

NEWS REVIEW

New Eckstine Style Clicks At Crescendo

HOLLYWOOD — In his last Stateside appearance before embarking on a lengthy tour of Europe, Billy Eckstine launched a new act at the Crescendo here. All indications are that this is a new Eckstine audiences will see, with the change heartily endorsed by this quarter.

Eckstine has apparently decided to drop his efforts to bend notes, and via the introduction of a soft-shoe turn and a series of vocal impressions of other pop singers he manages to gild the lily. His choice of repertoire is skillfully balanced and includes a sprinkling of standards, and his latest RCA Victor waxing, "Bitter With the Sweet." Record fans can expect to look for potential hit Eckstine recordings in the future if his performance here is an indication. Joel Friedman.

'Picnic' Cues Decca Tie-in

NEW YORK—How LP's and singles can work hand in hand to push each other up the ladder was illustrated this week with several Decca Records entries.

Top case in point are disks released on themes from the pic smash, "Picnic." Morris Stoloff, who has the sound-track main theme on a single, is a name from nowhere in the current disk market, having been in other years the man who backed Al Jolson records. Yet, this single is Decca's top seller of the week. The "Picnic" LP is now being released by the diskery with a tremendous advance order.

In the case of "Man With the Golden Arm," the LP version came first and has been on The Billboard best selling charts for many weeks. Elmer Bernstein, another non-name artist, then came up with the single on the "Main Title" theme, considerably later than the other single versions. This disk is now on the best selling pop singles charts.

Decca execs are hoping to repeat the same winning parlay with single and LP sound-track themes from "The Eddy Duchin Story," featuring Carmen Cavallaro at the piano.

Feld Pkgs. 'Biggest R&R Show of '56'

NEW YORK—Another of the big packages, titled "The Biggest Rock and Roll Show of '56," has been fully cast and is set to take off in Hershey, Pa., on April 20. The troupe, produced by Irving Feld's Super Attractions out of Washington, has been booked solid for 44 days, selling at a guarantee of \$6,000 per booking against 60 per cent of the gate.

The cast includes Bill Haley and His Comets, the Platters, Clyde McPhatter (who will be released from the Army the day the tour opens), Lavern Baker, Joe Turner, the Drifters, Frankie Lyman and the Teen-Agers, the Teen Queens, Bo Diddley, the Colts, the Flamingos and Red Prysock's big band.

The itinerary takes in Toronto and Montreal, the South, East and Midwest. It will range as far West as Denver and Omaha, Neb., and down thru Texas.

DONEGAN GETS CORNELL'S U. S. DISK BLESSING

NEW YORK — Mammie Greenfield has signed to manage British recording artist Lonnie Donegan in this country, and is currently negotiating to bring the London Records warbler over here for an appearance on Ed Sullivan's CBS-TV show, and following a schedule of nitery dates.

The deal makes Don Cornell one of the most magnanimous guys in the business, since Greenfield is also his manager, and both Cornell and Donegan are currently competing in the disk market with their respective versions of "Rock Island Line." However, Cornell—a big record favorite in England—recommended that Greenfield handle Donegan, so all's well.

The 24-year-old British singer, whose London waxing of the tune sparked the recent revival of the old Leadbelly ditty, plays guitar and has been singing with small combos in London. He is represented in England by Lyn-Dutton.

Decca Adds 6 Jazz LP's To Catalog

NEW YORK — Six new LP albums have just been added to the growing Decca Records jazz catalog. The release is headed by "Introduction to Jazz," which features the Rev. Alvin L. Kershaw, of "\$64,000 Question" TV fame, in an analysis of selected items by great jazz stylists.

Other new entries include "Jazz Studio 5," with the Ralph Burns ork; "Nat (King) Cole in the Beginning," featuring the Cole original trio; "Stan Kenton," the formative years; "Man With a Horn," featuring solos by famous stylists, and "Windy City Jazz," with the Yank Lawson, Bobby Haggart crew. This latest release brings to 75 the number of Decca LP's so far this year, of which 55 fall in the pop category.

Distrib Fete Art Pallan

PITTSBURGH — Record distributors of Allegheny County held a gala testimonial dinner here Monday (9) night for veteran deejay Art Pallan, who recently switched from WWSW to the Westinghouse station KDKA.

The dinner, held at the Copa Club, was attended by more than 100 distributors, deejays, dealers and record artists. Principal speaker was Bill Kaland, Westinghouse's assistant national program director, who discussed the pros and cons of the music and news format for radio stations. Kaland stressed the need for the format to be tastefully applied and for stations to put more emphasis on effective community service programming.

Electrone Bows On West Coast

HOLLYWOOD—The development of an electronic piano, and its application to the record business were revealed here last week with the formation of a new independent label, Electrone Records.

Headed by Les Phillips, president; Cliff Nolder, secretary-treasurer, and Warren Fletcher, vice-president, the company uses an electronic device on a piano to

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Tony Bennett Tops in New Copa Show

NEW YORK—Tony Bennett is just what the doctor ordered to head up Jules Podell's new Easter show at the Copacabana. There are few singers today who can so completely dominate a nitery floor. This was particularly evident at a late show this week, which had him in brisk competition with an octet of table-squatting barley-corners. But no parcel of tone-deaf tipplers can overcome that super-engaging projection, and Bennett won hands down with a brilliant performance.

The Bennett rep, as usual, cuts deep in the ballad groove. Currently, it includes five of his recorded faves, "Rags to Riches," "My Baby Just Cares for Me," "Boulevard of Broken Dreams," "Because of You" and, of course, "Sing, You Sinners" which is a natural for a wind-up. Other numbers run primarily to solid, pop standards, but there is splendid change of pace and beautiful arrangement in such items as "Lost in the Stars" and an Anglicized excerpt from "Traviata." Incidentally, he receives an excellent assist from guitarist Chuck Wayne.

Likewise contributing to the Copa agenda are the Four Coins and Larry Storch. The quartet offers some of its hot beat recordings for a good reception. Storch's comicalities seem solid as ever with the customers.

Production numbers are handsome in the approved Podell style. But this show is 90 per cent Bennett. Bob Francis.

Thall Back on Cincy's WLW 'Hayriders'

CINCINNATI—Bill Thall, who relinquished emcee duties with WLW's "Midwestern Hayride" nearly a year ago, due to what was termed "doctor's orders," rejoined the "Hayriders" last week as director and producer.

In his new post, Thall will be in charge of all WLW country and western personnel, and will emcee the NBC-TV "Midwestern Hayride," which originates each Wednesday night from WLW-T, Cincinnati. The Saturday night, 90-minute "Hayride," broadcast over a regional network via WLW-T, will be emceed by Ernie Lee, who rejoined the WLW c.&w. staff some six weeks ago. The shake-up came about abruptly Monday of last week (2) at a meeting of WLW minds, at which time Hugh Cherry, who had emceed both "Hayride" segs since Thall's departure, tendered his resignation.

Bert Somson, head of WLW Promotion, Inc., will continue to handle the "Hayride" on fair bookings and personals, assisted by Bill Querner. Clay Eager continues as emcee of "Boone County Jamboree" on WLW radio.

Thall, with WLW since 1944, is a feature on the Ruth Lyons "50-50 Club," heard Monday thru Friday, 12 noon to 1:30 p.m., over WLW-T, Cincinnati; WLW-D, Dayton, O., and WLW-C, Columbus, O.

achieve an unusual sound. Pianist Barclay Allen has been signed to a term recording contract and has already etched his first album for the firm. Distribution is currently being set by Phillips.

WHAT WOULD VICTORIA SAY?

LONDON—Rock and roll will invade sedate Albert Hall here, when deejay Alan Freed (WINS, New York) presents an r.&r. stage show there in the fall. Tentatively set for October, the Freed concert will mark the first full-scale invasion of England by rock and roll.

By that time, of course, Freed hopes that his new Radio Luxembourg r.&r. tape series (see separate story on this page) will have created a ready-made audience for the show. If the London performance is a success, the jockey will do a series of rock and roll concerts on the Continent.

SINATRA SUBS

Crooner Hot Pinch Hitter At the Sands

LAS VEGAS, Nev. — One of the Sands Hotel's bossmen (Frank Sinatra) comes to the aid of his partners for the current show in the Copa Room, spelling off Martin and Lewis for the final week of their scheduled engagement so M & L could fulfill picture commitments. At such times, head showman Jack Entratter finds his percentage arrangement with Sinatra comes in handy.

In a program billed as "Songs for Swingin' Lovers," Sinatra devotes a solid 40 minutes to his popular style of crooning delivery, and hardly any horseplay at that, as distinguished from past appearances.

The audience delights at the change, devouring such familiar Sinatra recording favorites as "Love and Marriage" and "Tender Trap," along with a variety of his personal favorites.

Second spot in the show is taken by tapper Bunny Briggs, who is better than most in an overcrowded field.

The Copa Girls of the chorus line are pleasing as usual with numbers by Bob Gilbert and Renee Stewart. Music is by Antonio Morelli and ork.

Venus Label Plans Held Up By Oberstein

NEW YORK — Eli Oberstein has temporarily shelved his plans for a pop singles label in order to preserve his competitive position in the low-priced classical field.

The veteran disk magnate's proposed Venus label, announced several weeks ago, will wait while Oberstein spends three weeks in Norway producing disk sessions with the Oslo Philharmonic for his Allegro-Royals diskery.

For this particular longhair series, he is taking along British engineers from the BBC, in order to capture "the British sound." Admittedly, Camden's recent pitch to dealers based on use of the artists' and orchestra's real names, is presenting a problem to other low-price disk outfits, despite the fact that some of these waxings date from the late 1930's. It's Oberstein's idea to combat these with modern high-fidelity sound at the same bargain price.

Before leaving, Oberstein acquired the old HRS jazz disk catalog from Jack Caiden of Empire Records. This label, which includes disks by Sidney Bechet, Muggsy Spanier, Sarah Vaughan, Jack Teagarden, Pee Wee Russell, Earl Hines, etc., had been leased to Atlantic Records for several years until Oberstein's purchase.

SCRAPE OR SING

Scales Pay Off Rasas Every Way

NEW YORK — The five Rasa brothers are doing very nicely these weeks. During the day they operate a fish company down at the Fulton Fish Market and spend most of their time scaling fish. On weekends they go out and play Italian weddings and such for Local 802 scale.

Recently the boys backed up brother Joe, a warbler whose style resembles that of the late Buddy Clark, on a record date for Marine Records. Last week another of their disk efforts was bought by ABC-Paramount, who plans to issue it immediately. Brother Joe also signed a contract with the diskery.

But the lads are keeping level heads thru it all, and instead of looking for pie from the sky, they're still scalin' and wailin' from the same old stands.

Savoy Expands British Deal

NEW YORK — Savoy Records made several new deals on the international front last week and also prepared to launch a new popular priced "variety" line of LP's in the near future.

The diskery's former limited deal with British Decca for release of selected repertoire abroad on London label was extended by Savoy's Herman Lubinsky to a complete catalog arrangement. This now includes albums as well as singles and gives Savoy outlets in 10 countries, mostly in Europe.

In Canada Lubinsky terminated his deal with Quality (M-G-M) and handed the line to London there as well.

While Savoy LP's will be held at their current \$3.98 and \$4.98 high, Lubinsky will activate a Regent LP line to sell at "popular" prices, probably \$2.98 and \$3.98 for 10-inch and 12-inch respectively.

According to Lubinsky, this line will have all new distributors. None of the present Savoy distributors will have it. Material will be a "pop" or "variety" nature, plus some jazz by new, lesser known talents. Polkas, harmonica disks, Irish tunes and Scotch bagpipes will also figure in the repertoire, 'tis said.

Northern Music Hypos Output

HOLLYWOOD—Northern Music Corporation, subsidiary publishing arm of Decca Records, has substantially increased its activity as a result of the upcoming publication of new songs and scores to five Universal-International pictures.

Larry Shayne, Coast representative for the firm, disclosed the use of title songs in "Away All Boats," "Written On the Wind" latter featuring the Four Aces, and "The Mole People." Julie London has been inked by U-I to air "The Meaning of the Blues" in "The Great Man," with Nat (King) Cole set to do three songs, "I Waited So Long," "When I Fall in Love" and "I Was a Little Too Lonely" for the film, "Istanbul." Northern recently purchased "When I Fall in Love."

Shayne is currently working on "Warm Sun, Cold Moon," introduced last week on a "Lux Video Theater" telecast, and "As I Love You."