

# A MUSICAL TOUR OF EUROPE

(Part 2)

by DAN FISHER

PARIS—The first thought upon arriving here is that there can't possibly be enough time—and my eleven day allotment is at least a few thousand too few. This is one city you have to see yourself. It's too much. Every bit as gay and lighthearted as those songs Cole Porter keeps writing 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 crowd (since I just hit half a dozen European capitols, I'm taking the liberty of lumping myself in that category).

The native French are in short supply in the plusher spots, but practically every other nationality group, even including a few Brooklynites, take part in the nightly mob scenes. I've managed to catch George Mattson, the satiric comedian, at the Lido and Charles Trenet at Bobeno—but I'm too intoxicated with the city (no cracks from the Brill Bldg. crowd) to remember all the other wonderful things that have been happening. The city is dancing to jitterbug, mambo and samba rhythms—and that movie concept of gaiety 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 performing in the city 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 exposition'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 "C'est 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 "Lavandieres Du Portugal", "Tchi Tchi-Ou-Tchi", and "Un Petit Peu D'Argent". From their native stock of talent, Line Renaud and Jacqueline Fracois, Louis Mariano 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 trampled in the lobby of the Brill again. See you in London.

LONDON—Well, it had to happen. Last stop. And to add to the frustration, all the bars and clubs close at 11 p.m. Theatre time's 8 o'clock and by closing curtain you're 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 being somewhat the way it used to be in the States when my old man was around, i.e., if you worked on a tune 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 Cotton 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 unhappy 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 dearth of disk jockeys—a situation which leaves the publishers mostly controlling the destiny of their songs and recordings. Of the platter spinners here, Jack Jackson and Eamonn 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 pub owners 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 in all, though, the only barrier I've found between myself and the English is The Language. Ten days has 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 Godot" is very good. "The Punch Revue" is a big, sophisticated show I'd recommend to anyone headed this way. And it's strictly standing room only for the Old Vic production of "Julius Caesar". Wendie Hiller'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 Toots Shor's, those delicious bagels at Lindy's, cheesecake at the Turf and those lovely paydays in the Brill Bldg. I've missed Bessie Stasny, Bert Mann, Charlie Lang, Ben Barton, Banjo Santly and all the gang. It'll be good to get home, but I hope it's not too long before I get back to being a Gulliver again. See you 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 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 prexy, discovered the tape, and plans were made to rush the record out to his distributors immediately.

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## Meeting



PITTSBURGH, PA.—Juliana Larson, making a mid-west tour with Buddy Basch (1), to promote her diskings of "My Ideal" and "It's Much Too Late To Go Home" ran into former Toledo (WSPD) and Detroit (WKMH) disk jockey Tom Finn. Finn is currently in the Public Information Office, Headquarters 18th AAA Group at South Park Military Reservation. He'll be discharged in May '56 and returns to broadcasting then.

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