—



BANDLEADER (stamping foot and shouting): NO! NO! NO! NO! The arranger standing beside him looks grim and proper. Suddenly the first alto chimes in with:—

"I say, Dick—third bar after 'B'—is that a C?"

Dick is the arranger. The bandleader and Dick pore over the score. I am saved by the gong, as it were. I have a few seconds' respite to look at my part and to wonder what to do.

BANDLEADER (testily): Let's get a move on, for goodness sake. (Looking at me balefully) Well, is it O.K. now?


Mr (jollily): O.K.

Somebody cracks a joke and everybody laughs except me. Even the bandleader chuckles.

Another brilliant short story by MAURICE BORMAN

BANDLEADER (chortling): Now, come on, Author (that's a little crack at me), we don't want to be here all day. Ready? Four bars before the drum break.

I play four bars and then give, with my regulation get-me-out-of-a-mess drum break:—



THE bandleader throws his baton down on to his music stand and hurries his face in his arms. The arranger looks at the ceiling and whistles silently. He is trying to disconnect himself from the whole thing. There is a tense silence. Nobody moves. Everybody is waiting. A few seconds go by.

The bandleader rises with haggard expression, says very quietly in the tone of voice suggesting that he has reached the end of his tether but that he is a good man and can still control himself:—

"You have a semi-quaver followed by a quaver and a semi-quaver. Right?"

Mr: Ye-e-e-s.

BANDLEADER (beginning to take life): Right! Then you have eight demisemi-quavers. Correct? And then you have a semi-quaver followed by a quaver and a semi-quaver. Yes?

Mr (slowly): Let me see. (Quicker) Yes, that's right. (I should know what he's talking about.)

BANDLEADER (back to normal): Then next you have a savor tied to a quaver and a half. (He was breathless and had become muddled. Nobody laughed.) Do you think you could play JUST THAT?"

ARABIC?

Not only could I not play "just that"—I couldn't even play an ordinary "that." I didn't answer. I prepared myself for the next ordeal.

Suddenly the bass player put his face to my ear and urgently whispered something in Arabic.

"This is no time for double talk," I said in an irritable whisper.

BASS PLAYER: "I was merely telling you how it goes. Look, it's like this. Duh bomb tsip, diddleldiddleldiddle, fah bomb tsip, DUH BOMB."

"Is that what it is?" I said, completely outraged. "What on earth am I to do?"

BASS PLAYER: Yes, it's not hard. Look. Duh bomb tsip.

Mr (interjecting): Yes, I know all about duhbombtsip. Anybody can sing duhbombtsip. I can sing whole choruses of Benny Goodman.

BANDLEADER (in end-of-the-world voice): I'm waiting.

I try a new form of tactics. In a strong, righteous voice I exclaim: "There are too many beats in the bar."

I SIT back and wait. Everything will now be taken care of. The arranger leaps up to my stand. Helpful saxophone and trumpet players crowd around me and look at my part. An animated discussion is going on all around me and over me. I dissociate myself from them and sit back contentedly.

A curious chanting has commenced, softly at first, but growing in volume as all the band in unison sing:

"Doh, ray, me, fah, so, la, T, T, T, T—"

BANDLEADER (wearily): All right. Break for tea. (And then, with venom): Ten minutes, not twenty-five!

We get off the rostrum and crowd round the table of the empty restaurant. I sit as far away as possible from both the bandleader and the arranger. Particularly the arranger.

"Clever boy," I think to myself. "I could brain him."

I feel I am in disgrace, and I sulk in my corner sipping my tea. My faithful friend in the band gives me that certain look. I know it so well. It has come to mean: "I told you this would happen one day, but you would spend your time in those night clubs."

A lot of happy chatter is going on, and one or two would-be cote are slyly forming a small jazz group round the piano. The Bandleader is up at once. He claps his hands. "We have more tunes to do, so let's get finished."

HOW MANY TIMES?

Two trumpet players hastily pour themselves out some more tea and smuggle the cups on to the stand. The Bandleader puts his elbow on the stand and rests his head on his hand. Sighing, he says:

"How many times have I told you I don't allow tea on the stand?"

Nobody takes any notice, but he is satisfied. He knows they won't take the tea back; he wouldn't want them to; he just feels he has to assert himself. It's just a routine that has gone on for years. At the end of the rehearsal he says:—

"O.K. Thank you, boys, and let's do a real show on the air to-night." Turning to me, he says, meaningly: "I shall expect to hear your part as written."

I can almost hear the bullet whistling through the air.

IT is evening, and we are back on the stand. Come are the pullovers and the medley of motley clothes that we are prone to wear. We are one with our evening suits. In five minutes' time we are on the air. We are having a break, but we are sitting on the stand. The Bandleader is giving final instructions to the various vocalists and the BBC to a.

I RUMINATE


I sit and ruminates as to what odds a bookie would give me in getting away with my break. I turn to my faithful friend the bass player. All bass players strike me as faithful. This one is my rock, my salvation. I have often shot him dirty looks when I have made a mistake, in an effort to direct the Bandleader's gaze on him.

"Listen," I say. "Will you give me a good nudge just as I get to that damn break? I will at least play something in the right place. Now, don't forget, will you?"

The red light flickers, there is a sudden hush, and we are on. We play the first four tunes and the one with the break arrives. One or two bars look round encouragingly. The Bandleader gives me a "family" look. The bass player moves nearer.

We start. We are getting nearer the break. I begin to perspire and my hands turn to clay. A whirl of thoughts rushes through my head. I don't know where I am. The Bandleader and the dancers are a blur. The bass player gives me a tremendous push. The sticks fall out of my hands. They hit the drums with a tremendous clatter. My feet involuntarily hit the hi-hat pedal and the bass drum a few times. Arms shoot up in all directions, giving me the thumbs-up sign. The arranger stands on the side and does a dance of joy. The Bandleader looks up and gives me a lovely beaming smile. He looks as if he could hug me.

My falling sticks have played:



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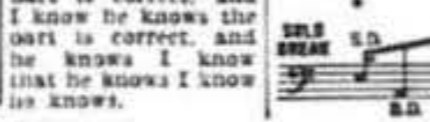
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A CURIOUS CHANTING

The Bandleader hasn't moved. He is looking at me. I am looking at him. He knows the part is correct, and I know he knows the part is correct, and he knows I know that he knows I know he knows.



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ANDRE PREVIN—13-Year-Old Prodigy of the Piano



by Peter Tanner

Most jazz musicians have to learn to tame the head obduracy of the piano... But what is the secret of his success?

It is not that he is a genius. He is a prodigy. He is a prodigy of the piano.

During his stay in America, Peter Tanner is regularly writing for the "Melody Maker." Recently visiting Chicago, he sends the following red-hot news from "The Windy City"

POPULAR trend is here away from hot jazz, more to music and a return to more downy styles. The Ink Spots are the big attraction here at one of the leading night clubs, the Club Manhattan, where they play in a few days' time to play the Aragon dance hall. Incidentally, My Heart and "Blasphemy" by Betty Grable having just presented him with a second daughter.

Old-time Art Kessel and his Raeburn-in-the-Air are playing the Trianon dance hall here; whilst Paul Levant's society styles grace the Black Hawk restaurant.

then moves to "The Crescent City"

Back up Canal Street until I reached Basin Street, and it is here that the only relic of the old days, the Crescent City, is a much more than just a big sprawling port at the mouth of the Mississippi. It is the very spirit of jazz.

Indeed, there is only the spirit of jazz left in the Crescent City. The color bar is content himself with memories, memories that come crowding with every street sign that comes to view. The color bar is Basin Gravier and many others.

The journey south, too, was interesting, scenery became more and more rural, the corn fields and open plains gave way to cotton fields, tobacco plantations, and the color bar is Basin Gravier and many others.

CANAL STREET

Early yesterday morning my trader pulled the blind, and I was in New Orleans. Yes, even the old Louisville and Nashville has been taken over by the American people. As soon as I had arranged hotel accommodation, as difficult here as in London, I started to walk up Basin Street, which is over 170 ft. wide and has sidewalks of terrazzo marble. In the past there was actually a curfew curfew, this wide street, but this it has been filled in and new street cars run along its middle.

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Get those coloured boys off the stand!

The first of an important series of articles on the status of the Negro in American Jazz, by the "M.M." New York Correspondent MARGERY LEWIS



THERE was a hush on the set at Monogram Studios—the hush that precedes the grinding of the cameras for the final "Take." Charlie Barnett, a pioneer in organizing "mixed" bands, raised his hand for the downbeat—the director was about to give the "go ahead" signal, when he rushed the top man from Monogram's sales department. "Stop the film," they cried. "Get those coloured boys off the stand!"

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Barnet howled. So did Sam Katzman, the producer of "Freddie Steps Out." But the money boys, their eyes on the film's Southern exposure, were adamant. Freddie didn't step out—Paul Webster and Al Killian did.

These two Negro members of Barnett's band who had shared three choruses of "Round Midnight" in the "Southland" (1) on the sound track, were forced to relinquish their seats in films who rushed in at the last minute. When all was "set," the cameras began to grind.

Collectors' Corner

by Rex Harris and Max Jones

JEAN WILDER

Clyde Lock, who has been playing since he was four, is a young prodigy of the clarinet. He is a member of the D.B.S.T. and has been playing in the Crescent City since he was four.

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GOSSIP

CONGRATULATIONS to two members of the Percy Page Band at Sale 14th, Cheshire. These are Maurice Davies (tr.), who last Saturday married Miss Dorothy Wainwright of Macclesfield, and trombonist Eric McHenry, who tied the knot with Miss Dorothy Lloyd, of Sale, on Saturday last.

Air-Bands Make News This Week B.B.C. ANNOUNCES NORTHERN BALLOONS

ATKINSON ON THE AIR

THIS Friday (27th) Northern Palms (8 p.m. North H.B.) brings to the microphone Harry Atkinson and his band playing on the recently de-requisitioned Empress Ballroom, Whiteley Bay.

Brother of the North-East's famous Joe A. Atkinson, Harry is a multi-instrumentalist having played with the B.B.C. Northern Orchestra on time; played with a string quintette on base; and often travels south to play piano at house parties.

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BAKER AND PEARSE AT SOUTHEAD... AT Southend's Kursaal Ballroom, London's gig king, Howard Baker, is celebrating his first anniversary.

SCOTLAND... FROM time to time one hears musicians asking the question: 'Where do you stand?'

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CARTOON by Betts... "D.K., George, we've made it! I told you we didn't really need tickets."

AROUND THE COUNTRY... Following their success at last year's "All Britain" Johnnie Stiles and his Orchestra have secured a plum of the West playing at their home establishment.

MARINE BAND IN SCOTLAND... THE only permanent official dance orchestra in the Royal Navy, the Royal Marines' "Cocaine" band, directed by Bandmaster Charles Hotham, is currently in Scotland, playing concerts (military band) and dances in the private.

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"M.M." DANCE BAND CONTEST NEWS High Standard Promises Terrific All-Britain

THIS season's contests have already disclosed some outstandingly fine bands, and it is safe to say that even if there were not a single other County or District Championship to be held (and there are, in fact, over thirty more still to come), this year's "All-Britain" Final looks like being the greatest and most closely-fought there will ever have been.

Among the bands which have already won through the first stage to the "All-Britain" by qualifying for their Area Final, it is questionable if any has put up a more brilliant performance than that given by Jock Caton and his band when they won the 1947 South Lancashire Championship presented by Lewis Buckley last Friday (26th) at the Ashton-under-Lyme Palais de Danse.

CONTEST FIXTURES ON PAGE FOUR

THE South-West Wales Championship, which was staged at the Mackworth Ballroom, Neath, Glamorganshire, on Friday last (26th), whilst not as numerically successful as the two previous years from an attendance point of view, was nevertheless a grand contest.

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GOLD RUSH OF DATES! 23-year-old Reg. who started drumming professionally with Duncan Whyte, left Vic Lewis some time ago, due to ill-health, and being a clever artist, contemplated accepting a job offered to him at a British film studio.

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Kostelanetz Arriving DUE to arrive by "Golden Arrow" at Victoria Station yesterday (Wednesday) evening, famous American conductor Andre Kostelanetz once again acts as guest conductor of one of Britain's leading orchestras when, on Saturday next (28th) he appears with the London Symphony at North London's Harringay Arena.

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