

THE HOLLYWOOD BEAT

'Total End' Rustic Rhythm Band Gets Set For Debut

By HAL HOLLY

Hollywood—From out of our west, whence came the "new bands" of Jerry Gray, Frank DeVol, Sonny Burke, Bob Keene, and some others who have tried with varying degrees of success to gas up the enthusiasm with which dancers used to hail their favorite bands, comes now another well-established radio and studio arranger-conductor who thinks he has the answer.

Our man is Carl Cotner. For some 15 years music director for Gene Autry, he was preparing at deadline time to unveil at Horace Heidt's Trianon, in the L.A. suburb of South Gate, a super deluxe rustic rhythm ork that Cotner figures will be not only the total, final, ultimate, and complete end for devotees of barnyard bounce, but the best ballroom band of the bunch.

Personnel

Here's the instrumentation and lineup of the band he had in rehearsal here. (It's a story in itself):

Fiddles—Emilio Caceres, Chuck Hurta, Sam Lichter, Tom Doria, and Cotner; violas—Ted Bacon and Lou Kievman; cell—Al Fried (remember Al from days when Harry James carried a string section?).

Trumpets—Frank Pratt and Frank Nelson; trombone—Bob Youngman; clarinet—Benny Lagasse, who will double on bass clarinet. (If you followed the band business through its palmy days you'll remember this New Orleans boy from Raymond Scott records, and as solo clarinet with the Jack Teagarden big band of some years back and others, not to mention a flock of jazz record sessions.)

Rhythm—Roy Harte (Hollywood's best known Jewish cowboy), drums; Mel Eberle, piano; Duane Coker, bass; Frankie Marvin, steel guitar, and Red Roundtree, banjo.

In the vocal department, Phyllis Lynne is the gal, Jack Perry is the guy.

'New Sound'

Cotner says that with that format he's going to give out with the "new sound in western swing," and we believe him. But to thoroughly appreciate this new band you have to see them in their handsomely tailored cowboy suits from Nudies' (not a strip show, but a famous Hollywood costuming concern), and we're pretty sure you will, for if anything is for TV, this is it.

Cotner is a conservatory-trained violinist who, as a kid, thought he was headed for the concert stage. In the early '30s he fell under the spell of Joe Venuti and found himself working for \$2 a night with a small jazz combo.

While hitchhiking from one town to another in the midwest he was picked up by a driver who turned out to be an up-and-coming cowboy singer named Gene Autry. They've been together ever since, including the spell with Uncle Sam's Special Services in World War II. Says Carl:

Not Far Apart

"Western music and jazz are both part of American folk music—and not so far apart as many people think. Most of the good western fiddlers and guitar men can take off on a good jazz chorus.

"I'm going to keep my brass down with mutes, but the boys will get a chance to swing out on solos from time to time, and the rhythm will have that authentic Dixie beat that is still the greatest for

dancers."

Okay, Carl, no argument from this department. See you on next year's Dixieland Jubilee. (Who's kidding?)

DOTTED NOTES: Pete Kelly's Blues, radio's first jazz-slanted drama series, quietly faded from the NBC net at close of 13-week cycle. No sponsor interest... Rose Stanman and Sam Rittenberg, Beverly Cavern ops who split on the "Dixie is Dead" issue, are dissolving their partnership with indication Rose will be running the Cavern on her own and shopping for a two-beat troupe... Jay Johnson, ertswile Stan Kenton dance band singer, did a turn as single at Tiffany club, sharing stand with Beat staffer Ralph Gleason's vocal discovery, Betty Bennett, and the new Jerry Wiggins trio (Jerry, piano; Irving Ashby, guitar, and Dave Brian, bass). Package was in for two weeks starting Oct. 11, but it looked like a holdover.

HOTSPOTTING: Guitarist Barney Kessel is impresario for the Tuesday (off-nite) sessions at North Hollywood's Palomino cafe, where Hank Penny's cowhand combo holds forth regularly (and some of Hank's rhythm rustlers are frequent sitters-in on Barney's bop sessions)... Also of interest in the same vein are the brisk blow-outs staged by drummer Jim Nordwall on Sunday afternoons and Tuesday nights at the Cottage Italia on Lankershim boulevard in the same locality.

BEHIND THE BANDSTAND: While Bob Crosby graciously acknowledged the cheers and applause for the briefly-reunited "Original Bob Crosby Band" at the Dixieland Jubilee (see comment this issue), Ben Pollack, who started that band on its way (and lost it), stood almost unnoticed in

Soundtrack Siftings

Nicholas Braslky (music) and Sammy Cahn (lyrics) signed to do songs for Jo Stafford's first starring pic, *My Fine Feathered Friend*, to be produced by Fidelity pictures. Tune team, Hollywood's hottest (*My Love, I Wonder Why*, et al) is under contract to MGM but is allowed one "outside" picture a year.

Ray Kellogg, recalled as band singer with Freddy Martin, Les Brown, Shick Henderson, and others, signed by Warner Brothers. First assignment will be role of John McCormack in Gus Kahn biogram, *I'd See You in My Dreams* (Doris Day, Danny Thomas, Frank Lovejoy).

Jean King, radio's "Lonesome Gal" platter chatter purveyor, will be portrayed in a biogram scheduled at MGM and now in writers' mill. Title role expected to go to either Lana Turner or Ava Gardner.

Tommy Martin's voice was dubbed into a jukebox sequence at RKO for use in the Wald-Krasna film *Clash by Night*, forthcoming Barbara Stanwyck starrer. The song, *The Closer You Are*, was taken from the tracks Martin recorded for his as-yet-unreleased RKOopus, *Two Tickets to Broadway*.

Les Brown ork, minus Les Brown (and with his blessing), was used by music director Leigh Harline to record a flock of jukebox and dance band sequences to be heard as incidental music in the forthcoming Goldwyn picture, *I Want You* (Dana Andrews, Dorothy McGuire). The band will not be seen in the picture.

Ralph Carmichael, young evangelist (and Local 47 member) who heads an ork on a Hollywood TV show (*Campus Chorus and Orchestra* on KTLB), did the original underscoring for soul-saver Billy Graham's production *Mr. Texas* ("The world's first Christian western"). Other music features are the Hardin-Simmons Cowboy band of the Texas university and vocal backgrounds by Sons of the Pioneers. Redd Harper and Cindy Walker have top roles.

Jack Phillips, agent (ina Pay Hurton and others), who has been making rounds of studios with stars based on course of Ben Pollack under title of *The Daddy of Them All*, had Jerry Thomas, Monogram producer, close to signing stage at this writing. Pollack will not appear in film.

the wings of the Shrine auditorium stage. Seemed to many that promoters Frank Bull and Gene Lorman might have brought old Ben on stage for at least a bow... Two-beater Turk Murphy is plenty sore at Joe Glaser's L.A. office. Says a Glaser man induced him to quit a good steady job in Sacramento, where he was offered a raise and a long holdover, with the promise of "six months of steady bookings including good spots in Chicago and New York," and then came through with exactly two weeks in Denver. Turk is taking it up with Petrillo... Lady phoned *Down Beat* Hollywood office to inquire where she could purchase a "tailgate trombone." She wanted to buy a horn for her son and all she knew about it was that he wanted to "play a tailgate trombone like Kid Ory."

Latest Studio Man Gets Dance Eyes



Hollywood—Another of the radio and studio baton boys here to succumb to the urge to front his own dance band is Carl Cotner, right, shown with Gene Autry above. Cotner has been Autry's music director and arranger for over 15 years. He tells Hal Holly about his plans for a "new sound" western swing band in the accompanying story.

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Left: Wally Sofer at his new "Knob Tension" outfit—purchased from Frank's Drum Shop, Chicago. See this fine instrument at your dealers, or write for latest literature.



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