

## The Ska Is Coming

Traffic between New York and Kingston, Jamaica, has notably increased recently as the Jamaican government has extended several invitations to members of the U. S. music-record business. Purpose is to evaluate the commercial possibilities in the American market for the Ska, or West End (Kingston) blue beat. The results of the trips are beginning to show up in singles releases.

Capitol Records was the first to release an imported single three weeks ago, Byron Lee's "Sammy Dead," and "Say Bye Bye." This week, three new singles on the new beat were released on Mercury ("Suzie Ska" and "Day-O" by Jeff Bowen), Atlantic ("That Lucky Old Sun" and "Don't Make Me Cry" by Prince Buster and the Ska Busters), and MGM ("Fare Thee Well" and "Mockin' Bird Hill" by the Five Strangers).

About the new beat (and accompanying dance), Atlantic Records' president Ahmet Ertegun had some provocative things to say last week. While Atlantic's first release was an imported master (which is a hit down there now) Ertegun feels that to reach a commercial market here will require a good bit of engineering and recording know-how. The basic elements are a 4/4 shuffle-type rhythm with a strong accent on the off-beat (played by organ, guitar, and as many horns as are available) so that the ear actually only hears the off-beat once the piece gets into motion. The tunes used can be standards, calypsos, or even gospel-types, with plenty of emotional leeway.

Ertegun took his chief engineer, Tommy Dowd, with him to Jamaica, where in eight days they recorded over 40 sides by various groups which he has now signed. It is his feeling that the material and professional recording techniques employed give him a pretty good chance for coming up with some hit records. However, he was quick to note that a tune will most probably make it on its own, rather than because it is the Ska.

The blue beat and ska grew up in the West End section of Kingston and, like the Twist, has begun to attract the upper classes in Jamaica, where the

dance is now the rage.

Ertegun suspects that, as with the twist, the ska will have a field day in France, and is arranging for release of his new singles there simultaneous with U.S. release. He has films of the dance, which he is readying to show to teeners at hops and for television demonstration.

Nobody knows whether the Ska can reach 'fad' proportions. But nobody is ready yet to say it won't.

## Sid Bernstein's Shows

Sid Bernstein, recent GAC alumnus and now an indie promoter through Theater Three Productions, is stepping up his Carnegie Hall booking activity. In addition, Bernstein is so convinced of the long-standing potential of the British movement, that he'll soon go after personal management deals with several "of the more promising acts" for their American activities.

Bernstein, who booked the Beatles first Carnegie concerts last February, now has the Dave Clarke Five for two Decoration Day weekend concerts there—first to be emceed by Murray Kaufman, the second by WMCA's Good Guys.

Next, Bernstein has bought the Rolling Stones for Carnegie. They'll appear there at the tail end of their upcoming American tour. Bernstein has also bought Jerry Vale for a Carnegie return Sunday (31) and will bring in the Serendipity Singers next fall. Another fall date is being set for Harry James and Nina Simone.

Within three weeks, he'll go to Britain to "study the scene there" with the express purpose of 1. Singing various acts for their U. S. management, and 2. lining up a group of three or four for what he calls a "British Are Coming" package to play Carnegie and "perhaps three or four other key dates later in the summer."

Bernstein also is now negotiating to stage the New York Paramount Theater Labor Day show for which he hopes to add some strong international flavor. "I'd like to get Rita Pavone, maybe Johnny Halliday and one or two of the British groups for the show this time," he said.

## King's 'Royal Family'

Hal Neely, general manager of King Records winged into New York from Cincinnati last week all fired up over a new album being issued by the firm called "The Royal Family." LP was produced by Kermit Schafer, producer of a long string of very successful "Bloopers" albums for Jubilee, and now set to do a series of other comedy LP's for King.

"The Royal Family" is a satirical takeoff on the Richard Burton-Elizabeth Taylor-Eddie Fisher triangle, the first LP attempt to capture that headline making romance on wax.

According to Neely, King Records is going on the biggest promotion on this LP that it has launched in years on any pop album. Neely thinks he has a big hit, and he is not loath to say so. On Wednesday, May 13, he had the album issued to a flock of top jocks all over the country, and claims that the plays were substantial.

The firm has pressed up 50,000 of the records and has them ready in their company owned distributorships in case the demand builds quickly. Mailing pieces are going out to dealers, one-stops, and any other place that sells records, and jockeys in major markets are being covered with samples.

Is there any chance of a lawsuit from either Mr. & Mrs. Burton or Eddie Fisher? Not according to Neely who said he and Schafer and their lawyers checked every possible aspect of this before issuing the LP.

There was another album with the word family in it issued about a year ago, that did pretty well. King is hoping that the same lightning will strike again.

## Joan Baez vs. Fantasy

Nothing wildly exciting usually happens at Fantasy Records. The firm, headed by the Weiss Brothers, Sol & Max, and run on the sales front by Sol Zantz, is well respected for doing a steady, nice, and almost hitless business (except for the recent Vince Guaraldi smash of "Cast Your Fate To The Wind.") But after last week it could be that Fantasy is becoming a bit wilder.

For in just a few days Fan-

tasy brought out a Joan Baez album, got slapped with a suit about the Joan Baez album and then had a temporary restraining order issued against it so it couldn't press any of the Joan Baez albums.

The album that Fantasy released of the top femme folk artist was her first ever recorded. It was cut by Dick Tognazzini, who had his own label back in 1958 named Storm. He held the tapes for years and then worked out a deal a few months ago for Fantasy to release it. Fantasy did and got hit with the suit. Miss Baez, through her lawyers, says the album is not up to her present standard. She also says she was under 18 at the time she made the LP so she was a minor and any contract (which she denies there was) would be invalid. There will be a full hearing on the case on May 26, at which time Miss Baez' lawyers will ask for a temporary injunction.

## CBC-Oriole Deal?

Britain's leading indie label, Oriole, may form a joint British recording company with CBS. Oriole managing director Maurice Levy and fellow-director G. Shestopal recently completed top-level talks with CBS execs in America.

Asked by Music Business if it were true that an Oriole-CBS tie-up had been agreed, Levy refused to either deny or confirm the story, but said an announcement would be made later. (In the U.S. Columbia Records president Goddard Lieberman had no comment on the Oriole-U. S. Columbia story.)

It is felt here that Oriole and CBS might be partners in a new firm, but an outright CBS take-over of Oriole is also possible.

Probably Oriole's biggest money-makers is its cut-price Embassy subsid label, sold exclusively by Woolworth's giant chain of stores. Oriole label hitmakers have included the Carefrees, Russ Hamilton, Maureen Evans and Sweden's Spotnicks. The company is building a new factory at Aylesbury which should be pressing records this fall.

The CBS label is issued by Philips in Britain, under a deal which expires May 1965. Epic and Okeh are put out

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