

Accordion Times and Musical Express

Editorial and Advertising Offices
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THE VOICE

VIDEO. SLOWLY, slowly, video develops. Our headline last week told you that Nat Allam is engaged with his band to entertain six film orchestras for them. Allam, apart from his photographic appearance, is the right choice, for he has grown up with video and knows all the technical requirements as T.V. concern music. You would imagine this important step was taken with the greatest of care, but the decision was on the business side, although as far as I am informed this is not so. In one direction, T.V. is as go-ahead as it can be. In another it is frustrated. While M.P.s of all parties are demanding progress, the studios are not making any advancement at all costs, red tape and bureaucracy are holding it up.

WHAT DO WE GET?

We pay one pound per session to receive on our still very expensive sets infrequent productions at considerable intervals. Sometimes a film-on-old film at that. One of my recent sessions was a "film" of a film of a film of a film or two back. I doubt if anyone would want to pay to see it in a cinema after eleven years and for this reason video is a still more expensive way to view it when you regard the cost of the receiving set. The cost of these sets is still high from different angles. They will come down as they are sold in great quantities. And the only way to create a demand to quantify (in spite of the limitations of distance) is to provide frequent entertainment every day. That, of course, would need to be without a T.V. receiver.

A NOVELTY

AT the moment sets are selling because they are a novelty. That's bad. It is up to the R.B.C. to provide first-class programmes as frequently as possible so that the nation will not be T.V. frequency. Once you cannot have video in offices or flats, where are you to radio? Video is not yet work with work. But let the evenings be peak periods for good shows and then see what happens. At the moment programmes are not yet very good. Even so, when an important show is being broadcast the majority of production, lighting, shooting, are positively amateurish even taking into consideration all the limitations of the T.V. studio and equipment. The trouble is that a great Civil Service like the R.B.C. views its job for T.V. within the movement limit of seeking the experienced brains from the motion picture industry.

ADVERTISING

THREE will tell you that video production has not the advantages of the motion studios. Obviously enough, in my view, video is an advancement in itself. If we could get rid of it there were to be exploited to the full we should have better and more interesting productions. In one respect, however, video is greatly inferior to radio and it would appear that the best way to improve it is to do nothing. That may be better for the audience to see as well as hear the dramatic play. That may be true, assuming the play to be produced with all the techniques necessary for pictorial presentation. If not, then let's have a patch on radio for the following simple reason. In radio there is no visual. No picture created by a producer, even with the resources of the greatest art director in the world, can compete with the most expert film imagination. In other words, listeners to radio drama create their memory. He who creates the "machines" and visualizes the position of every character in the play. He creates this mental picture in all its fluencies in a way no producer can.

COMPETITION

VIDEO, however, has no advantages over radio—as yet. To the present day, nothing comparable with movies can turn out anything worth while. Only by regarding a production in terms of picture, with the essential technique of story, action and scene into picture, can a T.V. producer hope to compete with the motion studios. Until Ally Pally finds a legal leg with the British Film Commission, radio is the best. But while we are paying our licence fees and what manufacturers are sinking astronomical sums into the development of new equipment, should the R.B.C.'s production staff continue to listen to the opinion of the public? There is a little too much to ask. The time is coming for the T.V. studios to decide whether they are going to import some money or not. One from Pinewood, Donham, Ealing and Elstree will get more from us than any other school in existence. Unless, of course, they intend to show slowly and exasperatingly by themselves—at our expense. We ought to be bound to demand. Of course, it isn't. At the moment, however, the little stage at the "Q" Theatre is a vast panorama compared with the T.V. screen.

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JAZZ IN THE DUMPS SOUND TRACK by Steve Race



Malachino

LAST week, in one of Lemert's Jazz Club, I took a look at the band. I was surprised to find that the band sounded symphonically perhaps—was called a "Brass Trust." We disagreed savagely, and a good argument ensued. The question fired at us by the question master ran something like this: "Do you believe that music is an art?" Both bands fully agreed, and listened to a short speech from the question master.

One's immediate reaction is to say that true impressionism can only be successfully produced, and sympathetically interpreted. I did, and it is certainly true that, in the case of the greatest jazz, it has emanated from there. But it is generally agreed that the negro's native music and taught ourselves to speak the musical language which we have learned, have, I believe, failed for a good many negroes characteristic in the process which we have adopted. It is well perhaps, with certain limited heavy quality which does not interfere with one's learning. It merely makes the band sound as though it was recorded in a studio, prefab, and in my perverse way I rather like it.

Mackey, Matty Malachino and Bob O'Brien make a neat and compact little band. Skipper Anderson, the pianist,

had a good association with the boys who were the only offenders. His playing was excellent, and his jazz has performed in the most extraordinary virtuoso get-ups based on the tastes of the American kids, and is one of the most original and clothes at the London Jazz Club that at the Club Eleven.

This association of jazz with odd dress is not unlike that of the negroes. The negroes were only tricked enough to play trumpet and to appreciate it when we were separated from the tyrannical white man. Why better could he achieve this in a low, smoky, basement room? The spirit of Mischa's "Not the boy boys" are the only offenders: the jazz boys have remained in odd ways, and the boys have been shown in a jolly, chatty, going rhythm section helps both Art Shapiro's bass break half chords is not as magnificently dull as most solo basses affairs as the boy boys. It is good, even if O'Brien does strike a little too close to the melody in "Sunbeam."

Surface is more obtrusive on the boy boys, and in other ways, too. I like it rather less than Mackey's. This is, for me, too much dragged out, and I would prefer a more rocking, with the rhythm section helping to drive off "Happy" or "Sunbeam."

New Orleans blues, particularly, with a sequence of negro phrases. It is in much Eastern fashion, reminiscing of the Orient. Oliver, Oliver, that of Ragged and Wilson, Keppell and Petty. When the thing does finally plunge into the jazz, the whole thing is excited and unannounced apart from the theme being popularised by a host of pop-calls "Sometime I'll feel good again." That is hard to find any jazz in the side of it. Perhaps the piano's abrupt opening to the record was intended humorously, and the result is that the over-exuberance which comes with blazed relief.

Elliott Jacquet & his Orch. Chappell—All-American Award Winner Indiana Winter

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HOLLYWOOD HEADLINES

From our
Hollywood
Reporter

LYNNE HAMMOND

TWO French lads, curious about Hollywood and abandoned by nothing, had plucked on orchestra leader Benny Carter's doorstep a few weeks ago, bussing him with luggage and a request to take them in this glamorous film capital. "Where shall we go?" "We're not married," "Where shall we go first?"—the query went.

Benny, in his usual gracious manner remained silent throughout the cross-examination, nodding his head from time to time. When the two youths had finally exhausted their breaths Benny smiled amiably and informed them if they happened to be accepted in the Hollywood offering this a seat in the orchestra he'd be pleased to know of it.

These young men shook their heads and bussed on jazz musicians followed a jazz in Hollywood, leaving two very curious Frenchmen.

The remarkable death of this music in a city which has grown and developed so rapidly, and without any abundance of record money, is an enigma. It is simply just an incomparable recession following the prosperous war period.

Entertainment—music included—has made a steady decline in the increasing whirlpool of Hollywood.

A constant stream of radio,

recording and more recently television diversion is buried into the portion of the population remaining their recreation within the home.

And in California this situation is especially prevalent.

And the music business here in many months—

months—has

been closed out with a

succession of

clubs.

Music, in

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RONNIE SELBY
who has just left
England for the
U.S.A. writes this
exclusive article
which answers
many British
questions

AMERICAN SCENE FROM A MUSICIAN'S VIEWPOINT



Ronnie Selby rehearsing with Toots Camara in America.

I HAVE had so many questions fired at me regarding America, during my short stay in England, that I feel obliged to write a column of Musical Express, to write a few lines on my experiences in the United States. Of course, if I were to sit down and write more than fill a book—but I shall do the best I can in the limited space available.

"My first few months in the U.S. were not very important, except that I found one can work as a musician without belonging to the New York Local Union. As many of you already know, the American Federation of Musicians is split into a great number of locals spread all over the States. For instance, New York is in Locals 802 and Jersey City (just across the Hudson, 25 miles away) is Local 636.

"Well, after practically fighting my way off a horrid ship that had laid us up for two weeks across the Atlantic, I looked up several friends of mine with whom I decided to stay. The next step was to find a Union job, because for a musician. If you could have seen the filthy looks I received on asking very politely whether I might join them, you would have taken the next plane back to nice peaceful England.

Apparently, local rulings state that you have to be a member of Locals 802 or 636 before you can even apply (IF THEY WILL ACCEPT YOU IS ANOTHER PROBLEM), unless you are on a transfer from another Local.

Yours truly, completely undaunted, decided to make a few enquiries and found out that by taking a train to New Jersey I could immediately join, providing I showed Jersey residence and also worked there. This is precisely what I did and, from that day until now, I have been in Union City—playing sophisticated music to a Strip Team with an American accent! Quite an experience!

After about three months of night work, I decided to move to Jersey. I came across Beryl Davis in New York, rehearsing

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