

GIMMICKS DIG BALLROOM GOLD

Promotions Do the Trick In Hying Terp Grosses; Old-Time Events Snag \$\$

Ops Wary of Teen-Age Dances Despite Successes

By Johnny Sippel

CHICAGO, May 14.—Tho the vein of dancers' gold is running thinner for ballroom owners, there's still much moo if the terperly op digs deep into his bag of promotion tricks, a survey of 50 leading ballroom ops across the country has disclosed. While old-time dance nights have been standard policy in some ballrooms, these special nights, set aside for music ranging from square dancing to European polka steps, seem to be the best biz builders currently. The Archer chain and the Karzas ballrooms have recently inaugurated old-time dancing in the bulk of their holdings. The Karzas chain is utilizing old-time dancing Wednesday night at the Trianon, Chicago; Fridays at the Terp, Austin, Minn., and Surf, Clear Lake, Ia., and Sundays at the Prom, St. Paul, and the Terp. The Pla-Mor, Kansas City, and George Devine's Ballroom, Milwaukee, are utilizing two nights per week of old-time dancing. Will Wittig, of the Pla-Mor says, "The two old-time nights are two of our best nights."

Orks Build Following

Consensus of operators is that mid-week nights and in some cases, Sundays, make the best old-time dancing parties. Admission runs from a minimum of 50 cents, including tax, to \$1, including tax, in the larger cities' terperies. Orks run from a minimum personnel of five pieces to 11 in the larger cities. Ops said they liked old-time dancing because bands, even those with a national name, required less of a guarantee than the average pop bands. Ops who have utilized a square-dance policy for a year or two said that they were able to build a local or near-by territory ork into a drawing attraction. Alice McMahon reflected other ops' general estimate when she said that the old-time dancing at her Indiana Roof, Indianapolis, "proved more fun than any other night." Ops generally felt that because of the circle dancing more strangers danced together, thus providing them an opportunity to meet new people. Wally Peters, of the Marcon Ballroom, Iowa Falls, Ia., said he found a "more orderly crowd attends old-time." Another op said that a square-dance crowd is consistent and "never leaves you."

Dress Nights Stimulate

Best square dance biz stimulator seems to be a special dress night, when patrons don overalls or rustic dress. These are titled "Gingham and Overall" or "Overall and Apron" nights and lure additional customers, it was reported. Miss McMahon has a half hour of free square dance instruction, which she said had lured novices into the old-time field. She has found that instruction makes it possible to mix up many types of old-time dancing, thus spicing the program.

Teen-agers still are being watched by most operators, who are wary of giving them a trial. Jodie Hall, manager of the Marine Room, on the Galveston (Tex.) Pleasure Pier, used teen-age dances last season, working the name bands for kid dancing from 3 to 6 p.m., Sundays. Utilizing a number of gimmicks, best of which was a merchandise award to the best-behaved couple, Hall said he feels that regular customers for the future were cultivated. Dave Shafer, of Colonial Hotel, Rochester, Ind., which operates Terrace Gardens, playing semi-names, has used Mondays during the summer as his teen-age night. He has worked out a deal with merchants in surrounding cities whereby each week residents of a different

Music's Stopped

WASHINGTON, May 14.—A stop-the-music performance put on recently by Local 161 of the American Federation of Musicians may cost the union \$100,000. A suit for that amount was filed this week by Mrs. Mary Dawson, promoter of a Negro opera, who charged the union stopped an ork right in the middle of Celeste Aida to put on a bite for \$511.

The tab, claimed Mrs. Dawson, wasn't due until the first intermission.

N. Y. Store Drops 802 Concerts

NEW YORK, May 14.—S. Klein, the department store, has withdrawn its co-sponsorship with Local 802, American Federation of Musicians (AFM), in the weekly concert series to be held in Union Square (The Billboard, May 7). The store withdrew when it was learned that the city park department would not be able to furnish as many seats as had been expected, fearing a heavy accident liability. Klein is contributing a sum equivalent to its share of the concert nut to the local's recording and e.t. fund.

The local will proceed with the concerts, the first to begin Tuesday (24), with succeeding ones the following three Tuesdays. A local spokesman said that seating facilities were being worked out with the park department.

Col. To Distrib Seeco to Mex

NEW YORK, May 14.—Seeco, Latin-American diskery with offices in New York, has made a five-year deal with Columbia Records for the distribution of Seeco masters in Mexico. The disks will carry the Columbia label, with Seeco credit, and will be pressed by Columbia. The Mexican plant, controlled by Seeco president, Sidney Siegel, will continue to operate with contract pressings for other diskeries, however.

Seeco will continue to operate as an independent label here and in other Latin-American countries, according to Siegel.

802 Rank & File Sends Arons To AFM With 4 Resolutions

NEW YORK, May 14.—Max Arons, Local 802 delegate to the American Federation of Musicians (AFM) convention in San Francisco opening June 6, has accepted suggestions for four resolutions from an informally elected rank-and-file committee. Arons, one of the few Unity minority candidates to win local office in last fall's elections, will introduce the following resolutions before the AFM convention:

- (1) A resolution to establish ways of amalgamating the country's white and Negro locals to eliminate Jim Crow locals.
- (2) A resolution urging the international executive board to see that provisions for unemployment insurance are included in all local negotiations with non-profit organizations—operas, symphonies, etc.
- (3) A resolution urging the international executive board to act on Local 802's recommendation that caterers be prevented from recommending musicians.
- (4) A resolution asking the Federation to permit Local 802's member-

town get in free if they present a ducat obtained in the store of the sponsoring merchant. Larry Geer, of Laramar Ballroom, Fort Dodge, Ia., has encouraged the Junior Chamber of Commerce to pay for the eight-piece local bands for Friday night high school dances. In three years of operating teen-age dancing, Geer has found business has remained at capacity without utilizing special promotions. In other cases, special intermission programs, featuring high school talent, have proved most successful.

ship to hold meetings on the exchange floor.

No Quorum

Because there was no quorum at a Local 802 membership meeting last Monday (9), no official instructions were given to the three delegates—Arons, local Prexy Dick McCann and Secretary Charlie Iucci. McCann and Iucci, Blue ticketeers, left the meeting when it became apparent no quorum was present. The members who were present formed an unofficial committee and asked Arons to present the above-mentioned resolutions at the convention. He accepted.

Yesterday (13) the committee asked McCann and Iucci to join in the resolutions, but they declined. They turned down the first one because anti-Jim Crow resolutions have been presented in the past, and almost unanimously opposed by Negro members, who feel that they are better off in their own locals than in amalgamated locals, where they might receive second-class treatment and left-over jobs. The Blue delegates refused to participate in the second resolution on the ground that a bill calling for unemployment insurance for musicians in non-profit organization is pending in the New York State Legislature.

McCann and Iucci gave no reasons for declining to sponsor the catering and exchange floor resolutions, but their stand—and the Blue majority's—is well known. They feel that the current scheme to prevent recommendations by caterers is unrealistic, and that the exec board's right to hold membership meetings in Palm Gardens was recently okayed by James C. Petrillo and is a hard won gain.

Tele No Gold Mine for AFM 47 Musickers

6 Outlets Spend 48G in Year

HOLLYWOOD, May 14.—Tele has proved a poor source of income for Hollywood musicians, according to a survey completed this week by Local 47, American Federation of Musicians (AFM). Union's study of tele employment from April 1, 1948 to March 31, 1949, disclosed that a total of \$48,098 was spent on live music by local tele programers employing 563 musicians during the year. Figure is far below original estimates and represented a small per capita income for Local 47 members.

Survey showed that only 48 regular weekly tele shows use live musicians, with an additional 80 stanzas requiring orksters on an irregular basis.

Highest musical talent buyer among six local tele stations was KTLA, Paramount-owned outlet, which spent \$15,218 on music during the year.

Cap Quarterly Net Nosedives

HOLLYWOOD, May 14.—Capitol Records' Prexy Glenn E. Wallichs expects consumer confusion over new speed disks soon to become clarified and the market again to become stabilized. In the meantime, Wallichs blamed the current mix-up in the buying public's mind for a drop in firm's sales and net earnings during the first quarter of 1949.

Cap sales for the three months ended March 31 totaled \$3,126,228 as compared with its sales during the same period last year of \$4,825,523. First quarter's net income (after all charges) was \$40,413, which equalled 4 cents per share on 476,230 shares common stock after payment of dividends on convertible preferred stock. Same period last year company netted \$588,588 (after all charges), which equalled \$1.32 per share of 430,000 shares of common stock after providing dividends on convertible preferred stock.

MCA Releases Orkster Fields

NEW YORK, May 14.—Shep Fields this week obtained his management release from the Music Corporation of America (MCA) after several weeks of haggling over the terms of separation. Fields is in the process of negotiating a new deal with the General Artists Corporation (GAC). The orkster left GAC about six months ago to make the MCA deal.

Also at GAC Raymond Scott was officially inked to a management pact with the agency. Scott intends to return for personal appearances with his quintet.

Disk Fund to Kid Hospital

NEW YORK, May 14.—Syd Nathan, King Records prexy, announced this week that all royalties earned by a forthcoming disk of *The Death of Kathy Fiscus* will be donated to the Kathy Fiscus memorial fund for a children's hospital in Los Angeles. The tune was composed and cut by folk warbler Jimmy Osborne and is published by Lois Music, King's pubbing affiliate.