

Melody Maker

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'RHYTHM'

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EVERY FRIDAY - 4d

HARRY ROY SIGNS FOR LONDON LYCEUM

EDMUNDO ROS BAND OPENING IN VARIETY

EDMUNDO ROS and his Latin-American orchestra are to undertake a lengthy tour of London variety theatres, commencing on March 6, when the show opens at Finsbury Park Empire. Edmundo is leading his fourteen-piece outfit, exactly as on broadcasts, and the production will also feature a team of dancers.

Big surprise of the show will be the starring of Chilean vocalists Inez Del Carrmen. This nineteen-year-old vocal bombshell has recently arrived in this country from Chile. Well known in her native land, she sang with Xavier Cugat in Chile during his South American tour.

Regarding his plans for this big stage production, Edmundo told the Melody Makers: "We shall play exactly the same kind of music as the public will associate with our broadcasts, and with my appearances last year at the BBC's Golden Slipper Club. We shall not attempt anything too 'technical' that is likely to be over the ordinary public's heads."

FURTHER DATES
Following the Finsbury Park debut, the show will play five more consecutive weeks—at Shepherd's Bush Empire, Chiswick Empire, Hackney Empire, Wood Green Empire, and Lewisham Hippodrome.

Waiting for final signature as we closed for press were further contracts to take the show on to Golders Green Hippodrome, Kingdon Empire and New Cross Empire.

It is emphasised that Edmundo Ros's variety tour will not interfere in any way with his resident engagement at the Mayfair Bagatelle Restaurant.

CAB KAYE BAND FOR RESIDENT DUTCH SEASON

CAB KAYE and his new band—the formation of which was front-paged in the Melody Makers 4/2/50—has now had to wait long for an important berth. The date is a sensational one in that it brings to Cab the honour of being the first British band to cross to the Continent for a resident job in many years.

Cab and his Orchestra open on March 1 at the Parkside Club in Rotterdam, where they follow in famous tenor-sax star Don Byas and his outfit.

Most of the top U.S. stars visiting Europe have played at the Parkside Club. British tenor-sax Kathleen Spohr went there during her Dutch tour, and Vic Lewis is scheduled for a visit next week. Cab Kaye's Dutch season will be one of several weeks. Meanwhile, he and his band will be seen at Newark (5/21) and at a Sunday concert (2/20) at the Corn Exchange, Chesham.

HOSTS OF THE HOLLYWOOD



Brilliant ABC Hammond organist and "Jazz Club" composer, Bobo Richmond (left), and piano-ace Eric Harwood (middle) are the hosts at the Regency Club, where they were staged at last Sunday's opening.

Full 15-piece for seven-day dancing

HARRY ROY and his Band have been booked for an entirely new type of engagement, namely to play in a dance hall. Harry has signed a contract to start on April 3 at the Mecca Lyceum Ballroom in the Strand, London.

This announcement brings to an end the spate of rumours which followed our Stop Press last week, wherein we announced that Harry would play for dancing "in a totally different environment from that with which he is usually associated."

He will lead the 15-piece band which he fronted at the Café Anglals, Leicester Square, where, on January 18, he completed an engagement that had lasted almost a year.

Bop banned at Wimbledon Palais

IMPRESARIO Archie Sherburn, proprietor of Wimbledon Palais de Danse, this week issued a directive that no band in his employ is to play bop, or anything remotely resembling bop. From now on, the musical régime at Wimbledon will be solely one of strict tempo music for the dancers.

Commenting on this drastic order, Mr. Sherburn, told the Melody Makers: "I am taking this step because it seems to me that bop music attracts only young irresponsible people whose main interest is in the energetic, undisciplined and sometimes positively dangerous 'live' dancing."

Do not imagine, however, that I am interested solely in the banning of this thing, even although I do regard it as a nuisance in the ballroom. My action is prompted more by the fact that the young live dancing enthusiast seems to attract camp followers of quite the wrong type who bring an undesirable element into the dance hall, which I am determined to stamp out.

It is, after all, the keen dancers who are the backbone of palais business. I intend to cater solely for them in future (Please turn to page 7)

NFJO AND HAMMERSMITH STAGING DIXIELAND COMMEMORATION BALL

TO commemorate the 30th anniversary of the visit of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band to Hammersmith Palais in 1920, the NFJO in conjunction with Mr. Claude Langdon, are promoting a super "Jazz Band Ball" to take place at the Palais on Monday, March 6.

The Ball is designed to be a feast of Dixieland, and the all-star array of Dixie-New Orleans talent, which has been contracted to appear includes Harry Gold and his Percos of Elmh, Humphrey Lyttelton and his Band, Freddie Randall and his Band, and the Mick Mulligan Magnolia Jazz Band.

In addition, negotiations are far advanced for the signing of several famous guest-stars, who will appear during a specialised cabaret presentation.

The Committee organising the affair for the NFJO comprises the Marquis of Donegall, Rex Harris, Mark White, Peter Ward (of Hammersmith Palais), Pat Brand ("MK" Editor) and Jack Marshall ("MK" Associate Editor), Bert Wilcox and Les Perrin.

PIONEERS

In view of the interest among jazz students which this function is expected to create, the nominal price of 3s. has been fixed for admission. Readers should write at once to Hammersmith Palais to reserve tickets, enclosing postal orders and SAE.

Harry Gold's birthday broadcast airing

Sunday week (26th) will be a great day at Cook's Ferry Inn. Not only does it mark the return of Harry Gold and his Percos of Elmh, but Harry and his boys will be broadcasting in Robin Scott's "At The Jazz Band Ball" from the "Inn" that night.

ANNABELLE JOINS DENNY



Vocal star Annabelle Lee, sister of Oscar Robin and Don Smith, has joined the Denny Dennis vocal stage act in place of June Ellis. This latest picture of the group shows it, to r.l., Tony Hagen (bass), Annabelle Lee, Denny, Fraser Holt (gtr.) and, at rear between Annabelle and Denny, pianist arranger Dave Mason.

Geller, Rockett co-operate for special 'production' session

THE newly formed and very modern Wally Rockett Sextet, whose broadcast debut on January 6 caused wide interest, will be heard again next Monday (February 20). The string is from 12.15-1 p.m. (Light) and will be shared with Harold Geller and his Orchestra.

Both bands being under the same management (Bill Elliott, of New Century Artists, Ltd.), the two bandleaders are co-operating to make their 45-minute session into a complete radio production.

Some of the numbers will be featured as joint items by the two bands, and special arrangements have been prepared.

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NEW BOOM IN JAZZ HITS NEW YORK

From LEONARD FEATHER

JAZZ activity seems to be reaching new heights around New York, though, as usual, the boom may be purely temporary. A new Dixieland-to-bebop show opened at Birdland this month starring Bobby Hackett's Quartet, which, incidentally, features a wonderful modern pianist named Dick Hyman; Wynonie "Mr. Blues" Harris; and the star who gave the club its name, Charlie Parker, with trombonist J. J. Johnson added to his group.

A new show also started at Pop City, with the bands of Dizay Gillespie and Flip Phillips, though most of the excitement and publicity seem to be centered on a young singer there, twenty-year-old Bill Farrow of MGM records, who is being hailed as a big new star.

Two new spots featuring musical entertainment are the re-opened Greenwich Village Inn, where Cab Calloway's small band headlined the first week's show; and Harlem's Alhambra Theatre, which has initiated a new stage show policy featuring for the first week Andy Kirk's Orchestra, Bob Howard, Bock and Sables, and Duddy Fletcher, with Willis Bryant as master of ceremonies.

Also in town is Ella Fitzgerald, who opened very successfully at Cafe Society, along with the Ray Brown Trio and J. C. Heard's little band.

The Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, once famous as a musical Mecca, is once again providing occasional evenings of excitement. As for instance earlier this month, when three bands were hired for a two-night stand: Erskine Hawkins, Illinois Jacquet and Cootie Williams.

A recent addition to the Jacquet band is the brilliant Ray Perry, a colleague of Jacquet's, who, in addition to playing fine alto sax, is believed to be the only authentic bop violinist.

The final word in the Great Controversy between the protagonists of progressive and orthodox dance music What we need is a policy of 'gradual education'

IN print, during the past two weeks, I have been accused of being a square, a reactionary, a disappointment and a turncoat!

Actually, I am none of these, and certainly I have not performed any volte-face. The fact is that my original article has been almost unanimously misconstrued and the important point overlooked.

Primarily, I am a musician and, as such, I know only two kinds of music—good and bad. I am prejudiced neither for nor against any particular idiom or style. For me there is good bop and bad—and the same goes for progressive, serious swing, jazz and even downright corn music.

I am also a professional musician and as such I am perhaps more critical than the amateur or the non-playing music lover, and perhaps more interested than him in the theoretical and technical advancement of modern music.

BUT as a professional musician I must also be a business man.

Music is my business and, to be successful, I must see to it that my business policy is both

stable and long-sighted. This means that if I take my orchestra into a dance hall for one night and the audience there is made up of 90 per cent. dancers and 10 per cent. progressive fans, I must arrange my programme proportionately to afford maximum satisfaction to the majority.

If, on the other hand, I am booked to appear before an audience composed mainly of progressive fans and bop lovers, I must, of course, cater mainly for them.

By operating thus, I am at all times keeping faith with my public, by giving them what they expect. In so doing, I am building the maximum of goodwill (which in the music business means popularity), and the more popular and firmly established I become, the more chance I have of playing a useful part in the progress of modern music.

Leaping ahead

It is all very well to be an uncompromising idealist, but attitude results in diminishing territory and narrowing influence. I am convinced that more good can be done over a longer period by adopting a policy of gradual education than by leaping ahead regardless of the general standard of appreciation by the majority.

If a band outstrips its majority support, it obviously loses its wider popularity and therefore lessens its usefulness as a real progressive influence. If it becomes sufficiently unpopular, it must disband—and that is both bad business and bad for the audience. It not only affects the band concerned, but also has an indirect adverse effect upon other bands and the "business" in general.

To keep our professional healthy, we need successful bands, not "fold-ups."

Regarding my reference to "this bop nonsense," I meant what I said because most of today's so-called "bop" is nonsense.

Good bop is rare

Good bop I like. But good bop is rare—and the bop industry, in general, is a dangerous thing for the young musician. In bop, more harmonic rules are more frequently broken than in the older forms of jazz, swing, etc. and this, so the newcomer, is confusing.

Without proper guidance, the youngster merely learns a lot of clichés and misapplies most of them. He is unaware of the existence of the many rules which should first be learnt and then knowingly broken.

I do not think myself "unfortunate" in meeting so many ill-equipped young musicians. It is just that I take more interest than most in the potential stars of tomorrow. Youthful exuberance and intention need guidance, if they are to develop into useful material, and we should make it our concern to provide the helping hand wherever possible.

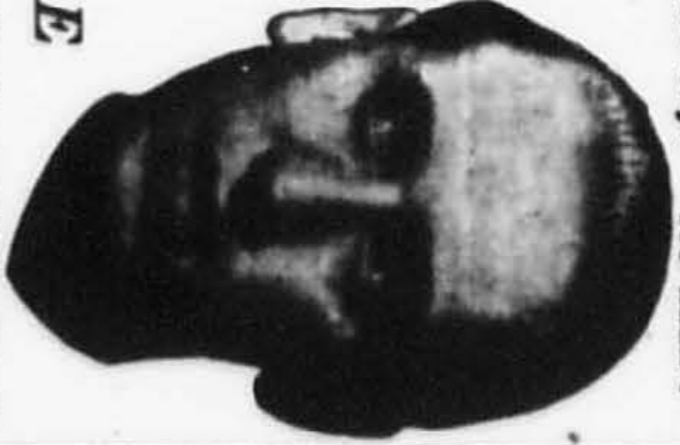
We certainly must not "leave them alone" until they are capable of playing with a name band." If we do, it will serve us right in a few years' time.

Finally—I still think that a first-class band plus a first-class stage presentation (which was what Hyllon had in "those days") would still be a show to bring peak business into any theatre.

GEORGE EVANS

'Bop!' he said

A 'fairly true story' by ERIC WINSTONE



The final word, did we say? We hadn't bargained for this!

HE stood in front of me, opening and closing his mouth like a goldfish. Shirt tails hung outside his trousers as if he had dressed forgetfully and in a hurry.

Although it was mid-winter and the ballroom lights were dim, he wore dark glasses with big rims as if he was a sun bather who had lost his way. A brown beret on the top of his head completed the picture. I gazed at him with interest.

He was obviously endeavouring to establish communication, but the band had reached the part they liked best in one of the jump numbers where the arranger, an unconscious humorist, had written "Play loud. Conversation was impossible within a radius of a hundred yards. Suddenly Joe Watson, the drummer, achieved the impossible by hitting everything on his kit at the same time, and the band promptly stopped to congratulate each other.

The sudden silence was unbearable. I turned round. Yes, he was still there.

"Pardon me," I said, "did you wish to tell me something?" The opening and closing movement began again.

"Bop," he said.

I hesitated. Perhaps, after all, he was a foreigner, and I remembered the difficulties I had had with the language out in Czechoslovakia.

"I beg your pardon?"

"He edged a little nearer and looked me straight in the eye. At least, I think he did, but with those dark glasses I couldn't be too sure of anything. He cleared his throat, I remembered that in Prague and a waiter had brought me a beer. Ah, yes, so he was a foreigner."

"I did some quick mental arithmetic to see how much such a course would save me.

"But what about the people trying to dance?"

**WE SAID IT WOULD BE A HIT!—
THE MUSIC DEALERS
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DOWN IN THE GREEN

The following list of TEN BEST SELLING records of price for week ending 9th Feb. 1950 has been compiled from lists supplied by the members of the "WHOLESALE MUSIC DISTRIBUTOR'S ASSOCIATION" in London and the Provinces.

1. DEAR HEARTS AND GENETHE PROBLE	1/- Morris.
2. JEALOUS HEART.	1/- New Rose 14.
3. LOVELY BUNCH OF COCONUTS	1/- Box & Cox.
4. HOP SCOTCH POIXA	1/- Leads
5. WALKING ON AIR	1/- Chesapeake
6. DOWN IN THE GREN	2/6 1. R. Wright 1. Chesapeake
7. I'M A BIRD	1/- Yalans
8. I'LL STRING ALONG WITH YOU	1/- Box & Cox
9. ROSE IN A GARDEN OF WEEDS	1/- Clonphonics
10. WHY IS IT?	

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'M' Radio Critic MAURICE BURMAN visits the Paris night-spots with pianist-bandleader JACK NATHAN and discovers that

The old-time stars are trying to forget it!

"OUI, Monsieur," said the concierge, "you will find Monsieur Kenny Clarke on the sixth floor..."

Going up in the lift we heard a piano tinkling in a strange apartment, a nice nostalgic tune with good harmony...

Pirates' den

Henry Kahn, "MIM" Paris correspondent, took us on an extensive tour of the jazz clubs. Our first call was at the club of St Germain des Pres, the interior of which looked like a pirates' den...

Britain's Top Tunes

- 1. THE BARBER SHAVE THREE (A1)
- 2. DEAN HEARNS AND GENTLE (A1)
- 3. RELOVE BEARER (A1) New World
- 4. HOP SCOTCH POLKA (B) Lads
- 5. YOU'RE BEAKING MY HEART (A1)
- 6. FIVE GOLF A LOVELY SERVICE (A1)
- 7. CONCERTO (B) Mm and Co.
- 8. A BOON IN A CLOSER (A1) Friends
- 9. DROWN IN THE GLEN (B) 441 (B)
- 10. WHY AM I AT (A1) Friends
- 11. CONVERSATIONALLY (B) New World
- 12. MILE TRAIL (A1) Champs
- 13. IT IS YOU LATER (B) This
- 14. OVER LOVE STORIES (B) Champs
- 15. FOREVER AND EVER (A1) Friends
- 16. WE ALL HAVE A SONG IN OUR HEARTS (B) Mm and Co.
- 17. HOW DO YOU FEEL (A1) Friends
- 18. IF I FEEL WHAT YOU FEEL (A1) Friends
- 19. ABBEY MILLER (A1) Friends
- 20. SUNDAY, SUNDAY, WEDNESDAY (A1) Friends
- 21. THE LAST MILE HOME (A1) Lads

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BE GOODY GOOD GOOD TO ME OH! TELL ME GYPSY BOLERO

HOW CAN YOU BUY KILARNEY!

HOP SCOTCH POLKA

I DIDN'T KNOW THE GUN WAS LOADED THE LAST MILE HOME

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Orleans bands one hears in Britain, it was let down badly by its rhythm section, which had no beat and no clear idea of what its function was. Later himself was doing his best to sound like Bechet and Doodds, at which the best man was Pierre Dieraux on cornet, who had a fine tone and good ideas.

Henry Kahn asked Claude if I might sit in on drums. After a whispered consultation they tried me out on the Blues. I am not a jazz drummer, but I carried on as long as I lasted.

Followed!

Visiting the Olympia, a palatial de-dance, we heard an excellent band, and a dance combination led by a pleasant Jimmy Dorey-John also played. I was surprised to find that the only band that he only had a full band other nights the boys took it in turns to be off.

Coming back to where we came in, I found him charming, modest and intelligent. Our first evening together was spent mainly in discussing drums, and he had so much of an interest to say about this that I intended to make it the subject of an article on the technical page.

is trying to adapt his style to the modern way of playing, being convinced that it is the jazz of today. And what is the name of that jazz? Boop! It is for a smaller reason, says Kenny, that he said James Moody played with the latter outfit; so that the latter boys can get the feel of the modern stuff—which they are very keen to do.

New sounds

The reason why I consider this sensational is because there are so many people with their heads buried deep in the sands of time who refuse to accept anything but the most archaic of jazz. Maybe they will try to listen to the new sounds when they know that their many idols are trying to copy them.

A Dixie beat upon the River Yarra

Once a year the river plays its part in Melbourne's Jazz Convention Week



Law Fisher's Jazz string made the Melbourne beats ring.

WINDING down through Melbourne Town is a busy river called the Yarra. Sydney folk, over-ground and preoccupied with the grandeur of their famous harbour, are apt to dismiss it contemptuously as a "muddy stream."

But though the Yarra is by no means polluted, it has a soft charm of its own, particularly in its lower reaches. Upon its curving bosom pleasure craft, ranging from smug little speed-boats to venerable paddle-wheelers, go ceaselessly about their business; and the dignified Pritch's Bridge which spans that arm of the river which reaches into the city proper, is a rendezvous for lovers and folk who come merely to dream over the quiet song of the Yarra.

Paddle wheels

This is the Yarra fifty-one weeks out of every year. But on the fifty-second, a noticeable change comes over it, for it is no longer a river, but a stage. The river is walled a distinct New Orleans song as paddle-wheelers slip gently down stream, their engines humming a Dixie beat in time with the bands they carry.

Song of Dixie

This was probably one of the largest conventions ever held in Australia. Bands came from N.E.W., Queensland, South Australia and Tasmania. Loose rangers from all states added to the throng, and then, of course, there were all the home-grown groups from Melbourne itself.

Deepening roots

But although we may argue over the most suitable locale for our annual Jazz Convention, there can be no argument as to the permanency of this institution. For jazz has taken a strong grip on this country. It has put down roots that will deepen with each succeeding year.

More on selecting a set

TV... by 'Scanner'

IN the "M.M." of February 4 I mentioned five inexpensive TV receivers which, from demonstrations given me by dealers, I considered to be among the best in their class.

Their respective makers have now advised me that two of these receivers are being sent to me for further test, so I shall be giving you a full report on them shortly. Meanwhile, here are some more tips to those I gave you, in the same article, on how to choose a TV receiver.

Comparisons

Main essentials are, of course, a clear, bright, steady picture, in which not only are the extreme high and low lights strongly contrasted (blacks should be black, and whites white, with neither tending towards greyness), but in which also all the intermediate shades are seen in their correct ratios.

But as you may as yet have had little, if any, experience of TV, you are no more likely to know to what extent this can be achieved, even in the sheet of the most expensive receivers, than you will have been able to acquire a standard from which to judge the soundness of conflicting virtues of the less expensive models designed to suit the pockets of the less affluent.

Atomised tubes

In the next week or two I shall be giving you some more tips which I hope will help you in this, together with pictures of the BBC TV tuning designs and some notes on how they should reproduce on a good TV receiver.

Meanwhile, I think it fair to say that it might be well for you to keep in mind certain advantages possessed by the new atomised tubes.

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Recorded on Capitol CL12015

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Recorded on Capitol CL12087

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Jim Bradley

VALENTINE'S

(lucky) DAY!



Heath singer Dickie Valentine had a big post on February 14...

Evans needs baritone

George Evans is seeking a baritone player to replace Roy Bull...

Tristano beats Shearing to first place in 1949 'Met' Poll

A SURPRISE highlight of the 1949 U.S. "Metronome" All-Star Poll is that Britain's George Shearing...

In view of the fact that, in "Down Beat's" "Instrumental Combo" section...

Musicians and vocalists who have scored an impressive "double-top" victory...

Owing to the condition outlined above, "Metronome" winners Charlie Parker...

Music Trades dance

Today week (24th) stars will be lining up at the Seymour Hall in London—some to dance...

Four more Contests fixed

Four more fixtures have now been lined up in the 1950 programme of MELODY MAKER Dance Band Contests...

LONDON WIMBLEDON.—Thursday, March 2 (7.30 p.m. to midnight)...

Ellis Jackson leaving Cotton . . . after 19 years

ABANDONING his playing career to run a dancing-school, coloured trombonist and tap-dancer Ellis Jackson leaves Billy Cotton's band on Saturday (18th) at the Brixton Empress.

Ellis, who is a native of New Jersey, and is fifty-nine years of age, joined Billy Cotton nineteen years ago at the London Alhambra...

His dancing-school is located at 89, Sudbourne Road, Brixton Hill, S.W.2 (Brixton 7015).

Ellis's place on trombone with Billy Cotton will be taken by Rube Stolf, who spent twelve years with Bill...

Now completely recovered, Rube rejoins the band at the Embassy, Peterborough, on Monday next (20th).

DEAN'S DECCA SOLOS

Vocalist Alan Dean, accompanied by clarinet-leader Nat Temple's Enchanted Rhythm Orchestra and the Temple Belles...

Geraldo, Silvester to play for Ballroom Queen

VICTOR SILVESTER and his Augmented Orchestra, alternating with Geraldo and his band, will, as in previous years...

The Area Finals in this contest in which the qualities for success are beauty, dancing, grace and charm...

At Hammersmith Palais on February 15, Lou Preager's band provided the music, and on the following night—at the Pump Room, Bath...

Conde-Tyree open 'BBC Ballroom'

The Conde Tyree Latin American Music will be opening the new radio series, "BBC Ballroom," on March 4 (10.15-11.30 p.m.)...

The outfit is currently at both Fischers Restaurant and the Milroy Club.

'Organ'-ised airings

Now approaching their fourth year of residence at Oddenino's, Roy Wallis and his Quartet have contracted for a new series of MWYW broadcasts...

Slim and Don form Radio Music

Long-established pianist Ernest ("Slim") Wilson and publishing notability Don Agness are the king-pins behind the new music publishing concern, Radio Music...

In his years with Victor Silvester, Slim Wilson, jointly with Victor himself, has written nearly 150 numbers...

BOP BAN

Catering for the other sort does not pay. I should know. I have been featuring both Vic Lewis and Tito Burns—the most progressive leaders in the country...

NEWS IN BRIEF

Resuming her Atlantic run after her annual overhaul, the liner "Queen Elizabeth" left Southampton on Wednesday (15th) for New York...

Caton returns to Caribbean Club

Plectrist Lauderie Caton last Sunday (12th) took the chair formerly occupied by guitarist "Curly" Clayton with the Errol Barrow Trio...

Lauderie, who thus returns to a familiar haunt, will be filling-in at the Caribbean until he launches out on a new venture.

The personnel of the Errol Barrow Trio now comprises Errol (pno.) leading Neville Boucarut (bass) and Lauderie (gtr.).

Ternenteer wanted

For his new vocal group, the Ternenteers, which he has been featuring on his last few broadcasts, Billy Ternent requires a vocalist with a fairly high register...

BARONIAL 5



A new picture of Frank Baron, pianist-leader who opened with his Quintet at Kempster's, London, W.1, on Wednesday last (15th).

Humph-Bechet discs for U.S.

The six sides which the Humphreys Lyttelton Band recorded with Sidney Bechet for Melodisc last November are shortly to appear in the USA...

that they have now acquired rights to the progressive New Jazz company's masters. While they will continue to draw from the American Disc catalogue...

When Savoy's Herman Lubinsky heard these records he was greatly impressed by the quality of the music, and was so interested in the recordings...

The first titles lined-up for release are the much-discussed Lennie Tristano sides, "Sub-conscious-Lee" and "Judy," and "Fishin' Around" and "Marshmallow," supervised by Tristano, but recorded under Lee Konitz's name.

Harry Robbins joins Ed Morris as . . .

Wishing to remain in London for domestic reasons, famous xylophonist Harry Robbins has given up touring to enter the music-publishing business...

Joe Rancoroni starts own company

On Monday next (20th) Joe Rancoroni is opening his own music-publishing firm, which will be known as John Fields Music Co. Ltd., with offices at 20, Denmark Street, W.C.2.

Pauline Gray ill

The MELODY MAKER regrets to report that drummer-leader Pauline Gray was taken suddenly ill last Tuesday (14th), and at the time of writing is awaiting an operation at the Prince of Wales' Hospital (private wing), Tottenham.

Pauline has been leading at the New Panama Club. Last weekend she also opened "Shergrays," a new club functioning on Saturday and Sunday afternoons at 17, Irving Street, Leicester Square.

Presenting BRITAIN'S GREATEST BAND ATTRACTIONS KINNLOSS ENTERTAINMENTS LTD. Morley House, Regent Street, London, W.1

Olde Tyme Dances SYDNEY THOMPSON'S BARN DANCE MEDLEY Containing: HONEYSUCKLE AND THE BEE DADDY WOULDN'T BUY ME A BOW-WOW LITTLE DOLLY DAYDREAM LILY OF LACUNA JUST LIKE THE IVY GOOD BYE-EE!

MALCOLM MITCHELL, THREE

Technical Page

COMMENT ON TRIO PROBLEMS

VISITED in their dressing-room at the Adelphi Theatre, Strand, W., where they are featured with great success during intermission, the Malcolm Mitchell Trio needed very little prompting to talk about trio playing and the function of the individual musicians in such a group.

The views of guitarist Malcolm, bassist Teddy Broughton, and pianist/arranger Johnny Pearson are reproduced here for the benefit of all semi-pros, who run or contemplate forming a trio on the same lines.



TEDDY BROUGHTON
ON

The bassist's responsibility

THERE are certainly special problems for the trio bassist. Three months after joining Malcolm, I was still trying to get used to the idea that I was on my own with no drummer to end moral and physical support. It had been playing with Ronnie Verrell for the nine months previous to joining and I missed him.

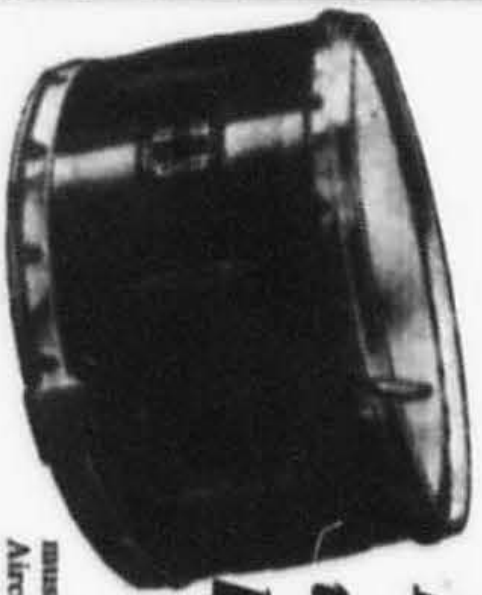
The first thing I did was to junk my amplification. However good the amplifier, I think that it just cannot reproduce the hits and "bite" of the acoustic bass. Many people told me that I would miss it when playing in big halls but the answer to this is that a trio doesn't normally play in such places. If it does, the house amplification must be relied upon to make the trio heard as a whole.

INTONATION

I found that I had to get "on top of the beat" more, at the same time keeping perfectly relaxed and giving each beat its full value. The responsibility of being a sort of one-man rhythm section weighs pretty heavily most of the time. I was hearing clearly each note I played for the first time in my life out on the job, and I was very conscious of this fact that everyone else could hear me, too. Accurate intonation was absolutely essential in these circumstances and I had to pay great heed to playing. Also a big round tone had to be produced in order to achieve a good blend with the guitar. In my opinion, there is nothing to equal the melodic rhythm produced by a bass and electric guitar and the importance of blend cannot be over-emphasised.

If the trio bassist is called upon to use while playing, I advocate the use of the G string. This brings many tricky passages under the thumb positions allowing him to give the fullest possible attention to the microphone and audience.

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Clean playing scores

observes arranger
JOHNNY PEARSON

ABOUT the biggest difficulty I have encountered since playing with the trio is that of finding suitable rhythmic fill-ins while the guitar is playing single string melody.

Another snag is that too many arrangements written into the programme for the piano and bass tends not to make the outfit sound interesting, as might be imagined, but to create stodgy items.

Whether playing for a listening or for a dancing audience, a clean and effective style should be striven for. It has already been pointed out that "busy" stuff just isn't effective.

When playing thirds with the guitar, the rhythmic responsibility should not be left entirely to the bass. Intelligent left-hand work from the piano can be helpful.

Introductory passages can be written for the bass, but it doesn't pay to be too daring.

The best is all-important, a lot of time should be spent on getting piano and guitar playing right. The tone of the amplified guitar is rich and smooth, while that of the piano



is hard. And consequently the guitarist should experiment to find the best phrasing for any given passage. The pianist modifying his own playing to suit this. Both instruments have a very fast attack and it is therefore very easy for them to sound "perky". Good articulation on the part of the pianist is essential if this is to be avoided. Notes must be given their full value and the phrasing kept as smooth as possible.

Rehearsal instils confidence

SAYS

MALCOLM MITCHELL

I THINK the prime requirement for the amplified guitarist in a trio is a good tone. A good tone is obviously necessary to any guitarist, but it is absolutely essential to the guitarist who works in a small group. In a trio, this is the only instrument capable of sustaining really long notes and chords. The lone does depend to a great extent on the quality of the instrument, but however good it is, the tone still has to be produced by firm, clean fingering, and accurate spectrum work.

Many guitarists, carried away by the novelty of a newly acquired amplifier and a freshly hearing themselves for the first time, are inclined to play full out, forgetting that they should be playing as members of a musical unit. Never drop the other instruments in the trio. If the piano is taking a solo, then let it be a solo. Just try to play an unobtrusive but noticeable rhythmic backing.

RELAXATION

When unison, harmony, or solo passages are encountered, they should be rehearsed until you know them so well that you could play them standing on your head only your eyes shut! That is the only way in which to achieve real relaxation in your playing. It comes from confidence in your own ability to play everything required of you without fumbling or faking.

Wide fat, deep chords from the guitar can, at times, make the trio sound like a bigger outfit. But a lot of attention should be paid to the blend. The tone and volume of the guitar should be matched as closely possible with that of the piano.

Pay a lot of attention to the amplifier. There should be no distortion even when you play the loudest and heaviest chords. You will find that it needs adjusting to suit the hall or room in which you are playing. I've often seen guitarists set up their equipment, turning the tone and volume controls to what they consider is the ideal level. A moment's reflection will show how fallacious this is.

It is necessary to have more "top" on the amplifier when playing in large halls or the guitar is apt to get lost when taking the melody in a small place. The upper frequencies need cutting down, for otherwise the tone of the guitar will sound harsh.

You have probably noticed that as a hall fills up with people, the volume from a band is reduced. This is because clothing or soft furnishings of any kind has the quality of absorbing sound. It might be necessary, therefore, to turn up the volume on your guitar amplifier after the hall or room has become full. But the tone control should be adjusted in conjunction with the volume to give the guitar extra "bite" and "cutting" power.

Strings are a matter for personal choice. I prefer a saucer heavy enough to stand up to hard playing yet thin enough to produce sustained notes.

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