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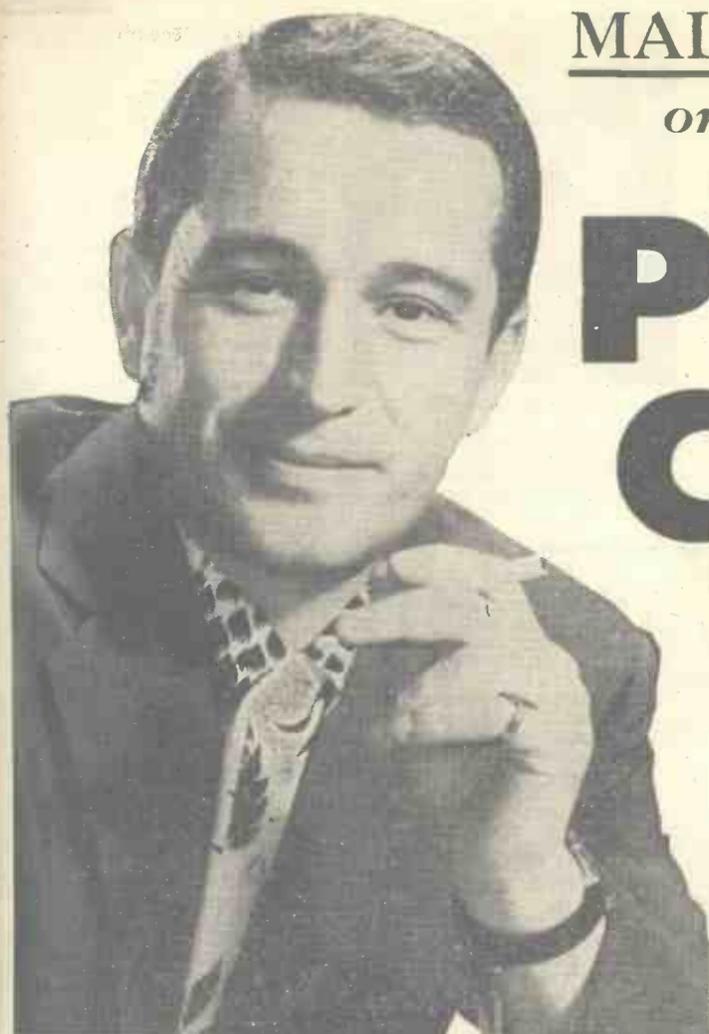
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MALCOLM JOHNS turns the spotlight
on America's greatest TV 'character'—

PERRY COMO

whom you'll be seeing on your tele-screens soon



he shaved. The townspeople—there were only 8,000—soon heard about it and Perry was asked to sing at local entertainments.

Still in his teens, he joined a touring band that passed through Canonsburg singing through the then standard megaphone "which we covered with phony star dust."

After four years, he moved to a name band—Ted Weems'—and stayed for seven years.

Como married a childhood sweetheart, Roselle Belline, when he was with his first band. They had a 24-hour honeymoon before Perry set out on an eight-month tour that kept him away from his bride.

Roselle, their first child, was born some years later while Perry was in Chicago. As they toured round America, the baby lay on a quilt spread out on the back seat of Perry's car.

Unhappy

But Perry was not happy to think that his boy would grow up without a home of his own.

He gave up his job with the band and for a time it looked as if he would become a barber. To be with his family, Perry didn't mind spending the rest of his life cutting hair.

Fortunately he was rescued by agents who fixed him with a radio show, "The Supper Club." This was at the end of the war when radio still held a major influence in American show business. Within eight weeks "Supper Club" won a Billboard poll as the best radio show.

It was the start of Perry's long climb to the big time. The series lasted six years and then transferred to television, which in 1950 was

most frequently asked for by American viewers.

This then is the story of the man who will be making British television history next month. It is a story few can equal. A story of a man almost unknown to British people. He has never been here, few Britishers have met him.

Lonnie Donegan is one of the exceptions. During Lonnie's first American trip, early last year, he was a guest on the Como show—a great honour for any performer, whatever his nationality.

Como's Italian parentage has left a clear mark on the man—similar in some ways to his friend, the equally retiring Frankie Laine. Perry is fond of bright colours. Rehearsing for the TV show, he may be wearing a vivid red sweater and pale blue slacks.

His black hair is bristly, too short to wave, but far from a drastic crew cut. Perry usually wanders round deep in thought breaking out with a quip to end that tension surrounding any rehearsals. Then his dark brown eyes sparkle and his whole face lights up.

Golf is Como's favourite sport. At home he likes to lie down and watch TV for hours on end.

Home is a 14-roomed white house at Sands Point, Long Island, about 25 miles from the TV studios. Perry and Roselle picked it because of the inaccessibility.

Good cook

Few photographs have been taken of the people who live at the house. With the help of only one maid, Roselle, the girl who met Perry at a school picnic when they were 14, manages to cope with all the cooking and chores. Their three children, Ronnie (18), David (11) and Terri (9), are never photographed.

Perry is a good cook and when there are privileged visitors, he is likely to be doing some of the kitchen work himself.

Hardly the sort of life you would expect from a millionaire. But Perry Como is no usual sort of millionaire. He would be just as happy being far less successful.

Yet his work brings joy to millions. A few more millions are going to join the throng when we see him regularly here next month.

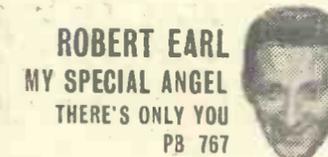
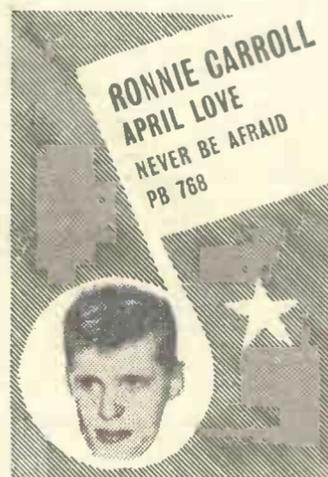
gaining ascendancy. Then, just over two years ago, he was given the big Saturday show.

Perry's early radio and TV series made him a major record name in America and there are several rows of Gold Records among his trophies at his home. "Till The End Of Time," "Prisoner Of Love" and "Temptation" were among the most memorable.

Como's stature here has not been so great. Many of his titles were covered by British artists and sometimes Como's versions were not released in Britain at all. One of the big exceptions was "Hot Diggity" last year which climbed high in the best selling records charts.

Throughout his solo career, Perry has recorded for RCA-Victor in America. Now that this label is issued separately in Britain there may be a different future for his records.

One of his latest releases is an LP—"We Get Letters." This is the title of the request spot in his TV series. It is a collection of the tunes



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THEY call Perry Como "Mr. Nice Guy." Who do? The tag was given him by the studio technicians, the dancers, the musicians—the important little people on his weekly TV show that we are going to see through BBC-TV on Wednesdays from the beginning of next month.

The show is making history. For the first time we will be seeing films of one of America's top three variety shows each week, within a matter of days after its original screening in the United States.

Cost of the programmes is something like £2,500 a week—a lot of money and probably the highest fee the BBC has paid for a filmed programme.

What sort of programme is worth this sum? Well, "The Perry Como Show" is just what it says—Perry Como sings, introduces guest stars and gag with them. It's all Como.

Peak-hour

In America it is the peak Saturday night programme. NBC gave him the job of beating the established high ratings of Jackie Gleason, a comedian better known here for his lush-sounding orchestral LP's.

Perry's series started in September, 1955. By September, 1957, there was no Gleason. Como had won the battle.

Not that Como cared a great deal for such victory. The outstanding thing about the man is his relaxed

nature. Nothing ever perturbs him or elates him!

He has been in show business for thirty years, fifteen of them as a major star. He has never been known to have a temperamental fit or an ulcer.

Como's show takes up his entire week. With preparations and rehearsals, he gets little time for golf. Instead, when he has a break, he takes up an imaginary golf club and swipes a make-believe ball round the studio.

Another recreation, reserved for studio breaks, is knitting. Perry learnt from the lady members of the Ray Charles Singers who are regulars on his show.

There can be few men with knitting for a pastime who are millionaires. Though he shudders at the thought, Como will admit to being worth more than a million.

Pierino Ronald Como was born in Canonsburg, a small, dirty town in Pennsylvania, in 1912. When he was only ten years old Pierino was apprenticed to a local barber and went to clean out the shop before school and again in the evenings. He got 50 cents a week.

By the time he was 14, Perry owned his own barber shop. He sang and

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RON GOODWIN

talks about

JOHNNY MATHIS

"I'd never seen it happen before. During a run through before the show, the whole cast started applauding an artist," reports orchestra leader Ron Goodwin. The artist he referred to is the phenomenal Johnny Mathis.

It happened when both were featured on "The Big Record," Patti Page's 60-minute American TV show devoted to recording stars. Ron flew to New York for the show recently as a follow-up to his "Skiffing Strings" success, which entered the American charts as "Swinging Sweethearts."

The whole cast worked for three days on the show. Ron had a lot of time to study Mathis.

"In any TV show there is plenty of waiting around to do. This one was no exception. I often found myself talking to Mathis," the British orchestra leader said.

"He is energetic and slim. It is easy to understand that he was a very successful athlete only a few months ago. His work constantly sparkles and he already has an assured stage presence."

Mathis, Ron found, is very serious minded. "He's very anxious to get a big hit here, but I don't think it was just because of the increased income he would receive. He is keen to visit the country, to meet the people and see the sights."

Mathis wasn't the only person Goodwin met on the show. Other

guests included Les Paul and his singer-wife, Mary Ford.

The couple are mainly known for their multi-dubbed guitar-vocal records. But when Ron met them, Les Paul was breaking fresh ground by playing a jangle box piano.

After the "Big Record," Ron started a hectic tour of disc jockeys in the big cities from New York to Chicago. "Each day there was a different city and new people to meet."

"The informality of the d-j's amazed me. I would arrive in a studio in the middle of a broadcast. Perhaps the d-j would be talking about dog biscuits. Suddenly I'd be asked to give my views on dog biscuits!"

But Goodwin's most unnerving experience came on a day-time TV music show. The host just played records and teenagers in the studio danced to fill the picture.

Nothing was rehearsed. When Ron was introduced on the air one of the dancers came up and started asking him questions!

"But in a country where you can buy the latest hit record at 3.30 in the morning," Goodwin thought, "Why should I be put off by being quizzed by the people who actually buy my records?"

KEITH FORDYCE

says

These three U.S. hits are doubtful starters here



RONNIE HILTON

song, "Johnny-O," and this should appeal to skiffers and non-skiffers alike.

Nancy is absent from the other side, "Bad Man Stack-O-Lee," but this, too, could be described as skiffle suitable for "squares."

If you prefer your words in English rather than in German, then try the Big Ben Banjo Band's version of the gay refreshing "Liechtensteiner Polka." It was a bright idea of Norrie Paramor's to cover this song with the BBBB, and my guess is that Columbia DB 4049 will secure a far bigger portion of the sales than will the original Will Glahe disc.

There's an English lyric on the flipside, too. "Swiss Canton Polka." Two sides of excellent value that you can't fail to enjoy.

The promise shown by The Five Dallas Boys on their first record ("Shangri-La") is maintained on their second, "All The Way." There is not another vocal group in Britain that sings as distinctively as this quintet, and their harmonising is modern and striking.

They take this song at a fair pace, and Geoff Love gives them a wonderful swinging accompaniment.

"I Never Had The Blues" is not such a good song, and doesn't give the boys much chance to shine.

If you enjoy listening to a big orchestra, a solo piano and a chorus performing a lovely romantic song, then don't miss "Till," recorded by pianist Roger Williams, plus his orchestra and chorus on London-American.

A musical treat that can be listened to again and again. An outside chance for the hit parade. "Big Town" is concert-style music with syncopation added. Music for the mind rather than for the heart.

go straight out and buy this record, but I do strongly advise you to hear the Gibbs disc before deciding. Her nibs, Miss G., has etched a real honey.

There's a change of voice from Fats Domino on London-American HLP 8519. The vocalising is much smoother, quieter than hitherto. In fact he gets mighty close to crooning.

Don't think you'll be disappointed in "Wait And See," however. The beat is restrained, and the wailing sax is almost polite, but the overall effect is very good.

Mc. I like the new Fats. "I Still Love You" is pretty well back to normal, but not so exciting as one might wish.

Nancy Whiskey and Chas. McDevitt are together again on Oriole CB 1403. The sound is very similar to the very successful "Freight Train."

The sweet and plaintive singing of Nancy lends a special charm to the

Gimmick-laden from start to finish; the fast-moving beat is emphasised by handclapping and the lyric is very brief. The greater part of the vocal is taken up by humming, either one or more voices.

This song gets high marks from me for attempting to be different from the usual rock material, and succeeding in a big way.

Flipside has Thurston H giving with a clear and vigorous rockin' vocal in "I Hope You Won't Hold It Against Me."

Bobby Day and The Satellites tackle "Little Bitty Pretty One" for HMV. Not as good as Thurston Harris.

The flipover is a miserably slow rock version of "When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano."

reviewed by

Allen Evans

and in the snappy "7½ Cents" which comes over best. Carol Haney makes "Hernando's Hideaway" really sizzle and Eddie Foy, Jr., does "Racing With The Clock" well.

FRESH AND FANCY-FREE

A gay, galloping Capitol LP bringing back the Andrews Sisters, excellently supported by Billy May's orchestra. Patty, Maxene and LaVerne breathe treble life into everything they sing, as in this medley that goes from the gay "Hooray For Love," "The Song Is You" and "Of Thee I Sing" to the sentimental "You Do Something To Me" and "Nevertheless."

As always, the Andrews girls sing as one, still the best harmony singers in the business.

THE WILDEST

A rip-roaring album of song and jazz, served up with spice and sauce, with Louis Prima's grit-voice, wife Keely Smith's vital vocalising, and accompaniment of Sam Butera (tenor sax superb) and The Witnesses.

Louis gags as he warbles in "Ain't Got Nobody," duets with Keely in "Nothing's Too Good For My Baby," rips on his trumpet in "The Lip," "Body And Soul" and "Night Train," soothes with a two-tempo version of "Buona Sera," and mounts the excitement in "Jump, Jive and Wail," "5 Months, 2 Weeks, 2 Days" and "You Rascal, You." A capital Capitol LP.

POP PARADE VOL. 5

(Mercury: Susie-Q—Crew Cuts; Sixteen—Curtin Gordon; The Door Is Open—Billy Eckstine and Sarah Vaughan; Shish-Kebab—Kathie Marterie and orchestra; Rockin' Is My Business—Freddie Bell and Bell-boys; Bye, Bye Love—Chuck Miller; Old Cape Cod—Patti Page; My Dream—The Platters; Poor Butterfly—Sarah Vaughan; Around The World—Dick Contino orchestra).

Most have been issued as singles, but the whole makes up a compact addition to your 10-inch LP collection.

arrangement is not vastly different from the American version, Ken has given more form and substance to the music.

I still can't find any entertainment value in this number, but if Ken can put a British band in the hit parade, then I shall be delighted. He certainly has a better chance than Mr Justis.

Ken's flipover is "Mojo," another rocking instrumental, which frankly, to me, doesn't sound all that different from "Raunchy."

The third import from the U.S. Top Twenty, and the one which I rate as having the biggest chance of a repeat success over here, is "Little Bitty Pretty One." Thurston Harris and The Sharps certainly make this a strong commercial contender for honours, on Vogue V 9092.



TORME MEETS THE BRITISH

Mel Tormé recorded this album while in London—and a remarkable one it turned out. Between planning by Mel and John Franz, not forgetting Wally Stolt's accompaniment, there's something for everyone—"Danny Boy" for the Irish, "For One And Only Highland Fling" for the Scottish (and dig the accent), and good singing for the Welsh.

For the English, there's a haunting "Greensleeves," "These Foolish Things" and "London Pride," with vocal attention paid to the singing nightingale in Berkeley Square and that lovely bunch of coconuts (encore the accent!) as well as a jivey "Limehouse Blues." Served up by Philips, the vital, velvety voice of Tormé is here at its best.

SKI TRAILS

Jo Stafford, with husband Paul Weston and his Music, plus Norman Luboff Choir and The Starlights vocal group, in a 12-song medley of wintery favourites.

Best is the snappy "Baby, It's Cold Outside," with "June In January," "By The Fireside" and "I've Got My Love To Keep Me Warm" proving most easy on the ears, too. This gay LP is on Philips label.

SARAH VAUGHAN SINGS GEORGE GERSHWIN

(Vol. 1 and 2)

Here is Sarah Vaughan at her vibrant, sultry best—singing songs by the maestro himself. The range is extensive, from 1922's hits—"I'll Build A Stairway To Paradise" and "Please, Do It Again"—through the immortal "Porgy and Bess" numbers, "Summertime" and "My Man's Gone Now," to '938's "Love Walked In." Something for the connoisseur on Mercury. Hal Mooney directs the orchestra throughout.

THE PAJAMA GAME

Doris Day—singing as attractively as she looks on the sleeve of this Philips sound-track-from-the-film LP—makes a great job of "Small Talk," "Once-a-Year Day," "There Once Was A Man" (all duets with John Raitt),

THREE records currently appearing in the Top Twenty bracket over Stateside have just been released here, together with home-produced versions of the same songs. Except for one, I'm not over-confident that these songs will repeat their success this side of the water.

Margie Rayburn is a lass who has invaded the male-monopoly of the hit parade, with "I'm Available." Issued here on London HLU 8515, the song is quiet, medium paced and with an easy-going beat.

Margie employs the increasingly popular gimmick of singing with herself, and the result is quite pleasant, but no more than that.

Multi-track recording is also a feature of the two British discs I've heard. The best, by a narrow margin, is Cynthia Lanagan on Parlophone. Her interpretation is a shade smoother than that of her rivals.

Cynthia has a cute number for her coupling, "Don't Stop, Don't Stop, Tell Me More," and she makes a good job of it.

The Oriole waxing of "I'm Available" is different in that the vocalist is a male. The name of Dave Burgess is new to me, and first impressions suggest that he might be worth hearing again.

He is particularly pleasing with "Who's Gonna Cry?" a slow, appealing calypso.

As a song, "I'm Available," is not really worth a place in the Top Twenty. If it makes the grade, I'll be surprised.

Another American hit is "Raunchy," an instrumental recorded by Bill Justis and his orchestra on London-American. A jangling, wailing number with little to recommend it other than the beat (even that gets monotonous) and a repetitious melody (if it can be called that), which just hammers its way into your brain.

The Justis orchestra doubles up with "The Midnight Man." Not especially exciting, but much better than the other side. This one is a vocal, an interesting feature being the neat use of chorus in the background.

The British coverage of "Raunchy" is by Ken Mackintosh and his orchestra on HMV POP 426. While the

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NME MUSIC CHARTS

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1	MARY'S BOY CHILD (Harry Belafonte) (RCA)
2	WAKE UP LITTLE SUSIE (Everly Brothers) (London)
3	I LOVE YOU BABY (Paul Anka) (Columbia)
4	MA, HE'S MAKING EYES AT ME (Johnny Otis Show/Marie Adams) (Capitol)
5	MY SPECIAL ANGEL (Malcolm Vaughan) (HMV)
6	BE MY GIRL (Jim Dale) (Parlophone)
7	SANTA BRING MY BABY BACK TO ME (Elvis Presley) (RCA)
8	ALONE (Petula Clark) (Pye-Nixa)
9	REET PETITE (Jackie Wilson) (Coral)
10	LET'S HAVE A PARTY (Elvis Presley) (RCA)
11	LET'S HAVE A BALL (Winifred Atwell) (Decca)
12	REMEMBER YOU'RE MINE (Pat Boone) (London)
13	DIANA (Paul Anka) (Columbia)
14	THAT'LL BE THE DAY (Crickets) (Coral)
15	GOT-TA HAVE SOMETHING IN THE BANK, FRANK (Frankie Vaughan & Kaye Sisters) (Philips)
16	HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS (Laurie London) (Parlophone)
17	ALL THE WAY (Frank Sinatra) (Capitol)
18	TAMMY (Debbie Reynolds) (Coral)
19	MAN ON FIRE/WANDERING EYES (Frankie Vaughan) (Philips)
20	ALONE (Southlanders) (Decca)
21	KEEP A KNOCKIN' (Little Richard) (London)
22	WAKE UP LITTLE SUSIE (King Brothers) (Parlophone)
23	PEGGY SUE (Buddy Holly) (Coral)
24	MY DIXIE DARLING (Lionel Doregan) (Pye-Nixa)
25	APRIL LOVE (Pat Boone) (London)
26	PARTY POPS (Russ Conway) (Columbia)
27	MY SPECIAL ANGEL (Bobby Helms) (Brunswick)
28	HANDFUL OF SONGS/WATER, WATER (Tommy Steele) (Decca)
29	WHITE CHRISTMAS (Pat Boone) (London)
30	ALONE (Shepherd Sisters) (HMV)

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3	ALONE (Duchess) 2s.
4	FORGOTTEN DREAMS (Mills Music) 2s. 6d.
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6	DIANA (Robert Mellin) 2s.
7	MY SPECIAL ANGEL (Yale) 2s.
8	LET ME BE LOVED (Frank) 2s.
9	MAN ON FIRE (Robbins) 2s.
10	REMEMBER YOU'RE MINE (Bellinda) 2s.
11	AN AFFAIR TO REMEMBER (Feist) 2s.
12	WAKE UP LITTLE SUSIE (Acuff-Rose) 2s.
13	THAT'LL BE THE DAY (Southern) 2s.
14	WANDERING EYES (Bron) 2s.
15	ISLAND IN THE SUN (Feldman) 2s. 6d.
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17	PUTTIN' ON THE STYLE (Essex) 2s.
18	LOVE LETTERS IN THE SAND (F.D. & H.) 2s.
19	I LOVE YOU, BABY (Sherwin) 2s.
20	HE'S GOT THE WHOLE WORLD IN HIS HANDS (Sterling) 2s.
21	WITH ALL MY HEART (Bron) 2s.
22	MY DIXIE DARLING (Southern) 2s.
23	AROUND THE WORLD (Sterling) 2s.
24	HANDFUL OF SONGS (Peter Maurice) 2s.

BEST SELLING POP RECORDS IN THE U.S.

Last This Week	(Week ending Wednesday 11th December, 1957)
1	You Send Me/Summertime (Sam Cooke)
2	Jailhouse Rock/Treat Me Nice (Elvis Presley)
3	Wake Up Little Susie (Everly Brothers)
4	Silhouettes (The Rays)
5	Raunchy (Bill Justis)
6	Be-Bop Baby/Have I Told You Lately That I Love You (Ricky Nelson)
7	April Love/When The Swallows Come Back To Capistrano (Pat Boone)
8	Chances Are/The Twelfth Of Never (Johnny Mathis)
9	Little Bitty Pretty One (Thurston Harris)
10	My Special Angel (Bobby Helms)
11	Raunchy (Ernie Freeman)
12	Rock And Roll Music (Chuck Berry)
13	Peggy Sue (Buddy Holly)
14	Kisses Sweeter Than Wine (Jimmie Rodgers)
15	I'm Available (Margie Rayburn)
16	All The Way (Frank Sinatra)
17	Fascination (Jane Morgan)
18	Melodie D'Amour (Ames Brothers)
19	Just Born/Ivy Rose (Perry Como)
20	Tammy (Debbie Reynolds)

BEST SELLING SHEET MUSIC (U.S.)

Last This Week	(Week ending Wednesday 11th December, 1957)
1	Around The World
2	Fascination
3	April Love
4	Tammy
5	All The Way
6	Silhouettes
7	Ivy Rose
8	My Special Angel
9	Jailhouse Rock
10	Chances Are
11	Liechtensteiner Polka
12	Melodie D'Amour
13	Wake Up Little Susie
14	You Send Me
15	Just Born

The American charts are published by courtesy of "Billboard"

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The Joker (that's what they call me)
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POP423 78 & 45

SHEPHERD SISTERS
Alone
coupling CONGRATULATIONS TO SOMEONE
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SINGING STARS BOOKED FOR BLACKPOOL SHOWS

JOAN REGAN and Edmund Hockridge will star at Blackpool next summer. They will be featured in "Show Time," Bernard Delfont's second show at the North Pier, with David Nixon.

The King Brothers may also be included in the show's line-up, but a final decision has yet to be made.

Male singers will be strongly featured in Blackpool summer shows. In addition to Hockridge, David Whitfield will be at the Opera House and Josef Locke at the Central Pier.

Apart from Joan Regan, Eve Boswell will be the only other female singing star. She will be at the Queen's.

It is possible that Shirley Bassey may star at the South Pier. Because of her success in Australia it is unlikely that the final decision can be made for some time.



Two groups taken during the weekend at rehearsals for television shows. On the left are stars of "The Jack Jackson Show" on Sunday (l. to r.) Robert Earl, Eve Boswell and Eddie Calvert. The picture on the right was taken after the "Six-Five Special" show on Saturday with (l. to r.) Dickie Valentine, Winifred Atwell and Johnny Duncan.

HEATH BAND BOOKED FOR THREE TV'S

Marty Wilde set for first film

MARTY WILDE, launched on a singing career in September by Tommy Steele's managers, Larry Parnes and John Kennedy, is to star in a film next February.

Final details have not been completed, but it will probably be directed by Terence Fisher, who was responsible for Tommy Steele's first film role—in a sequence of "Kill Me Tomorrow."

Lionel Bart, who has collaborated with Mike Pratt to write some of Steele's most successful recordings, will write songs for the new film.

Initial reaction to Marty Wilde's record debut has been so good that Phillips recording manager, Johnny Franz this week signed him to a new record contract.

He is cutting his second sides this week while he is making his London variety debut at Finsbury Park Empire with Colin Hicks.

Hicks and Wilde end their current tour with Chiswick Empire next week. Both will continue in variety next year, but probably as individual bill topping attractions, not as a joint package.

TED HEATH and his Music, Britain's top band, have been booked for a series of three weekly BBC-TV programmes. They will be seen on Mondays, from December 30.

The programmes will be built around the band. "I plan to feature my musician's extensively," Ted told the NME. "I want the general public to have the opportunity of knowing them as individuals just as the fans do."

The series was arranged on Wednesday. Final details and a title have yet to be decided.

NEW ALBUM

This week the Heath Band was recording a new LP for Decca. It will form a history of the band from 1945 to 1958.

Two members of the early Heath Bands will be among their soloists. Drummer Jack Parnell and trumpeter Kenny Baker, both now top leaders in their own right, were recording with the band yesterday (Thursday).

Kenny was specially released from his recording commitments with Nixa and Denis Preston for the project.

Another feature of the LP will be part of Ronnie Roullier's new composition "Ringside Suite."

LANZA SELLS OUT EVERYWHERE

NOT only have all tickets been sold for Mario Lanza's first Royal Albert Hall concert on Thursday, January 16, but a complete sell-out at every provincial venue—in Sheffield, Glasgow, Newcastle and Leicester—has been announced by impresario Victor Hochhauser.

Since the NME announcement last week that Lanza is making a second appearance at the Royal Albert Hall on January 19, the demand for tickets has been so great that a further concert at this venue will be arranged during February. Also that month, another London area booking is likely at Croydon Davis Theatre.

When the NME exclusively revealed Lanza's provincial appearances on November 29, we stated that four dates remained to be filled. However, in view of the tremendous box office reaction, it is now virtually certain that return engagements will take place at Manchester and Leicester—with Sheffield and a fresh date at Belfast possible on the remaining two evenings.

TERRY DENE'S IRISH DEBUT

TERRY DENE will play his first Irish date next month, when he opens for a week at the Theatre Royal, Dublin, on Sunday, January 26.

March dates have been set for Terry at super-cinemas in Dover and Carlisle. His last British date before his South African visit is a week at Huddersfield from April 7. He opens in South Africa on April 28.

Skiffle contest show re-starts early in 1958

STANLEY DALE'S National Skiffle Contest variety tour ends its 1957 run at Birmingham Hippodrome this week-end. It will reopen early in the New Year. The new line-up has not yet been announced.

Jim Dale, who stars in the show with the Vipers, will undertake radio, TV, and one-night stand dates during the remainder of this month.

On Sunday, he appears at Barking Odeon, and the following Saturday he televises in BBC-TV's "6.5 Special" from Plymouth. Later the same evening, Jim will be heard making his straight acting debut on the BBC Home Service in "Celery Quartet Blues."

Jim can be heard in the BBC Light Programme production "Toast Of The Town" on Boxing Day.

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Humph-Clayton exchange off

THE long-awaited Humphrey Lyttelton-Buck Clayton reciprocal band exchange, planned for next March, is off!

London agent Lyn Dutton scrapped his plans for the tour when the Willard Alexander Office, of America, stated that they were unable to fill a complete schedule of dates for Lyttelton in the States.

Lyttelton was to have played a series of U.S. college dates with trumpeter Wild Bill Davison's band in a package show titled "Anglo-American Dixieland Parade."

But, according to Mannie Greenfield (Humph's U.S. personal manager), colleges are now working on a tight budget for concerts, and the Alexander office could not line-up sufficient engagements for the package.

For similar reasons, a recent projected Benny Goodman college tour has also been cancelled.

Lyn Dutton told the NME on Press day: "We are hoping to arrange a series of personal appearances for Humph as a "single" in America soon, and through TV and radio disc-jockey interviews, build him up as a personality.

"If this is successful, we will reopen negotiations to bring the Clayton band to Britain in exchange for Humph later next year."

MINISTRY SAYS NO CHANGE

THE Ministry of Labour has rejected representations by the Musicians' Union to limit the number of future Anglo-American band exchanges.

The Labour Ministry is solely responsible for the issue of working permits to allow foreign orchestras or artists to work in Britain.

A ministry official told the NME: "There is to be no change in the practice. The reciprocation will continue."

The NME understands the MU made the approach to the Ministry after some touring bandleaders had complained of bad business before and after American bands had played in towns for which they were booked.

Cleo Laine began to cut a new LP "The Tunes Of The 'Fifties" for Denis Preston this week. Backings were arranged by Johnny Dankworth and Dave Lindup.

TV Coffee Bar

TERRY DENE, David Hughes, Eddie Calvert and the Confrey Phillips Trio will be seen in a special music programme Jack Hylton is producing for AR-TV on Thursday.

Set in a coffee bar, it will feature comedienne Tessie O'Shea as the owner acting as hostess to the musical guests.

SINATRA FILM OPENING DATE

FRANK SINATRA's latest film—Hollywood's version of the Broadway and London stage hit, "Pal Joey"—is to have its London premiere at the Leicester Square Theatre on Thursday, January 9.

The film, which co-stars Rita Hayworth and Kim Novak, is currently a top box-office hit in America.

Sinatra's film biography of entertainer Joe E. Lewis, "The Joker Is Wild," is now on general release. This film features Sinatra's current hit, "All The Way."

TRIBUTE TO MILLER ON BOXING DAY

THE BBC is planning to broadcast a special tribute programme to the music of Glenn Miller on Boxing Day. It is scheduled for 4 p.m. in the Light Programme.

The show, consisting of recordings of the bands Miller led and their successors, will include specially recorded comments from bandleaders Ray Anthony and Ray McKinley, former Miller musicians.

The programme will also herald the visit of the present Miller band—led by McKinley—to Britain next month.

Squads return to I.O.M. again

RONNIE ALDRICH and the Squadronaires have been booked for their seventh consecutive summer season at the Palace Ballroom, Isle of Man. They open on June 29 for a nine-week season.

In addition to playing daily for dances in the ballroom, the Squads will also be featured in Sunday concerts in the adjacent Palace Coliseum.

GROUP FOR '6.5'

THE Worried Men have been booked for a return appearance on BBC-TV's "6.5 Special" on January 4.

They are resident skiffle group at the 2-I's, and were previously seen when this show was transmitted recently from the famed coffee-bar.

The Five Dallas Boys join them on this edition for which Ted Heath and his Music have already been booked.

POLL-WINNERS' CONCERT TICKETS: A FEW 'SPECIAL' AVAILABLE

WITHIN forty-eight hours of our announcement last week—that a limited number of 15s. and 10s. 6d. tickets would be available for the NME Poll-Winners' Concert on Sunday afternoon, January 12, at the Royal Albert Hall—every seat was sold.

Fortunately, during the past few days we have been able to obtain a small quantity of Private Seat-holders Tickets for this event, obtainable at 12s. 6d. each. Alternatively, only gallery standing tickets (price 3s. 6d.) are available.

Only postal applicants will be able to secure 12s. 6d. and 3s. 6d. tickets, by completing the coupon below. POST NOW!

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NAT HENTOFF'S American Airmail

Paul returning to school

BEFORE leaving for England, Paul Anka told a reporter his future plans: "Next autumn I go back to finish school. Oh, no, I'm not a musician. Not the musician I want to be. I want to learn it good and proper." Anka's newest ballad is "My Destiny," and he's written "I Lost My Love Last Night" for Johnny Nash.

Frank Sinatra will be guest of honour March 27 at the annual Waldorf-Astoria ball given for Boys Town of Italy, the first show business figure to receive the honour...

A disc-jockey in the northwest has been fired for playing Elvis Presley's version of "White Christmas." The station had banned it. In Vancouver, British Columbia, all six radio stations have agreed to bar Presley's Christmas album and a station in Calgary, Canada, has also forbidden the set being played, on the air because Elvis "pans" through such hymns as "Silent Night" and "O Little Town Of Bethlehem."

Presley's new film, "Jailhouse Rock" has, meanwhile, been doing excellent business. Latest estimate of his income is \$3,000,000.

Johnnie Ray recently opened for the first time at the Town and Country, a huge night club in Brooklyn. Ann Sothern may play the life of Sophie Tucker on screen... The MGM record label is likely to be considerably energised now that Arnold Maxin has moved from Epic to head it... Sammy Davis, Jr., is anxious to do a straight acting role, preferably in a version of "Brothers Karamazov" set in Harlem...

According to one report, Harry Belafonte's detached retina will leave him blind in one eye for a year...

Dimltri Tiomkin has been approached by David Selznick to write a musical score for "Gone With The Wind." Selznick would open the operetta on Broadway... Woody Herman told "Variety" that his teenage daughter, after a spell of rock 'n' roll, has become quite hip to jazz, and he feels a similar transformation is likely in many other teenagers... Mills Music has purchased the catalogue of W. Paxton & Co., of London... Alan Freed starts a new film in January in which he doesn't play himself but instead Johnny Desmond's piano player... Tony Randall will star with Abbe Lane in the Broadway musical version of "Captain's Paradise," now retitled "Oh Captain."

Victor Records is expending a lot of space and money to exploit a pop singer, Jennie Smith. She's nineteen and from West Virginia... Eileen Rodgers, Mitch Miller's find, who made it last year with "Miracle Of Love," may do well currently with "It Ain't So." It is also rising...

A couple of weeks ago, 1,600 people in Chicago came to a benefit concert for Big Bill Broonzy, who has had a serious operation. Writes Studs Terkel who arranged the evening: "Mahalia Jackson was never better. Pete Seeger was electrifying" Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan have recorded again together for Pacific Jazz... Bob Brookmeyer has cut a set with guitarists Jimmy Raney and Jim Hall...



Paul Anka holds Billie Anthony's hand backstage at the Kilburn Gaumont State on Sunday. Also seen are bearded Bob Cort and John Barr, whose "Seven" Paul Anka praises highly.

Anka wows 'em!

A CANADIAN 'teenager with a confident walk stepped on to the vast stage of the Gaumont State, Kilburn, London, last Sunday evening and got one of the most rousing receptions ever given to a visiting recording star.

Yes, it was Paul Anka in the flesh. Several thousand more British fans were seeing this juvenile wonder from Canada for the first time.

Conducting the band behind him as he made the long journey from the wings to the huge "apron" in front of the stage, he went straight into "Tell Me That You Love Me," following up at once with another of his recording titles, "Don't Gamble With Love."

Obvious enough choices to begin with, but from now on there were big surprises in store in the variety of numbers he chose to sing. There was gasp after gasp of amazement as he went into songs that no one expected to hear from him.

His next number, for instance, was the old rock 'n' roll favourite, "Gum Drop." Paul introduced it with a few strong hand-claps, which were quickly picked up by the audience, and whipped it up to an exciting climax.

The fans like this so much, he had to sing it again. After this he strolled over to the piano for a glass of water and made his first announcement: "I must be getting pretty old!"

Then he told the audience he was going to sing one of his "favourite standards," and stunned them with a belting version of "I Believe," that reminded you of Frankie Laine.

There were squeals and wild foot-stampings when he next came down to the front of the apron with a hand-mike and seemed to fix his attention on a girl in the front stalls. For it was her he chose to address with words of his current recording hit, "I Love You, Baby."

It was obvious by now that this wasn't going to be a gimmick act. Except for an occasional knee-bend and a kind of pointing movement of the hand, he was just going to stand there and sing.

But judging by the electric atmosphere in the packed house, it seemed

that this was all the fans wanted him to do.

At this point he broke off to thank the John Barry Seven for "swell" accompaniment and tell the audience: "You've probably heard many transatlantic voices telling you how wonderful it is to be in Britain. Count me in on that, too."

Although the fans had been shouting for "Diana" from the beginning of the act, Paul seemed determined to show off his versatility. He followed with a rocking version of "Down By The Riverside" and (after another sip of water) "White Christmas."

The latter number, though very seasonal, rather unkindly showed up some of the limitations of his voice and was, perhaps, the least suitable of all his songs.

Finally, after whipping up the hand-claps for another rock 'n' roll number, "Shake, Baby, Shake," he launched the song that everyone had been waiting to hear. This, too, the fans insisted on hearing twice over.

Then, after a couple of curtains, Paul Anka was gone, leaving behind the impression of a singer with a strong personality and plenty of confidence. Perhaps, in time, he will learn to be a showman, too.

The John Barry Seven, on stage for most of the show, gave Anka fine support throughout his act. Though their main job was to reproduce the well-known recording sounds, their best work was heard in the backings to "Down By The Riverside" and "Shake, Baby, Shake."

The strong supporting bill included the Bob Cort skiffle group (scoring heavily with a number called "Your Feet's Too Big"); vivacious Billie Anthony (much better in "Old Pianna Rag" than the ballads); and the platinum blonde vocal group, The Gitsom Sisters.

CHARLES GOVEY.

For the JAZZ record

WITH the possible exception of Claude Williamson (who owes quite a lot to Bud Powell), young HAMPTON HAWES is perhaps the most original and consistently impressive pianist yet to set up home on America's West Coast.

He first won acclaim for his crisp, crackling solos with the Lighthouse All Stars, and you'll find that the promise shown on some of these earlier records is fulfilled on the first album to be released here by Hamp's own trio (Vogue LAC 12056). Bassist Red Mitchell and drummer Chuck Thompson complete the line-up.

A forceful, percussive, two-handed pianist, Hamp swings like mad on his own "Blues The Most" and he also weaves some intriguing patterns around likeable standards such as "I Got Rhythm," "What Is This Thing Called Love," "So In Love," "Carioca," "These Foolish Things" and "All The Things You Are."

BLUES BY BASIE—Philips BBL 7190 (Tootie; How Long Blues; Way Back Blues; Blues; Harvard Blues; Bugle Blues; Take Me Back, Baby; The Golden Bullet; Nobody Knows; Royal Garden Blues; Gonna Move To The Outskirts Of Town; Bluebird Blues). The Basie piano is showcased here in a variety of settings—with both big and small bands—and blues shouter Jimmy Rushing sings

superbly on several of the tracks. Clarinetist Buddy de Franco and the late Serge Chouff (baritone) blow on some of the fine small combo titles, and among the other soloists are two of the finest trumpeters in jazz history—Buck Clayton and Harry Edison. Excellent work, too, by Basie's unforgettable original rhythm trio—Freddie Green (guitar), Walter Page (bass) and drummer Jo Jones.

THE MODERN JAZZ QUARTET AT MUSIC INN—London LTZ-K15085 (Bess, Oh Where's My Bess; A Fugue For Music Inn; Two Degrees East, Three Degrees West; Serenade; Fun; Sun Dance; The Man That Got Away; A Morning In Paris; God Rest Ye Merry, Gentlemen). A somewhat variable set by the ultra-musically Modern Jazz Quartet. "Sun Dance" and "Morning In Paris" both have some fine vibroharp work by Milt Jackson and "Man That Got Away" is conceived as a piano solo for musical director John Lewis.

"Bess" and "God Rest Ye Merry" (excellent bassing by Percy Heath) make for relaxed, easy listening, but "Fugue For Music Inn," "Fun" and "Serenade" benefit not at all by the inclusion of guest artist Jimmy Giuffre, who blows a lot of anemic, colourless clarinet.

KEITH GOODWIN

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FROM YOU TO US

ROYSTON DURSLEY writes from Bristol:

Not being a fan of Presley or anyone else, I have no axe to grind. But when people complain at his not coming to England, have they ever given a thought to the followers of Bing Crosby?

Apart from an odd charity and war-time visit—oh yes, and golf—they never even see him, let alone hear him in person.

As Bing has said personally that he is now past singing at his age, it seems that those who have been loyal to him over the years will never get the chance.

★ **Miss S. HALPER**, of Westcliff-on-Sea, Essex, writes:
In the article, "Two More Rock Show to Tour," you state that the Teen-agers will be included at some venues during the tour.

Does this mean that the U.S. vocal group are coming back to England? If so, please could you tell me when they are expected in this country?

If this name applies to some British vocal group, then I think it's terrible that this sort of thing is allowed. People will go expecting to see the U.S. group and instead will see an unknown British one.

[The group referred to is a recently formed British one. Their act was reviewed in the NME of October 25.]

★ **Miss B. DAVIS** writes from Manchester:

I would like to know why Dickie Valentine is being so sadly neglected by all the disc-jockeys.

After reading Keith Fordyce's excellent review of his latest records, I expected to hear them frequently

over the air. But although I am a regular listener to Luxembourg and BBC, I haven't done so.

If Dickie's Christmas record is, as Keith Fordyce says, better than his two previous ones, then surely it deserves a place in the Top Ten.

But as a lot of people, like myself, will not buy a record before first hearing it over the air, it doesn't seem fair that it isn't given a chance.

★ **DAVID ADES** writes from Leigh-on-Sea, Essex:

As an enthusiastic record collector, I am far from satisfied with the service offered to the general public by the record companies, considering the high prices of records today.

Why don't ALL the companies issue complete catalogues each year? Besides being a help to buyers, they would boost sales of older records.

And why are records deleted so quickly these days? I think discs ought to be available for at least five years before disappearing from the catalogues. It's extremely unfair to the buyers.

★ **JOHN WATERFIELD**, of Plymouth, writes:

After Elvis has given the thumbs down sign to appearing in this country, surely this should wake his fans up to the fact that he's getting a bit too big for his boots.

★ **DENNIS OXLEY**, of Barnsley, Yorks, writes:

Let's face up to it, even music has been dragged into this do-it-yourself craze. Elvis Presley and Lonnie Donegan owe their success to the fact that anybody who gets a guitar thinks he can copy them.



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It's QUESTION TIME

for JIM DALE



THINGS have happened so fast over the past few months for young Jim Dale that the talented, versatile singer-guitarist is still in a whirl.

Not so very long ago, Jim was touring variety theatres as a comic. Right now, he's a top-of-the-bill singer, with a smash hit recording to his credit. No need to remind you that the title of Jim's hit parade success is "Be My Girl."

Already, he has a string of television appearances behind him (you have seen him many times, no doubt, on the popular "Six-Five Special" series), and pretty soon he'll be making his debut as a straight actor. Jim's sudden rise to popularity has promoted a whole avalanche of questions from fans all over the country, and his answers to a selection of these queries, put to him by the NME, are reprinted below

entertainer. At the moment, singing is the predominant factor in my act, but I'd like to work a little more comedy into the show.

I studied tap and ballet dancing for six years, and although I haven't yet incorporated this into my act, I hope to in the near future. I'm also very interested in acting.

I have no definite plans following the end of the National Skiffle tour, but when I know what's happening, rest assured that I'll be happy to let you know

Q. How do you select the tunes which you eventually record? (Bobby Don, Ramsgate, Kent)

A. As you probably know, I'm with the Parlophone label and my recording manager is George Martin. George and I get together and sort through maybe a dozen or more songs before we find one that we feel is suitable.

Sometimes we find two songs that we really like—my latest coupling "Crazy Dream" and "Just Born," for example. In such cases, I record both titles, and try not to emphasize the importance of either side in particular.

Q. Having worked on radio, TV, variety and concerts, which medium do you prefer working in and why? (Heather Long, Stratford, London)

A. I prefer playing to "live" audiences, so obviously my first love is variety. There's an atmosphere in variety which you can't get in either radio or TV, and it also gives you a chance to really meet the people.

I recently finished filming in the "Six-Five Special" movie, and although it was hard work, I found the experience very interesting. Needless to say, I enjoy working on radio and TV—in fact, I just enjoy working.

Q. Have you any off-duty hobbies and am I correct in saying that you study acting? (Brian Collinwood, Paddington)

A. My main hobbies are painting and decorating around the home. If I can't sleep or am nervous I get up and paint—doors, chairs, tables, anything. All the doors in our house are different colours.

I do study acting, mostly by reading and on December 21, I'm going to play a straight acting rôle in the BBC Home Service "Saturday Night Theatre" production "Celery Quarter Blues." I'm just keeping my fingers crossed for success!

Q. You mention jokingly in your act that "dear old dad" taught you to play the guitar. Who really taught you? (Linda Parish, Bedford)

A. I taught myself in my spare time in between shows in the dressing rooms of theatres where I used to work as a comedian when I was 16. I suppose it was partly an escape from boredom.

I used to use a guitar in the act as a prop, but didn't play it then. Anyhow, I gradually grew more and more interested in the instrument, and decided I would like to play it

Q. Can you tell me (a) your most thrilling moment? (b) your most disappointing moment, and (c) your most embarrassing show business experience? (Trevor Wainman Harlow, Essex)

A. My most thrilling moment was when "Be My Girl" started to climb the hit parade; my most disappointing moment will be when it really starts slipping down!

My most embarrassing experience, at the age of 16, was at the first audition I went to for a touring revue with Carroll Lewis. Three hundred other performers came along and after a two-hour wait came my big chance.

As I walked on, the main curtain got entangled with my feet, and I landed flat on my face in full view of the audience! When I eventually

did my impressions, Carroll Lewis wasn't the least bit interested, but told me that if I could work up an act consisting of falling over (as well as I did on my entry), he would consider taking me on tour.

I did, and for the next two years, I was the most battered and bruised artist on the boards!

Q. If you were given an opportunity to record a duet with a fellow artist, who would you choose, and what sort of song would you sing? (Josephine Terry, Wood Green, London)

A. I think I'd choose either Spike Milligan or Peter Sellers, because that would lead to a lot of fun and I could break away from the normal run of things for a while. I'd leave the song to their imagination!

Q. Was there any major turning point in your career, and what has been your most important engagement to date? (Sheila Poole, Ipswich)

A. Some time back, I was appearing at Manston USAF base, when out of the blue I suddenly decided to cut out nearly all the comedy from my act to concentrate on singing. I sang a lot of American hill-billy type tunes, and the reception was great.

That was the real turning point in my career, and I've carried on singing ever since.

My most important engagement is the play which I've already mentioned. It's something really different and new for me, and it might ultimately lead to great things

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SUNDAY
12 noon Waitz Time; 3.10th Div. Christmas Show; 5.05 Playhouse Of Favourites; 7.05 People Are Funny; 7.30 Meet Corliss Archer; 8.30 European Story Book; 9.35 News and Sports; 10.30 Conversation.
MONDAY
11 a.m. Request Show; 12 noon Man About Music; 12.30 Holiday in Bavaria; 1.00 Outpost Concert; 2.05 Stickbuddy Jamboree; 3.00 One Man's Family; 3.30 Santa Claus; 4.00 Requests; 5.00 Under The Christmas Star; 6.00 Music In The Air; 7.05 Community Christmas; 9.00 American Music Hall.
TUESDAY
11 a.m. Request Show; 12 noon Man About Music; 3.00 One Man's Family; 4.00 Requests; 6.00 Music In The Air; 7.05 Community Christmas; 7.30 X Minus One; 9.00 American Music Hall.
WEDNESDAY
11 a.m. Request Show; 11.55 Les Paul; 12 noon Man About Music; 12.30 The Todds; 2.05 Stickbuddy Jamboree; 3.00 One Man's Family; 3.30 Santa Claus; 4.00 Requests; 5.00 Under The Christmas Show.
Star: 6.00 Music In The Air; 7.05 Community Christmas; 8.30 Suspense; 9.45 Fiesta; 10.30 Request Show.
THURSDAY
11 a.m. Request Show; 12 noon Man About Music; 3.00 One Man's Family; 4.00 Requests; 5.00 Under The Christmas Star; 6.00 Music In The Air; 7.30 21st Precinct; 8.30 Fantasy; 9.45 Songs of Many Lands; 10.05 Request Show.
FRIDAY
11 a.m. Request Show; 11.55 Les Paul; 12 noon Man About Music; 2.05 Stickbuddy Jamboree; 2.30 Robert Q. Lewis; 3.00 One Man's Family; 4.00 Requests; 5.00 Under The Christmas Star; 6.00 Music In The Air; 7.05 Community Christmas; 8.30 Richard Diamond; 9.00 American Music Hall; 9.45 Melodia; 10.05 Request Show.
SATURDAY
11 a.m. Request Show; 12.30 Western Swing; 1.00 Saturday Salute In Music; 3.30 Doctor Sixgun; 4.00 Request Show; 6.00 Music In The Air; 7.30 Grand Ole Opry; 8.30 Operation Entertainment; 9.00 Music Views From Hollywood; 10.05 America's Popular Music; 11.05 Request Show.
NOTE: Radio Luxembourg programmes are exactly the same as last week.

MARION RYAN

chats about her crane-driver Pop and £SD



MARION RYAN is noted for her singing, her excellent physique, and her frequent appearances on TV; the latter have earned her the dubbing of "Britain's Most Teleshown Singer."

So, when we went along to see her, the odds were that she would talk about (a) singing; (b) the problems of keeping a figure in that hour-glass shape, or (c) the trials and tribulations of being a top name on television.

Her conversation didn't fall into any of the three preconceived slots—in fact, Marion talked about "unfairness."

Seems that Marion's father is a crane-driver in her native Leeds, making some fifteen pounds a week. An honest technician earning "the rate" for his labours.

Marion sat in her flat, poured out a coffee, and smoothed out a dress that would have put Dad's pay-packets in the red for a couple of months.

"It all seems so unfair," she said, with a conviction that doesn't emanate from small talk. "It all seems so very unfair," she repeated. "Dad works so very much harder than I—he gets fifteen pounds and I get twenty times as much."

No. This wasn't "talk-for-print." We were discussing values. Marion still is convinced that her Pop in Yorkshire is underpaid by comparison.

Her statement made a point. We went over it line by line—pound by pound!

What are the economics of being a star? First, most folk would not want to watch a

personality like Marion Ryan dressed in the manner they, the onlookers, could afford. Psychologically, a fan wishes to place a star on a pedestal.

The upkeep of pedestals can be very expensive. For instance, Marion's dress account, she learned from her accountant, had put back her bank balance by £3,000 in a year.

Then there are such expenditures as pictures—a couple of thousand sixpences a month can be very hard on the savings.

Publicity—yes, even this has a premium—and fan club outgoings have to be met. And the success of the former can mean a heavy postage bill, answering the letters of the latter.

Entertaining is also another heavy expenditure—one that has to be done if a singer is star material.

We talked about these facets of the life of a TV and disc personality... we analysed the hours spent rehearsing, the constant attendance to small detail, the endless time that it takes to read and answer fan letters, and we (not Marion) came to the conclusion that Miss Ryan does work hard, however much she gets!

As we made to leave her flat, a few yards from Hyde Park, she slipped into a coat... "Can I drop you anywhere?" she asked. "You see, I have a four-hour recording session starting in half an hour."

The time was 11.30 p.m. and crane-driving Pop had been asleep for sixty minutes! D.B.

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NIGHT rendezvous are usually pretty dejected places during the day. They come alive only when the soft lights and smooth music begin. But on the day I'm thinking about the Coté d'Azure club in Soho was mighty active—at 5.30 p.m.

Outside, the rush for home was just starting, but inside a lithe, panther-like dancer called Ron Hitchins was taking his time, his feet moving to the recorded music, his body jerking from habit more than from inspiration, his face a wet mask of perspiration and determination.

He had been dancing non-stop from 9 p.m. the night before and was all set to break the world record by keeping going for more than 24 hours. A relay of dancing partners took over from each other from time to time and an MC and others kept slapping their hands in rhythm while the band changed tunes or the record-player switched discs, so that Ron never stopped.

Celebrities dropped in to watch the spectacle, including American trumpeter Ray Anthony, whose dance orchestra plays for dancing in the States and who was obviously thinking this event might stimulate interest in ballroom circles. Other stars had their pictures taken watching the gyrations of the writhing, hypnotised dancer.

"Must be mad," someone said. "Where will that get him?" I said nothing. I was thinking of a most intriguing, almost unbelievable conversation I had had just a few days before. I watched Ron Hitchins in action.

Reminiscing

There had been a lull in rehearsals at Wood Green Empire, which now serves as an ATV theatre and is the headquarters of "Saturday Spectacular." Frankie Laine relaxed after his exertions of getting his act right for the show that night. I have often been with him, but had never heard him talk about the old days. Quite suddenly he started to reminisce and out came this startling confession, which he had never told to a newspaperman before.

"I remember when I was a marathon dancer..." he said casually.

"A what?" I asked, thinking I had misheard. "Marathon dancer," he repeated. "Where'd you think I started to develop this?" And he expanded his colossal chest.

I said nothing, waited for him to tell me more.

"I was just a skinny kid at the time, with jeans and a sweat shirt and thick soled shoes with built-in shock absorbers," he went on.

"By 1932, I was getting into the big time of marathon dancing. I had a great little partner called Ruthie Smith. We were a swell team—Frank Vecchio and Ruthie Smith—because she let me be boss! I saw more couples defeated by arguing about what

they should do than by exhaustion.

"Ruthie and me, we got on swell. We won the world champion marathon at Atlantic City. It started on May 27th, 1932... you don't think I can remember the date? It's engraved on my brain." Frankie paused, and chuckled a bit, then went on, in a soft, faraway voice: "For 145 days... for 3,480 hours... we danced."

He looked at me to see the reaction. "Believe me, we did. For nine days less than five whole months, we danced. No days off. Only 15 minutes in every hour rest.

"The other 45 minutes we had to keep moving round the floor—day and night, night and day. The routine was—dance seven minutes, walk three minutes. For almost five months of my life. Boy, it sure sounds crazy now."

Dancing sleep

"Ruthie and me got that we could sleep and dance. We held each other up. I was skinny then, remember," he added when he saw me looking at his size.

"Day and night we had parties coming in to look at us. Like folk look at queer fish in the aquarium. They'd come late at night, after a party, and the promoter would say: 'Let's put on a show.'"

"Then we had to strut out some nifty steps and jazz it up. We couldn't wait for those customers to go home to bed so's we could slow down and get some mobile sleep.

"It got pretty mechanical and after a time you almost got angry if you couldn't dance on and on. Those 15 minute breaks were just long enough to let you get some food—not too much because you had to dance right after eating—take a shower, change your sweat shirt, read a paper, get your feet in the air to let some blood trickle back to your head again, and have a massage.

"We had a Master of Ceremonies who worked long hours, too. He cracked gags about us and gave us build-ups. He'd dream it all up, making us out to be Counts and Dukes, if he felt like it.

"I remember thinking he was improving his style during that lengthy engagement... and he must have gone right on improving because today he's Red Skelton. "Each day we danced on, right

through the summer. And the summer of '32 in Atlantic City was a hot one. "Holiday-makers flocked in to see us and each couple got a fan club. We saw the same faces back several times and it was during this dance that I first got to know how encouraging fans can be.

"I came from Chicago and Ruthie from Ohio, so we had two lots of visitors rooting for us. When they came in, we'd put on an extra show, although the energy expended could be dangerous.

"Never going to bed for more than 15 minutes for those whole, long summer months was sure a drag. But it was our racket and we were stuck with it.

"About September we were down to about four couples. Each day or so another couple gave up. Sometimes we had a stitch and that meant the other had to carry the partner. If both got a stitch at the same time it was curtains.

"We were lucky, I guess, because we kept dancing on. By October, we were left with only one other couple. It was murder. We had to keep going and hope the other couple quit. They kept looking at us with the same hope

in their hypnotised eyes. The crowd yelled encouragement, but we couldn't put on a show any more—just hang on.

"Then one day one of our rivals slipped to the floor. It was the man. The girl tried to pull him up but she hadn't the strength. The judge counted ten, like a boxing referee over a floored fighter, and it was all over. We'd won! We were the world champions."

Frankie wiped a bead of sweat off his brow as he told me this. Re-living this fantastic episode in his life had brought perspiration to his skin.

But he wasn't done yet. "Ruthie and I were challenged by the non-stop world champions. This was another type of championship, in which you had to dance together without stopping or leaving the floor for as long as you could, and last couple dancing won.

Challenge

"The champions were Joe Ray, a famous American long distance runner, and his partner—I can't remember her name. The Atlantic City promoters persuaded Ray to challenge us—with the title at stake.

"We were delighted. Fresh from our marathon triumph, we were also full of confidence. But, looking back on it, we won this new title through foresight.

"Nature being what it is, I told Ruthie not to drink or eat anything for several hours before the contest. Joe Ray and his partner

kidded me about it and said they didn't have to go into training. They drank to their victory—before the contest. But we didn't.

"The band struck up at 9.30 p.m. and before a packed ballroom, we started off, just we two couples. We really danced, fancy stuff, waltzes, fox trots, tangoes, charleston, anything the band played we danced.

"All through the night and into the dawn we danced. Then about 9 a.m. I could see that Joe Ray was looking worried. Remember we couldn't leave the floor. In the end that victory drink proved his downfall!

"Ironically for Joe, one of the judges was the city sanitary chief, and he disqualified Joe when he saw his plight. "We had won another title.

We danced non-stop on this occasion for 12 hours, 20 minutes, and could have gone on if necessary for many more hours.

"We were double world champions. And we retired undefeated. Ruthie had to go back home for some reason and I drifted back to singing—I had always considered singing my first career and even sang as I danced in the marathon, which Red Skelton used to stress in his commentary."

The producer of the TV show—Bill Lyon-Shaw—broke up the story by asking Frankie to try over another number. But before Frankie went back to work as a star singer, I asked him: "Do you dance now?"

"My wife, Nan, likes to dance with me when we're on holiday. But often I say 'I've had enough,' but she says 'I haven't,' so we dance on—but never for 12 hours 20 minutes," he said with a grin, adding with a chuckle: "That's for the birds!"



Frankie Laine used to be the dancer who danced hour after hour in search of championships. Above is Ron Hitchins, of Petticoat Lane, London, who jived 24 hours 5 minutes non-stop in August to win the world jiving record by over four hours. Recognise the trumpeter on the stand? It's America's Ray Anthony.

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Eddie Calvert meets the Duke of Edinburgh at the Water Rats' midnight charity show at London's Victoria Palace on Monday. Picture shows (l. to r.) Clarkson Rose, the Duke, Alfred Marks, Dickie Henderson, the head Tiller Girl, and Eddie Calvert.

TAIL-PIECES by THE ALLEY CAT

Dangers of TV series

AMERICAN singing stars undertaking a TV series now face probable aftermath crisis in other phases of their career. Although Pat Boone is a successful vocal personality on U.S. television, because the public are familiar with his weekly TV appearances, cinema box-office takings have suffered considerably. According to "Variety," returns decreased by 50 per cent for his current U.S. release, "April Love" (compared to his first film, "Bernardine," screened prior to his TV series). An executive of a major picture booking corporation claims that movie theatres are losing huge potential returns with films starring a TV personality frequently available on home screens.

He maintains Elvis Presley has remained a top attraction, by accepting only occasional television guest appearances. If American critics continue attacking most vocal personalities with weekly TV presentations, singers might have good cause to reluctantly decline the risk of over-exposure in this medium—through fear of damaging their reputations in other lucrative fields of show business.

Now rehearsing intensively for his title role in "Robinson Crusoe" at London Palladium, David Whitfield is grateful for the help and advice received from co-star, Arthur Askey. An LP of standard songs was recorded in Germany by Gary Crosby earlier this year—including "Blue Prelude," a composition of Gordon Jenkins; this album is now released in America. Max By-

graves starred in the cabaret at a theatrical charity ball on Sunday; guests in the audience included singers Dickie Valentine, Lonnie Donegan, Gracie Fields and Frankie Vaughan, at this Dorchester Hotel event.

Although his TV appearance was successful, Paul Anka did not appear at ease in "Sunday Night At The London Palladium" with the accompaniment of Cyril Ornadel's orchestra. A "happy event" is expected in the near future by Jim Dale and his wife. "Julie Swings" is title of an LP waxed by Julie London in Hollywood prior to her visit here—with backing from Bobby Troup and an all-star jazz group, including the incomparable Benny Carter.

"Banana Split" is latest disc waxed by McGuire Sisters—featuring a piano solo by the composer, U.S.

Lewis, daughter of vocal star Vera Lynn and music publisher Harry Lewis, has returned home.

At New York Friars Club dinner, Johnnie Ray was guest of honour. What is Musicians' Union reaction to BBC screening of tele-recorded Perry Como programmes?; if position were reversed, a British musical show hardly likely to be sanctioned by James Petrillo, chief of AFM. Although thanking NME Editor Andy Gray for recent publicity on this page, Neal Arden complained we have not published his picture!



Future recordings by screen idol Robert Wagner will be issued on Brunswick here; he has been released from contract with U.S. Liberty label. Gene Norman signed an artist last summer to appear at his Hollywood Crescendo Club next month—at a salary of £250; this artist is Johnny Mathis, who now receives weekly salary exceeding £2,000, following three recent successive disc hits in America. Music publisher Johnny Johnston has adapted new lyrics to his composition, "I Like Music, You Like Music"—now featured by the Keynotes in ITV commercial jingle for Idris.

Agent Joe Glaser is assembling all-star coloured package show—including the Platters and jazz singer Dinah Washington—for coast-to-coast concert tour of America next month. Tremendous advance bookings for Finsbury Park Empire pantomime, starring Dave King. Great acting performance by singer Beatrice Reading in "Requiem For A Nun" at London's Royal Court Theatre.

Return visit to Rome for concert appearances planned by Frankie Laine early next year. Dorothy Dandridge has signed for two films in Germany concerning racial problems. Producer Josephine Douglas injects lively spirit into BBC-TV "6.5 Special"; noticeable last Saturday that Johnny Duncan has more hair than the three supporting Blue Grass Boys combined. Jazz pianist-singer Hazel Scott has

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Available early next week, details of how to obtain the "Twelve Star Calendar" (price 2/6d.) can be found elsewhere on this page.

BRITONS ARE JINGLE KINGS OF AMERICA

THE "jingle king" of America, British-born Eric Siday, is in London on a business trip. Siday and his partner—another Englishman, Austen Croombe-Johnson—are recognised as the foremost writers of commercial jingles in the States.

In the early 1930's, Eric was a prominent London jazz violinist. He went to America, where he teamed up with "Ginger" Johnson. Since then they have been responsible for hundreds of nationally-known commercials.

Their best-known is the Pepsi-Cola signature tune, sometimes referred to as "the second national anthem of the States."

Siday and Croombe-Johnson have recently been appointed music consultants to the American Broadcasting Company, and will undertake all that company's musical promotional work.

In a country with over 3,000 radio stations, it is essential for each channel to have its own distinguishing features. The partners are presenting a host of "new sounds," in creating ABC's musical station identifications.

The principal reason for Eric Siday's visit to Britain? He has come to look at some new, advanced recording techniques.

Rather surprisingly, he told the NME: "I am conducting some research into these techniques, which are more advanced in London and West Germany than in the States."



There is a special significance in Pearl Carr and Teddy Johnson playing roulette at an Oxford Street store while Christmas shopping. Their Nixa recording of "Tomorrow, Tomorrow" has just been released in the States on the Roulette label.

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television personality Steve Allen... Reviewing recent Glasgow variety appearance of Russ Hamilton in an American show business paper, the opinion of Gordon Irving is, "a monotonous performance"—also that Russ lacks appearance and stage presence. Mrs. Gladys Hampton is due in London today (Friday), for business discussions regarding another European tour by the Lionel Hampton orchestra.

Although Pye-Nixa's original disc (by screen star John Fraser) of "Why Don't They Understand?" failed to enter best-sellers here this Joe Henderson-Jack Fishman composition is rapidly heading towards American hit parade—with the understanding version of George Hamilton IV. New producer of fortnightly Eddie Fisher U.S.-TV series is veteran musician Gil Rodene—for many years an instrumentalist and manager of Bob Crosby's Bobcats.

Original plan that Nat "King" Cole plays concert tour here in January has now been ruled out. Frank Sinatra, anxious to improve his U.S.-TV series, has persuaded Bing Crosby to make a guest appearance on December 20. Although his performance was polished, Michael Holliday appeared over-casual on BBC-TV "6.5 Special" last Saturday—to the extent of forgetting lyrics in "I'm In The Mood For Love".

Screen star Tony Curtis has been approached to play flute—on a recording with the Chico Hamilton group. Scottish-born singer Annie Ross has been signed to World Pacific American label; manager Dick Bock plans an album for her with Gerry Mulligan Quartet. After an appendix operation in University College Hospital, Virginia

Stars and songs in 'Jamboree'

"JAMBOREE," a film about the record business, features 22 new numbers, listed below, and features 19 disc jockeys, representing many countries—including Jack Payne and Jack Jackson for Britain.

Max Rosenberg, producer of the film, was due in London yesterday (Thursday) for a preview of the picture.

Here are the numbers and the stars who sing or play them:—"Jamboree"—Count Basie and Orchestra; "Record Hop Tonight"—Andy Martin; "For Children Of All Ages"—Connie Francis; "Glad All Over"—Carl Perkins; "Who Are We To Say?"—Connie Francis and Paul Carr; "Teacher's Pet"—Frankie Avalon, with Rocco and His Saints; "Siempre"—Connie Francis; "Cool Baby"—Charlie Gracie; "Sayonara"—Jodie Sands; "Toreador"—Ron Coby; "Your Last Chance"—Lewie Lyman and The Teenchords; "If Not For You"—Paul Carr; "Unchain My Heart"—Slim Whitman; "A Broken Promise"—The Four Coins; "One O'clock Jump"—Count Basie and Orchestra; "I Don't Like You No More"—Joe Williams; "Crazy To Care"—Martha Lou Harp; "Cross Over"—Jimmy Bowen; "Hula Love"—Buddy Knox; "Wait And See"—Fats Domino; "Twenty-four Hours A Day"—Connie Francis and Paul Carr; "Great Balls Of Fire"—Jerry Lee Lewis.

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