A MUSICAL TOUR OF EUROPE

(2)

by DAN FISHER

PARIS.—The first thought upon arriving here is that there can't possibly be enough time—and my eleven day allowance is just about a few hours too few! This is one city you have to see yourself. It's too much. Every bit as gay and light-hearted as those songs Cole Porter has written about it. Now I understand why he's so in love with the place. The clubs are packed every night—and with a real cosmopolitan air. Even the hotel staff shows the liberating influence of such a doorstep European capital, I'm taking the liberty of lumping myself in that category.

The native French are in short supply in the plush nightspots, but practically every other nationality group, even including a few Brooklyners, take part in the nightly mob scenes. I've managed to catch George Mattson, the satiric comedian, at the Lido and Charles Trenet at Bobino—but I'm too intoxicated with the city (no crossing from Brill Bldg. crowd) to remember all the other wonderful things that have been happening. The city is dancing to jitterbug, mambo and swing, and the music—new, old, varied—concept of safety and exuberance is the real thing. These Parisians love to sing and be happy. Their big American favorites are Les Paul and Mary Ford.

Before I get into the song-and-artist hit parade here, I've got to toss in a plug for the Russian folk dance troupe, Kadril, who'll be over for the first time. They're absolutely sensational, and if they ever make it to the U. S., I'm going to pull a Drew Pearson and predict they'll fracture the dance critics and the public. Just found out why the city's even more crowded than normally—the automobile exhibition's going on this week, and the Parisians love cars. They're pouring in from the suburbs, adding to the always large tourist population.

The top U. S. tune in Paris is "Mambo Italiano," with "Best Magnifique" running second. Proves that Porter has an authentic Parisian flavor or the locals would never spin it into the runner-up spot. Doris Day and Ella Fitzgerald are the female song leaders, while Bing Crosby and Frankie Laine are one and two, respectively, in the crooning ranks.

Their own best sellers are "Lavender Da Portugal," "Tahi Tahi Ou Tahi," and "Un Petit Peu D'Argent." From their native stock of talent, Lino Renaud and Jacqueline Francois, Louis Marvillo and Gilbert Becaud are the biggest favorites.

I almost hate to wind up this little Parisian travelogue. It means there's only one more stop before I start getting motion sick in the lobby of the Brill again. See you in London.

LONDON.—Well, it had to happen. London, in the midst of the frustration, all the bars and clubs close at 11 p.m. Theatre time's 8 o'clock and by closing curtain you practically closed out for the night. Not even time to meet a pal for a drink. But the music business here is more nearly like home than in any other spot in Europe. It strikes me as the way such music was used to be in the States when my old man was around, if, you worked on a turn and it clicked—you could clean up. The musical backgrounds on records are in sharp contrast—right up to date, in fact frequently swingingly modern.

The American influence is found in every phase of showbusiness, with legitimate shows, movies and records dominating much of the overall entertainment picture. Our artists are very popular with the Englishmen. Especially Nat Cole, Slim Whitman (surprisingly enough), Frankie Laine, Doris Day and Rosemary Clooney. Glen Miller's records are still the best-selling of all the band sides, with Ray Anthony next. The jazz import with the biggest following here is Gerry Mulligan. One of our tunes, (speaking as an American, not a publisher) "Blue Star", is leading the London hit parade, with "Ever More", an English song, in second. Ruby Murray is the top British songstress, but the male crooner race is a 3-way photo finish. David Whitfield, Ronnie Hilton and Dickie Valentine are just about equal in popularity. The band leaders are Billy Cotten and Ted Heath, with the Star Gazers at the top of the vocal group listings.

The British version of Tin Pan Alley is called Denmark Street. Publishers all have their own buildings (Mr. Brill would be unappreciated here), and they still carry big staffs of arrangers, song pluggers, stock boys and pianists. Many of them print their own music and make their own demos since it's far less expensive by British standards. The most outstanding difference here is the demand for milk jockeys—a situation which leaves the publishers mostly controlling the destiny of their songs and recordings. Of the platter spinners here, Jack Jack-Jack and John Andrews are the most important. The overall music picture is good, with record sales up 50% though sheet music has dropped in sales. Even the music business joins in the national tradition of stopping for tea-with-milk at 4 p.m. every day.

TV's definitely on the corny side here. All the major networks are waiting to see what that new-fangled fad—commercial television—will do for their business. Even the TV sets are on the hokey side, and it seems that some of the announcers talk with monocles in their mouths. All too well, though, the only barrier I've found between myself and the English is the Language. Ten days have been all too short a time to spend here—but that's been the case with every city I've visited.

I managed to squeeze in a few shows, "Waiting For Godey" is very good. "The Punch Revue" is a big, sophisticated show I'd recommend to anyone headed this way. And it's fairly standing room only for the Old Vic production of "Julius Caesar". Wendie Hillier's just great in that one. Before I begin to sound like a road company version of Brooks Atkinson, I think I'd better get back to the music business. It's going to get back to me very soon. By the time you read this I'll be back getting my roast beef at Tony Shor's, those delicious bagels at Linda's, cheesecake at the Turf and those lovely paydays in the Brill Bldg. I've missed Beanie Snappy, Bert Mann, Charlie Lang, Ben Barton, Banjo Sunty and all the gang. I'll be good to get home, but I'll be back too long before I get back to being a Gal-liver in front of the Brill.

Another Platters' "Only You"

CINCINNATI, O. — King Records this week announced the release of "Only You" by the Platters.

Currently the number one record in the R & B field and number 7 in the national pop sales chart, as reported by the Platters on Mercury, the market will now see two versions of the same tune by the same group. The Platters had formerly been the property of King Records. The group had cut the tune in one of their King sessions but it had never been released. This week Syd Nathan, King's speedy, discovered the tape, and plans were made to rush the record out to his distributors immediately.

Attention Distributors! BEST AND ONLY R & B VERSION "SIXTEEN TONS" Tip Top Record #202 Call, write, wire for territory Joe Sinsheimer Allen Distributing Co. Richmond, Va.

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