

Accordions Times and Musical Express Editorial and Advertising Offices 33, King Street, London, W.C.2

MERRY MACS COMING HERE IN MARCH

HALF way through the first month of the year and still a very quiet news front from the U.S. so far as music is concerned. The annual "Down Beat" and "Metronome" popularity polls have been declared without any really surprising results.



new contract terms, but I understand that the Capitol and Strand theatres are also negotiating for similar terms with their band attractions.



HOW FUNNY CAN YOU GET? Jack Benny's reaction to fast-talking Fred Allen. Benny, clutching his beloved violin, doubles up with amusement at one of Allen's jokes on a vacation-time theatre date.

THE VOICE

TRUTH ABOUT ROONEY It seems all London wants to know "Is Mickey Rooney good or bad?" The reason is because irresponsible elements among critics failed in their duty.

THE REAL REASON You see, Mickey Rooney followed - I say FOLLOWED - the greatest laughter-maker in the world, Jimmy James.

COMPLETE UNITY Gerald's gesture in cancelling an outside broadcast in view of the wishes of the Musicians' Union is the first expression of co-ordination between the Union and the D.B.A.

WHEN WILL THIS ALL FINISH? Believe it or not, after all the declarations of policy on behalf of the M.U., the "Melody Maker" still persists in stating that they "hope the new Committee will recognise the valuable work done" (by dance musicians) "by giving them a sympathetic hearing."

By Lee Conway I HEAR the all Australian show I advocated some weeks ago is to be heard in the very near future. It should bring some fresh material to the mike that the customers will like!

impressive list of dates lined up for him by G.A.C. On February 14, he will appear at Carnegie Hall, New York, following this by a dash to Boston for a show the next night at the Symphony Hall.

I WAS very surprised to discover that my tip, Margaret Whiting, didn't win the polls this year and that her place was taken by Sarah Vaughan, whom I don't think is all that good.

MY last week's announcement that the Merry Macs were coming to Britain this month has proven to be incorrect. The Merry Macs will not be coming to Britain this month.

STAN KENTON (the guy who won the polls), is doing well with his concert tour and has an augmented with strings - and what strings! The programme was discreetly built up and very well presented by radio personality Jackson with a fine script of which I guess him to be the originator.

THE TIN PAN ALPHABET

ADELAIDE HALL soon to be seen in West End Show. I hope so!

BRAND NEW. Remember I told you of Jean Gould? Did you hear her with Bill Cotton the other day?

EVER SO GOOSEY. Toots Camarata's recording of "Fiddle Faddle."

FUNNY MEN. Harry Secombe. A comic with a fine voice. He should use it.

GOING TO AMERICA. The British songwriters will miss Dennis Dennis.

HANDSHAKE to Jack Nathan for a fine band broadcast. I'm waitin' to hear more of Jack Nathan.

I HEARD the Sammy Kaye recording of "Dream Again" on A.F.N. A commercial disc with a novel touch.

JAMES ETHERINGTON and SYLVIA WELLINGTON should leave the "popular" songs to the people who usually sing them!

KISS to that amazing impressionist Peter Cavanaugh. He attains the almost impossible - perfection!

LIKEABLE FELLOW. Jimmy Miller - the little man with the big hello!

MAISE WELDON. The next time Maisie sings "Golden Earrings" she should do an impression of Anne Shelton instead of Marlene Dietrich!

NAIVE. The British songwriter who walked into Chappell's with a corny song!

OFF THE RECORD. Most British songs! There'll never be a girl like you! I fancy this for another British entry to the Sellers' soon.

QUERY. Did Eric Winstone enjoy playing those "corny" songs on Band Parade?

RONNIE LESLIE'S Isy Bonn is more Bon than Isy's!

SONG DETECTIVE. Sorry, Sherlock Holmes is on holiday this week.

THINGS I'D LIKE TO SEE. The Irving Berlin Music Co. publishing British songs in U.S.A. in return for the use of our air space.

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The Waltz of The Year THE WISHING WALTZ Recorded for February issue by VICTOR SILVESTER and his BALLROOM ORCHESTRA

JAMES C. PETRILLO rated a two-page spread in the December 15 issue of "Life" magazine which reached me just too late to catch last week's column.

ANOTHER Union topic comes from Hollywood, where I reported earlier that there had been talk of a break-away Union in defiance of the recording ban.

Well, the radio, recording and film studio musicians are getting rather impatient with this group of people who, ironically, are controlling Union affairs.

By Lee Conway OCCASIONALLY we come across legitimate show people blossoming into radio and giving the crooners a lesson at their own game.

OF Sam Browne, what shall I say that you don't already know? That he is as good as he ever was? That he holds his place among the great radio singers of popular music?

BAND PARADE took on a different turn with such vastly divergent orchestral units as Eric Winstone (resident), Victor Silvester and Tommy Sampson.

TO finish a sentence with a preposition, may I ask you the Heath boys are running away from? Every known form of disguise is being used by this band today.

I HEARTILY commend The Monarchs, a vocal team with three harmonicas, who presented a very slick show in Variety Band Box.

ONE thing the M.U. strike has done is to give us a very interesting band broadcast in the place of pantomime.

NAT KING COLE has set the wedding date for his marriage to former Duke Ellington singer Marie Ellington (no relation). The couple plan to tie the knot on March 21.

COLEMAN HAWKINS, Joe McPhee, Philip Phillips, Howard McGhee, Ray Brown, J. C. Heard, vocalist Helen Humes and two other Be-boppers are due to leave New York by plane on February 13 to appear at the International Jazz Festival at Nice on February 16.

GUY LOMBARDO, who does a little speedboat racing when not waving a stick in front of that fabulous band of his, is catered city companion.

BOUQUET for Paul Adam and Russ Allen in Band Parade for their duet "Anything You Can Do" which was very well done. Russ taking the part of Annie. If listeners could have actually seen Russ doing this with his big moustache they would have realised how funny it was.

YOUR commentator Jack Jackson blossoms out in his own right as Disc Jockey. As I write these words I look forward, with pleasurable anticipation, for something new from this intrepid broadcaster.

SURELY it's time the title of this show was changed. Why BEGINNERS PLEASE? Recently on one broadcast every artist appearing was announced as having done various other broadcasts, and one or two of the names were quite well known to listeners.

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THE MUTUAL ADMIRATION. Remarkable story of an incongruous friendship

Lauritz Melchior, the world's foremost tenor, and Jimmy "Schnozzola" Durante, he of the gravel voice and the most famous nose extant, are buddies in one of the most incongruous friendships in the history of the Hollywood film colony.



Latest picture of Lauritz Melchior and Jimmy Durante taken on the set of M.G.M.'s "This Time For Keeps."

Coming to the screen from the opposite poles of the entertainment world, Melchior from the Metropolitan Opera, and Durante a graduate of the boisterous downtown night clubs, they have appeared together in several pictures and now are as friendly as Damon and Pythias ever were supposed to be.

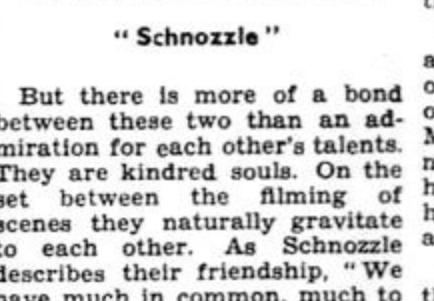
Melchior says that Jimmy is one of the finest artists he has ever known. "He knocks himself out to make people happy. He remembers, and repays, everyone who ever did him a favour and he is beloved by all who know him."

Durante tells "Musical Express" that "Mr. Melly-quire" (the closest he seems to get to the 250-pound tenor's name) "is terrific. If you've never heard him at the Met, you've missed the treat of a lifetime." All of which calls for a chuckle, for the comedian, if pressed, will admit that he, himself, has yet to enter the portals of the Metropolitan.

discuss, being as which we are both of the singing profession." Durante is a frequent guest at the home of the Melchior atop Hollywood's famed Mulholland Drive, the house where the rotund tenor and his attractive wife, the former Maria Hacker, seem always to be celebrating "anniversaries."

"I just relax and listen. Then I sing and he relaxes and listens." And there, parenthetically speaking, is the picture of a perfect friendship. Schnozzola relaxing to the powerful strains of Lohengrin and Tristan in turn, relaxing to Durante's "Hinka, Dinka, Do" and "I Can Live Without Broadway, but Can Broadway Live Without Me?"

So the famous opera star and the owner of the world's best known nose, as strange an entertainment team as ever gave out, put on an hour's free show for the amazed guests of the place.



"Schnozzola"

But there is more of a bond between these two than an admiration for each other's talents. They are kindred souls. On the set between the filming of scenes they naturally gravitate to each other. As Schnozzola describes their friendship, "We have much in common, much to discuss, being as which we are both of the singing profession."

At the Melchior, Durante and the famed tenor thrash about the swimming pool and then lie in the sun and talk for hours. "We discuss life, people, customs, the current state of the world — just the usual man talk," says Melchior. He admits, however, that occasionally Umbriago, Durante's famous mythical character, creeps into the conversation.

When the urge overtakes him, as it always does in the presence of mahogany, ivory and music on racks, Durante plays the Melchior piano. Jimmy is the most famous piano breaker in history but with this instrument he is gentle. He plays awhile and then breaks into song. "I do not sing most of the things he plays," says Melchior.

One fundamental reason that Durante and Melchior are pals, it would seem, is that they both love fun. Illustrative of this was an incident at Lake Mackinac, Michigan, where Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer filmed "This Time For Keeps," the Esther Williams, Johnnie Johnston, Xavier Cugat, Technicolor picture in which both are featured.

There was a band intermission at the small tavern where the film unit had gone to eat. Durante, unable to see a vacated piano without doing something about it, slid over to the instrument and soon was going great guns. Suddenly he had drums accompanying him. Melchior couldn't resist either.

"And that's why I'm learning perns about opera from Mr. Melly-quire," declares Durante. "I want to really show my appreciation and double for him at the Met. some day."

Which, ladies and gentlemen, should be something (with a capital "S") well worth waiting for!

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STOP PRESS. BAKER FOR EARL'S COURT. Howard Baker and his Band will play at Earl's Court, opening for the first time since the war.

POLISH PIANIST IN ENGLAND. It was a large and enthusiastic audience which gathered at the Wigmore Hall on Friday, January 2 to hear Andrzej Wasowski's first performance in England.

BRITISH TUNES TO CONTINUE. Jack Simpson, whose weekly British Tunes programme was due to finish on January 24, has had an extra date given him, which will mean the present series will cease on January 21.

Congratulations Ken Grieff Changes his address. Ken Grieff has now changed his address and can be contacted at Menal Lodge, Wellesley Road, Chiswick, W.1. Telephone No. Chiswick 1030.

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Accordions Times Edited by J. J. BLACK. Accordion Times provides the answer to this riddle. A certain band leader, who shall be nameless, has told me that he considers the accordion to be out of place in the modern dance band.

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