

Melody Maker

INCORPORATING

"RHYTHM"

NEW NIGHTINGALE NITERIE FIXES 17-PIECE BAND



An exclusive "M.M." picture of Felix King (right) signing the contract for the "Nightingale" under the watchful eye of agent Frank Morgan.

CONJECTURE HAS BEEN RIFE IN WEST END DANCE-BAND CIRCLES FOR SIX MONTHS AND MORE AS TO WHEN THE MUCH-DISCUSS'D "NIGHTINGALE" NITERIE IN BERKELEY SQUARE WOULD BE OPENING, AND WHO WOULD BE THE LUCKY LAD TO FRONT THE BAND AT THIS SENSATIONAL AND LANTISLA DECORATED NEW DANCING SPOT.

This week the Melody Maker is able exclusively to announce that West End plans are Felix King is the fortunate batoneer, and that he will lead an outfit no less than seventeen strong for the opening of the Nightingale on January 15. The band, a hand-picked combination of selected London musicians, will be sufficiently versatile to supply all the "Nightingale's" dance music and also to provide a small "after" band as well as a specialised rumba outfit, from within its ranks.

Vocalist with Felix King's "Nightingale" Band will be famous pre-war figure of the profession, popular, Scottish-born ex-Commando, Hughie Diamond.

How fortunate Felix King is to click for this coveted Mayfair prize will be even further realised with the news which we are able to give authoritatively that some of the most celebrated dance bands in town, including both Ted Heath's Band, the Blue Rockets, and many others, were approached to feature there.

For the benefit of our younger readers, it will be interesting to recall that pianist-composer Felix King, prior to his six war-time years in RAF base, played with many of London's leading bands, and at several

of our top line resorts before the war. Felix was particularly well known just before the war in the South of France, where, in collaboration with Edward Scammerfeld, he played extensively both at the Palais de la Mediterranee at Nice, and the famous Sporting Club in Monte Carlo. Coming back to civvy street a comparatively short time ago, he has taken out several bands to big one-night dates for West End agent Frank Morgan, and it was his success on these jobs that decided Frankie to get him to form a band specially for the "Nightingale."

"PLUM" JOB

Frank Morgan, it should be explained, is the old-time drummer who worked years ago at the Café de Paris and other top-line London resorts, and who was bandleader at the famous "43" Club for so many years. During the war he was for some time leader at the Knightbridge Studio Club.

Now a successful agent, Frank has fixed bands for many London hotels and clubs, and has a very close association with the Florida Club, among many others. He landed his biggest "plum" to date when he secured the contract to fix the band at the "Nightingale."

Discussing the style of his new band, Felix King said to the Melody Maker: "I have favoured for a long

(Please turn to page 2)

PARRY FIXES WEEKLY AIR "JAZZ CLUB" SERIES

BIG news breaks this week for the legion of jazz fans who have been bitterly complaining of recent months that there is no regular programme of their kind of music on the air these days.

Ever since Radio Rhythm Club was taken off the Light Programme and switched to the Overseas wavelength, with the Spike Hughes' weekly record feature also taken off, fans have had no programme of their own for far too long.

Now the Melody Maker is exclusively able to report that a new weekly programme for the fans is coming on the air for a Saturday night series, commencing on March 1.

Under the intriguing title "Jazz Club," it is to be a half-hour audience show, featuring famous British instrumentalists in the flesh, under the presiding genius of clarinet maestro Harry Parry, who, of course, will also be heard playing.

Harry will also compose the programme, and will be responsible for selecting the stars who will be heard, in conjunction with BBC producer Pat Dixon.

It will be remembered that Harry Parry was the shining light of the early days of Radio Rhythm Club, and has had plenty of experience in giving the fans what they want. Bearing in mind the success he made with the RHC, and the great popularity he enjoys from his stage tours round the country and his broadcasts from his resident berth at the Potomac Restaurant, Jermya Street, W., he is an ideal personality for presenting the best in British swing to the public.

This programme is definitely a step in the right direction, and, as it comes on at the excellent time of 6.30 p.m. on Saturdays, it will undoubtedly be assured of a very big and enthusiastic listening public.

Details will be given later in the "M.M." of how readers can apply for tickets to be present at these exciting broadcasts.

JOE DANIELS OFF TO ITALY

AS his tour of Germany proved such a great success, it was only to be expected that Joe Daniels would be quickly fixed for a visit to the Mediterranean area by Combined Services Entertainments. Accordingly, he leaves on January 27 for a nine-week stay in Italy and Austria, going to Milan, Rome, Venice, Vienna, Trieste, Sorrento, etc., taking his full stage-show to the troops out there.

With Joe will be Eric Langdon and Monty Montgomery (trumpets); George Ritchie (trombone); Frank Kent (alto, clarinet); Ray Sheeran (saxophone); Eve Cliff (bass, vocalist); Ray Nicholson and Mary Nolan (singers, vocalists); Dave Kenney (manager); and a pianist.

With the sales of his Parlophone records keeping right up, Joe has had his contract extended into the eleventh year.

READ FOR MALAYA

SAILING from Liverpool on Saturday last (4th), brilliant pianist-arranger Bert Read set off for Singapore, to take up a three years' executive job with the Malayan Broadcasting Corporation.

Member of many famous bands in his lengthy and eminent career, notably with Henry Hall and Ambrose, Bert had been on the expedition staff of the Peter Maurice Music Co. since his demobilisation after six years in the Army.

MRS. NEILSON GIVES EVIDENCE IN BBC INQUIRY

IN the strictest privacy, Sir Valentine Holmes, K.C., on Monday last opened the inquiry into allegations of bribery amongst BBC officials.

The Melody Maker understands that prior to this a considerable amount of documentary evidence had already been collected, and although even the highest circles in the BBC do not know the exact lines which the inquiry will follow, it is learned that BBC producers, bandleaders, vocalists, music-publishers and other notabilities of the entertainment world will be called upon to give evidence.

Already interviewed for over two hours on Monday by Sir Valentine was Mrs. Tawny Neilson, head of the BBC Dance Music Department.

The inquiry is expected to last several weeks, and the findings will be made known to the governors of the BBC, who will decide what further action, if any, will be taken.

D.B.D.A. GETS GOING

THE new Bandleaders' Association has made grand progress in a few weeks, and it looks at last as if a really powerful body to look after the interests of dance band leaders—and through them their musicians—has come to stay.

The official title of the new body will be the Dance Band Directors' Association (Section of the Musicians' Union), and this week circulars have been sent out to all the principal bandleaders convening a big general meeting on January 21.

Mr. Hardie Ratcliffe, assistant general secretary of the M.U., and interim secretary of the D.B.D.A., told the Melody Maker this week:

"As it is possible that some bandleaders may have been overlooked in sending out these invitations, would those who do not receive the circular this week kindly contact me at 7, Sicilian Avenue, London, W.C.1 (Phone: Holborn 1238), from where the business of the D.B.D.A. is at present being conducted?"

"We have had many enquiries from provincial bandleaders anxious to join the Association, but, for the moment, we are delaying acceptance of these. We want to put the London branch on a thoroughly firm and organised basis first, and then we propose to extend our activities all over the country."

ON Tuesday of this week (7th), Ted Heath and his boys inaugurated a series of Tuesday night sessions at Cricklewood Palais, London, N.W.

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IVY LEAVING FOR AUSTRIA AND ITALY TOUR

NEXT Sunday (12th) globe-trotting Ivy Benson and her Girls' Band hit the trail again—this time for a nine-weeks' tour of Italy and Austria, under the auspices of Combined Services' Entertainments.

What with their tours of Germany, the Continent, Sweden and Denmark, Ivy and her girls are certainly the most travelled ladies in our business, and they will depart for their new territory happy in the knowledge that they slayed the clients at the Empress Ballroom, Winter Gardens, Blackpool, over the two weeks' holiday season.

On the strength of their terrific success at Blackpool, they have been booked for the month of August again at the Empress Ballroom—a "plum" booking which last year fell to none other than Ted Heath.

Ivy returns from her tour at the beginning of April, and immediately returns to the variety stage, commencing with a week at Hackney Empire on April 7, under the Jack Hyllon aegis.

Full personnel of the band nowadays is Ivy herself on clarinet, alto and piano, Sonia Barton, Gracie Coles, Norma Birch (trumpets); Betty Thomas, Elsie Rogers, Laura Lynne, Joan Nelson (trombones); Eunice Cox, Lena Kidd, Irene Cain, Irene Boynton, Betty Caddy (saxes); Doris Ball (piano); Margaret Chappell (bass); Paula Pyke (drums); Joan Waller (guitar); Anne Cole (solo violin); and Joyce Clarke and Doris Knight (vocalists).

A CRUSHING after-Christmas blow befell popular ex-Joe Loss crooner Harry Kaye on the night of December 30, when a thief broke into his flat in Connaught Close, Connaught Street, W.1, and stole three suits, several shirts, an overcoat and a radio.

HEATH SIGNS PREAGER TROMBONE

A BIG break for one of the country's most enthusiastic young trombonists has come to Jackie Armstrong, currently with Lou Preager's band at Hammer-smith Palais, who becomes a permanent member of Ted Heath's Orchestra starting with Ted's concert at the London Palladium next Sunday week (January 19).

This will bring the Heath brass team up to full strength again, and will release the ever-reliable Joe Cordell (who has been filling in for Ted since Ladd Busby left) to carry on with his heavy programme of sessions, etc.

Discussing his new capture, Ted Heath said to the "M.M.": "I think Jackie Armstrong is one of the most promising young trombonists in the whole of England, and I am delighted that Lou Preager has been sporting enough to release him to come over to me."

Incidentally, scenes outside Leeds Town Hall last Friday (3rd), when police were called to bar the public from enter-

ing to dance to Ted Heath and his Music, have left Yorkshire fans indignant and baffled, since many of those refused admission were holders of tickets or pass-out slips.

In statements to the "Melody Maker," both Ted Heath and promoter Gerald Cohen expressed regret at an action for which, they wish to assure fans, they were not responsible.

Gerald Cohen told the "Melody Maker": "I have been running dances at Leeds Town Hall since 1928, and have never before known of any restriction upon attendances."

"On this occasion, I had warned the Town Hall authorities that this would be a big night, but had not been told of any likely curtailment of numbers."

"At 8.30 p.m., however, with fewer people inside the hall than on many previous occasions, orders were given by the Town Hall authorities that the doors be closed, and the police were sent for to control those still waiting outside."

"I would like to stress the point that this dance had by no means been over-sold."

WOOLF PHILLIPS' BAND: DISAPPOINTING DEBUT

THE first concert appearance of the ambitious Woolf Phillips Orchestra at the Hackney Empire on Sunday last emphasised the necessity for a new band to be thoroughly rehearsed and prepared before it is launched (writes Chris Hayes).

Frankly, the whole show was rather disappointing, for although Woolf no doubt meant to be sincere about presenting a star-studded personnel and a new sound, he failed the fans by offering a very good but quite ordinary dance orchestra, which could have been better, and which lacked four of the stars promised—pianist Dick Katz, bassist Coleridge Goode, trumpet Danny Deans, and drummer Joe Watson.

The saxes were nicely blended and the brass had a good, solid kick; but I didn't care for the rhythm section, the drummer, for instance, being more lusty than rhythmic. I went along expecting to hear something fresh and vivid, with special orchestration to feature the unique instrumentation. But only once were the woodwinds used, being condemned for the rest of the time to sit nursing their instruments and looking most uncomfortable.

Woolf's explanation for this is that he did not have time to include them as he had intended, as they were added at a late hour. Well, I contend that it isn't good enough, for if you promise a speciality you should have it ready in time. Furthermore, somehow or other the production went awry and the concert appeared to be flung on haphazardly.

Promoter Harry Leader says he planned everything to run smoothly and Woolf altered it round, but Woolf argues that he simply insisted on his orchestra and artists doing the second half of the programme. Whoever was to blame should realise that the public pay their money to see and hear a faultless show.

Woolf was smiling and suave but terribly timid, and although he is unquestionably a brilliant instrumentalist, I recommend that he puts down his trombone and concentrates on conducting, as somehow his subdued playing never sounded convincing out there in front.

Rest of the bill included Terry Devon, Barbara Lea, Ivor Mairants, Ronnie Selby, David Miller, Vic Lewis, Donald Purchase, Len Reed, Dick James, Michael Linden and the Harry Leader "Down Beaters."

Musically, the best thing in the show for me was a jam session by a section of the Woolf Phillips Orchestra, which really got the audience stamping their feet.

But on the whole, although well varied, the concert definitely left a lot to be desired, and I hope that both Harry Leader and Woolf Phillips will do better next time, as they are both highly respected artists, with plenty of experience and ability.

Currie Joins Dash

PRE-WAR fans of the Harry Roy Band will need no memory-jogging to recall the name of Bill Currie, vocalist, funny man and stage timpanist with the band.



Bill Currie

Bill was a stalwart of the Roy organisation for eleven years, and left to enlist in the RASC. He served throughout the war in Africa, Italy and elsewhere, and attained the rank of captain.

Now in Civvy Street again, he has launched out into a new branch of the profession, and this Monday (6th) joined the Irwin Dash Music Co. on the exploitation side.

Since Bill's demob he has been writing film-scripts and special material, and undoubtedly entering Irwin has made a good capture to add to his live-wire team of Sid Green and Rhoda Michaels.

"NIGHTINGALE"

(Continued from page 1)

time the music of Carmen Cavallaro, who uses two pianos as the big feature in his band, with the orchestra used largely as an accompaniment to the pianists, and I shall endeavour to build my new band for the "Nightingale" very much on these lines, leading from piano myself with Freddy Hunt as my second pianist. To put this plan into operation, the management of the new club has provided two magnificent pianos at a cost of over £1,000.

Full band to be built round the two pianists will be six brass, five saxes, plus guitar, bass and drums. Personnel details will be given in our next issue.

CARROLL'S DRUMMER

WHEN Eddie Carroll opened up very successfully at Quaglino's Restaurant last Sunday (5th), the one member of his band whose name has not yet been announced in the "M.M." was his old pre-war drummer and cory, famous stylist of the skins Sid Heiger.

With Eddie before the war at the Chez Henri Club and elsewhere, Sid Heiger added to a brilliant peacetime reputation by his work with the Arthur Mouncey RAP Quintette during the war, and since demobilisation has been a busy "sessioneer" and made many appearances, up to a few weeks ago, with Harry Gold and his "Pieces of Eight."

VOCAL STARS FOR CYRIL STAPLETON

DOING his best to live up to Pat Brand's prediction—"one of the six best bands over here"—in last week's "Essence"—Cyril Stapleton comes into the news again this week with two more important additions to his orchestra, this time both in the vocal department.

In order to fulfil the need for a resident vocalist with the band at Fischer's Restaurant Cyril has signed up Dinah Kaye, who commenced singing with the band last week and will be featured on all broadcasts.

Dinah, who needs no introduction to our readers, finished fifth in the vocalists' section of our poll last year, and since completing a nine months' broadcasting series with Harry Parry has been free-lancing in cabaret and television.

Cyril's second capture is none other than Dick James, the well-known vocalist from the Geraldo Orchestra, and although Dick will not be at Fischer's regularly he will be heard on all of the Stapleton airings.

Completing a strong vocal team is Tom Henry, who has been a feature of the previous Stapleton broadcasts, and Tom, together with Dinah and Dick, were all heard on the air last Tuesday (7th) in the first of Cyril's fifty-minute programmes.

Phillips Kicks Off At Coconut Grove

BEFORE a distinguished gathering of guests familiar in show business, Syd Phillips and his Band got away to a flying start in their new berth at the Coconut Grove niterie, London, W., on Monday last (6th).

With a wealth of club experience behind them—Le Sui, Astor Club, etc.—Syd's boys were completely at home from the word "Go!" and their quiet, lifty, two-beat rhythms seemed to be "just what the doctor ordered," with Jill Allen's sophisticated vocals scoring heavily.

Also leaving little to be desired in its efforts was the Novelty Trio, comprising Jules Ruben (piano) and the brothers Joe and Frank Deniz on guitars. This little group would, however, be so much better with the addition of a bass, which was noticeably lacking.

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"ESQUIRE'S" STAR GROUP

Edgar Jackson's Record Review

LEONARD FEATHER'S "ESQUIRE" ALL-AMERICANS
 ****Long, Long Journey (Leonard Feather) (V by Louis Armstrong) (Am. Victor PD6-VC-6020).
 ****Snafu (Leonard Feather) (Am. Victor PD6-VC-6021).
 (E.S. in. H.M.V. C1348—6s. 7id.)
 SNFU.—Feather directing guest stars Louis Armstrong (solo tpt., voc.) and Duke Ellington (pno.), with Jimmy Hamilton (cl.), Johnny Hodges (alto), Don Byas (ten.), Charlie Shavers (cpt.), Billy Strayhorn (pno.), Remo Palmieri (str.), "Chubby" Jackson (bass), Sonny Greer (dms.). Recorded January 10, 1946.
 SNFU.—Feather directing guest star Louis Armstrong (solo tpt.), with Hamilton (cl.), Hodges (alto), Byas (ten.), Neal Hefti (cpt.), Strayhorn (pno.), Palmieri (str.), Jackson (bass), Greer (dms.). Recorded January 11, 1946.

PICK OF THE WEEK
 (for Everybody)
TED HEATH AND HIS MUSIC
 —"Getting Nowhere" and "You Keep Coming Back Like a Song" (Decca F8697)
SPIKE JONES AND HIS CITY SLICKERS—"That Old Black Magic" and "Jones Poika" (H.M.V. BD1147)



Visiting the Kursaal, Southend, the "Melody Maker" photographer took this snap from the balcony, showing Howard Baker with the ten-piece band which he features there—twice weekly just now, but every day in the summer season.

CONTRARY to what happens—or rather, doesn't happen—over here, many of the biggest "popular" magazines of America not only cover swing, but also take steps to see that they get capable authorities to deal with the subject for them.

"Esquire," for instance, has, among others, Leonard Feather, part of whose duty it is to take part in the making of the publication's annual best bands and soloists poll.

All of which is to explain to any who may not already have tumbled to the fact that this combination entitled "Leonard Feather's 'Esquire' All-Americans" is a group of some of the winners of "Esquire's" 1945 poll.

This is, of course, by no means the first time records have been made by a band consisting of some of the winners of some poll or another. There were, for instance, "Bugle Call Rag" and "One O'Clock Jump" (H.M.V. B9195), "King Porter Stomp" (Parlophone R2746), "Royal Flush" (Parlophone R2967) by the Metronome All-Star Band; "All Star Stomp" (Parlophone R2746), by the Metronome All-Star Nine; and "I Got Rhythm" (Parlophone R2967), by the Metronome All-Star Leaders, all of which were groups made up of winners of various "Metronome" polls.

Some of these records showed that, notwithstanding the individual players as such may have been, their combined efforts were not so brilliant.

The reason was, of course, that, no matter how good its musicians may

be individually, the strength of a band lies to a great extent in its ensemble, and it can take weeks or even months to produce an anything like perfect ensemble. It is so much a matter of sympathy and understanding between the players, and they may have to work together for quite a time before that can be achieved, at any rate in the case of large modern-style swing bands.

So it seems that Leonard Feather acted wisely when he decided not only to give this combination comparatively simple arrangements of simple tunes, but also to rely less on ensemble work and more on solos.

"Snafu," a catchy, easy jump-tempered little melody, is in every way simple. After a formal introduction by the rhythm section in which Remo Palmieri's guitar is the main feature we get a chorus by the ensemble. This gets home mainly because it calls for no more than a straightforward unassertive statement of the theme.

Then follow choruses by (a) Louis's trumpet, (b) Hodges' alto and (c) the piano of Billy Strayhorn (Duke Ellington's arranger), after which the side closes with sixteen bars ensemble on the same lines as the opening chorus.

Louis hasn't quite the exuberance he had in his younger days, but the tone, style and even to some extent

the old inventiveness are there, and all round he puts up a fine show. Billy Strayhorn plays a great deal more piano than most others who are better known as arrangers and is well supported by "Chubby" Jackson and Sonny Greer, who also do their fair share towards making Hodges' impeccably tasteful alto bounce along nicely.

"Long, Long Journey" is a slowish-tempered blues.

It opens with a complimentary announcement by Duke Ellington, who says how pleased he is to have the opportunity of sitting-in with

"this wonderful all-star band," and then, after the usual introduction, goes into a sequence of choruses. Louis takes the first on trumpet, Don Byas on tenor the second, Louis sings the third, fourth, sixth and seventh, between which is Duke Ellington's solo (fifth chorus), and the record ends with Louis singing the passage used for the introduction over the whole ensemble, the first time it is featured in the side apart from the introduction.

As in "Snafu," the accent is all the while on economy. The last thing one finds is any attempt to force home what wonderful technicians these "Esquire" roll winners are. Nobody is called upon or makes any endeavour to be "brilliant," but all the same proves that he is.

For this record, like "Snafu," has what brilliance is made of—taste, understanding and feeling. And not only in the solos. What goes on behind them is often as fascinating as the solos themselves. And that goes for "Chubby" Jackson's bass in the rhythm as well as for the instruments, including Palmieri's guitar, which take "front-line" parts.

Also, if "Long, Long Journey" as a composition hasn't quite the "primitive" depth of feeling that one found in the early original Negro blues, at least it is blues with, in both its words and music, a good deal more of the true character of the music than one finds in many contemporary blues songs.

RECORD PRICES
 Decca announce the following increase in prices of their records, operative as from January 1st—
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TACTLESS TOPICS

WOT! NO LIGHTNING?

by Claude Bampton

WHEN I was very young, and years before the Brass Age, in fact, long, long before the Stone Age, we used at one time to play a number called "After the Storm."

This, of course, was literally before some of you were born, and it was then prehistorically fashionable to use single-headed bass-drums, these being rather like a proper bass-drum seen in half, with one half functioning in one band, and the other some place else.

Now it so happened that for no reason at all the band possessed two such halves, and in the ordinary way, one half would suffice for the small parish-hall stuff, whilst a minor operation with some pieces of cord would join the two halves together for big-time dates at the drill hall.

This, as I say, was in the ordinary way, but the publication of "After the Storm" altered the situation, and a council of war found the big-time half detached from its moorings and tipped up horizontally, timpani-wise, in which position it would take a considerable amount of punishment in providing the thunder effects necessary to the number.

A friendly hand on the light-switches would produce the lightning, siren whistles and crescendo cymbal rolls would add to the fury, a pleasant time would be had by all, and if you expected more than that from a band of four you could take your ignorance and your eighteen pence round to that terrible Percy Pimple's Purple Passion Panatropics at the Assembly Rooms.

Those were the days. But, alas, they are no more. The russet browns of autumn tinted the song with its demob tapers from the evergreen class, and the song, it seems, is ended. But the thunder lingers on. And we don't even get any lightning.

The beauty of the storm chorus was really in that it was extremely nice when it stopped.

These days, it would be even nicer if some of our young drummers would refrain from even starting.

Drum choruses can be terrific, sometimes, and Jack Parnell's solo of last year's Jamboree can join with Arthur Mounce's trumpet playing of the Blues a couple of years before and the annual Chisholm-Breeze uni-

son choruses as being among the very few things that will always be a more than great pleasure never to forget.

But if some of our brutal bacteriologists think they sound anything like that they are suffering from a delusion which leads me to the painful conclusion that the gentleman who chooses to earn his daily bread at the safe distance of the car-park has a considerable amount of musical discrimination.

After a pleasant gig with Carlo Kraemer the other evening, I said to him: "Carlo, where's your overcoat?" thinking to get it for him whilst he was packing his kit.

His reply was that he was just about to unearth it from the innards of his bass drum, its usual depository whenever he used the collapsible type.

Do you know, there's quite an idea there.

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GLASGOW

AN item of importance to all Scottish M.U. members comes from headquarters in Glasgow. For some time back Neil Aitken has been acting as part-time Glasgow branch secretary, but recently it has been felt by members that a post with more scope should be created.

The EC having given their approval, Neil will act from now on as full-time secretary and organiser, the latter part of his duties coming as a great help to Scottish organiser Jimmy McBean, who would otherwise find it humanly impossible to cope with the vast volume of work caused through Glasgow's own city dance business. For the benefit of a few people who might misunderstand the position, Neil wishes it to be known that this new appointment involves his retirement from the playing side of the business.

At the Albert Ballroom, where Neil Aitken played drums for Jack Chapman, the chair has now been filled by recently demobbed Laurence Brotherhood. Jack's brass section, changed the other day, now consists of Jimmy Wilson, from Ayr, and Bill Munro, late Eddie Shaw's Band, on trumpets, Billy Hall remaining on trombone as before.

The Legionnaires Band, which played at Rotheray during the summer under Don Cunningham's leadership, is meantime "demobbed," but will re-assemble in a few weeks for an affair which has been fixed by Don, the boys doing a 20-minute spot on the evening of January 11.

HUGH HINSHELWOOD.

EDINBURGH

DURING war-time service in the Navy, Jack Wright, leader of the band at Macdonald's Ballroom, Edinburgh, didn't allow rust to gather on his alto sax and clarinet. He was able to blow as lustily as ever as a member of the "Blue Jackets" Band, which recorded a series of programmes for broadcasting to the Forces on Overseas network, and he was also a member of the orchestra featured in the "Merry-Go-Round" programmes.

Back at Macdonald's, where he opened in 1934 after engagements at the Star Cafe and the Dunedin, Jack leads a quintette, other members of which are Jack Bain (tenor sax, clarinet); Jack Davidson (tpt., vocals); Teddy Whitten (piano, accordion); and Jimmy Schater (drums).

NOTTINGHAM

CHRISTMAS TIME was the first anniversary for Jimmie Honeyman and his Band at the Victoria Ballroom, Nottingham.

There have recently been a couple of changes in the band, which, with Jimmie fronting, now lines up as follows: George Spencer (piano); Eddie Lambert (bass); Harry Harrison (drums); Keith Iron (guitar); Arthur Lewis, George Rawlin and Bill Howell (trumpets); Frank Brindle, George Graham, Les Crippwell and Jack Dawkes (saxes); and Micky Simms taking vocals.

PROVINCIAL PAGE

Northern Leader Reinstated:
Doncaster M.U. Election: Pleydell Airs

AT a meeting held at Warrington recently, a Ministry of Labour Reinstatement Committee instructed Messrs. British Bands and Cabarets, Ltd., owners of the Casino Ballroom, Warrington, to reinstate Nat Bookbinder as manager of the ballroom.

When the Casino first opened in 1938, Nat secured the job as band-leader and was later made manager, licensee and a director of the company. He was called up for military service in December, 1943, after three years' service in the N.F.S.

Demobbed from the Army last October, Nat applied for reinstatement, which was refused on the grounds that he was dismissed shortly before being called up.

At the meeting, witnesses for the company included the chairman, Miss Turner, with Jimmy Gallier (present licensee) and Jack Brown, who played alto and piano respectively in the band at the Casino when Nat was in charge.

Nat refuted their verbal evidence of dismissal, and produced a photostat copy of an article which appeared in the "Daily Dispatch" a few days after he received his callings-up papers, in which he announced his intention to apply for compassionate leave in order to continue a battle which he was having with the local military authorities who had placed the Casino "out of bounds" to troops.

The committee took the view that a man under notice of dismissal would not be likely to continue to work in the firm's interests whilst in the Forces, and they instructed the employers to reinstate Nat as from November 8 as manager under terms and conditions not worse than he enjoyed before being called up.

Leave to appeal against this decision was granted.

NORTH WALES

UNDER the direction of Mr. R. Pattison, the Ambassadors Dance Club has recently opened in Bangor. Supplying the music is the Ambassadors Club Sextet, led by altoist Glyn Douglas. With Glyn are Roy Thomas (tenor); Hughie Granville (tpt.); Cliff Williams (piano); Teddy Brooks (drums); and Les Fisher (bass).

DONCASTER

HELD early in December, the annual election of officers for the Doncaster branch of the Musicians' Union resulted in Harold Butterworth being appointed president and Arthur Clark secretary.

The committee now comprises John Howeroff, Jack Hope, Harold Diggins, Len Bote, Frederick Haydn Jackson, Maurice Tichiaz and Eric Stapleton.

DERBY

A GAIN resident at the Plaza, Derby, is Ken Turner with his band, which he leads on trumpet.

With Ken are Terry Brown (trumpet); Phil Morgan and Jack Gowley (altos); Ronnie West and Bob Buggs (tenors); Jim Cowhill (baritone); Denny Termer (piano); Jack Morris (bass); and Phil Seaman (drums); plus vocalists Beryl Parsons.

Ken and the boys are scheduled to remain at the Plaza until April, after which it is likely that they will return again to the Plaza, Aberdeen, where they spent last summer.

BOURNEMOUTH.

GOING on the air for the first time with his eight-piece band which opened at the Ballerina Restaurant only two months ago, sax-clarinet-leader Ronnie Pleydell will have the pleasure of broadcasting twice on January 20.

From a studio he will be heard on West of England Regional from 6.30 to 7 p.m., and from the Ballerina he provides late-night dance music in the Light programme from 11 to 11.30 p.m. Ronnie leads George Oldfield (tnr., cl., vln.); Billy Wells (alto, cl., vln.); Ernie Lockett (tnr., cl., vln.); Ronnie Horier (tpt.); Frank Harlow (pno., arr.); Frank Dounison (bass); and Jeff Whetstone (drums).

THE Musicians' Union announces the appointment of Edward Almond as North-West Area Organiser of the Union in succession to B. Newton Brooks, who will henceforward act as full-time secretary of the Manchester Branch after many years of faithful service as Organiser.

BIRMINGHAM.

BUSY around Brum is the Hedley Ward Band, which plays four nights per week at the Salfrey Ballroom. Photo of Hedley is inset here.

With Hedley conducting, the boys are: Andy Smith and Harry Reynolds (altos); Freddie Armfield (tenor sax and violin); Gilbert Hazel

(baritone and vocals); Frank Watson (trumpet); Arthur Jones (second trumpet and vocals); Horace Jones (trombone); Bob Carter (piano); Stan Upcott (guitar); Neville Davis (drums); Morris Western (bass).

The band was featured at the annual Hogmanay Ball at the Grand



Hotel, Birmingham, on New Year's Eve.

LEEDS

NOW in his eighth season at the Capitol Ballroom, Bert Noble and his Band still retain great popularity with the dancing public there. In addition, Bert is very busy with his Chord Formation course and Orchestral Service, supplying students and clients from all parts of the country. He also has a high-class gig connection covering most parts of Yorkshire.

The present line-up, with Bert conducting, is Al Carritt, Barney Gomersall, Norman Sissons and Percy Pope (saxes); Freddy Argyle and Lou Tait (tpts.); Phil Gelding and Fred Yeaton (tms.); Jack Mann (pno.); George Eddison (dms.); and Arthur Thackwray (bass), with Dinah Lee (vocalist).

ILKLEY

GREAT occasion for Yorkshire trumpeter-vocalist Stan Smith comes on January 20, when he opens with his own band in his home town of Ilkley, playing for dinner and dancing at the handsomely renovated Ilkley Moor Hotel.

Stan spent last summer at Butlin's, Skegness, with "The Modernaires," vocal team attached to Eric Winstone's Orchestra.

AD LIB.

DUE out of the Army shortly, Eddie Mendoza would like to hear from his old boys. Contact Eddie at 52, Cambridge Avenue, London, N.W.6. . . . Drummer Bill Sutton, of "Ty-Owent," Dilton, Westbury, Wilts, would like to hear from Liverpool bassist Ernie Morris, late RAMC. . . . Ex-Lew Stone trombone Frank Fielding is available at 5, Sixth Avenue, Royton, Oldham. . . . Jazz writer Peter Hawkins recently engaged to Miss Sheila Dunk, of Hastings. . . . Due for demob. any time now is Freddy Radley, noted Yorkshire leader. Would like to hear from his friends at "Hillside View," Ossett. . . . Congrats to Alan Holmes, Bradbury Wood plugger, upon addition to the family—a baby girl. . . .

CONTEST FIXTURES

LONDON AREA

LEYTON. — Tuesday, February 11 (7.30 p.m. to 12 midnight), at the Leyton Super Baths, High Road, E.10.—The 1947 South-West Essex Championship.

Organisers: Entertainments Committee of the Borough of Leyton, Town Hall, Leyton, E.10. (Phone: LEYtonstone 3650, Extn. 210.)

PROVINCES

BIRMINGHAM.—Tuesday, February 11 (7.30 to 11.45 p.m.), at the New Baths Ballroom (Thimblemill), Smethwick.—The 1947 Birmingham District Championship.

Organiser: Mr. Arthur Kimbrell, 38, Rugby Road, Hinckley, Leics. (Phone: Hinckley 643.)

IPSWICH.—Wednesday, February 26 (7.45 p.m. to midnight), at the Baths Hall.—The 1947 Suffolk County Championship.

Organiser: Mr. T. W. Geary, Baths Superintendent, Exchange Buildings, Lion Street, Ipswich, Suffolk. (Phone: Ipswich 4351.)

Rules and Entry Forms for all the above now available from their respective organisers.

ROBINS' REVELS

INCREASING their popularity with each airing, the Radio Revellers' vocal team include in their immediate schedule of bookings the first regular series to be seen on television. This opens on Sunday (12th) and will go out every third Sunday under the title of "Paging You," starring vocalist Phyllis Robins.

The following Saturday (18th) they start their regular airings in the Len Camber Light programme series, "Show Time," at 6.15 p.m.

A number of return bookings also take them to the London Casino Theatre, January 19; the Liverpool Empire (26th), with Henry Hall; the London Palladium (February 2), with Ted Heath; and they will also feature in another Henry Hall Guest Night on January 21.

CHEST trouble is the cause of trombonist Jack Irvine's resignation from Teddy Foster's Band.

Recent addition to the Foster personnel is altoist Dave Ede, who moves over from Joe Daniels' "Hot-Shots." Teddy Foster is very enthusiastic about this boy, and goes so far as to say that in his opinion he is one of the outstanding soloists in the land.

Northern fans will be able to form their own opinions next week, when Teddy and the boys play a week of one-night stands in the Manchester district.

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M.U.: ANOTHER LINER VICTORY

AT a meeting held on Monday last (6th) between Musicians' Union officials and representatives of the Union-Castle Mail Steamship Company, a temporary agreement was reached on the question of rates of pay and conditions for members of the ship's orchestra on the steamship "Capetown Castle," which sails from Southampton today (Thursday).

Pending a definite agreement between the Union and the Shipping Federation, which represents all the major shipowners, similar terms to those operating on the "Queen Elizabeth"—£32 per month—were agreed upon, although the conditions are not exactly identical.

It is significant that these negotiations were again conducted between the Union and the shipping company, and not with the contractor, who in this case was Olive Parsons. The contractor—as he rightly should be—is thus relieved of any responsibility except in applying the rates laid down.

The band concerned in this particular case is a six-piece led by noted violinist Matthew Newberry, who has for long been a well-known figure in London musical circles.

With him will be Jack Saunders (alto and violin); J. Hoole (cello and tenor); Syd Baskerville (bass); T. Judd (drums and vibes); and Rohan Clarke (piano and acc.).

In an effort to reach a permanent agreement for the employment of musicians aboard ship, Hardie Ratcliffe and Ted Anstey, of the Musicians' Union, recently had a long conference with officials of the Shipping Federation, and are now awaiting the Federation's decision on the proposals made.

MINDEL LEAVES 'KNOT'

GUITARIST Alan Mindel, who has been very successfully leading his own five-piece at the Café Anglals (The "Knot" Restaurant) in Town since last April, is leaving there on January 18.

Alan's contract is finished, and with the taking over of the resort by a new management, a new musical policy will be introduced. New band to start at "The Knot" will be led by Alan Carr. Meanwhile, Alan Mindel will be ready to fix up a new date for his excellent little outfit which, with himself on guitars, includes Eric Darby (piano); Chris Curtis (tenor sax); Bill Leaning (bass); and Billy Stephens (trumpet).

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Oscar Rabin

Still on the subject of Balance and Control, this controversial article by OSCAR RABIN and HARRY DAVIS argues the case for

Balancing from the Score



Harry Davis

ON reading Jerry Dawson's MELODY MAKER article about Balance and Control of dance-band broadcasts we felt compelled to offer a few comments in the light of our own experience. Here they are:—

First, Jerry's assurance that the Corporation is able to give bands a good balance doesn't seem of much consequence. No one questions that

BBC engineers are capable of doing a fine job; the point at issue is whether broadcasting bands can rely upon well-balanced broadcasts.

Next is his statement that if a broadcast goes out badly balanced, it is not necessarily the programme engineer's fault. We would say, most emphatically, whose fault is it, if not his? How can the band be blamed when the balancing is not in its hands?

As for his third point, that bands tend to devote too much time to rehearsing material at the expense of their balance-test time: there are many factors that bear on this question. In his opinion, orchestras should have their programme fully rehearsed before entering the studio. But does this viewpoint take into account all the circumstances that may attend a broadcast today?

Without examining in detail how the average band has to "make up" a week in which it has three airings (at different times of the day), we will simply instance the typical occasion of a band scheduled for a morning broadcast following a gruelling one-night stand. Faced with new material, one number, perhaps, just off the arranger's desk, and intricate orchestrations such as the ambitious band will employ, how can a band enter the studio with its programme rehearsed to a T? Where would extra rehearsal time come from, and who would pay for it? These are questions which immediately spring to mind.

ENGINEER PROBLEMS

The two-and-a-half or three hours may suffice as both rehearsal and balance-test time for a combination that is to play conventional dance music, but it is scarcely satisfactory for the more ambitious outfit with a programme of twelve to fourteen ultra-modern arrangements!

Leaving Jerry's article, but remaining on the subject of balance and control, we have a few more observations to make. In our experience it has not been possible to rely on getting the same engineer for two consecutive shows, much less a whole run of broadcasts. And even if the same man were to be put in charge of balancing a band two or three times running, what chance would he have of really learning its repertory and style of playing?

Which brings us to the crux of the matter. Not much chance, unless he could read a full score! No engineer can be expected to acquaint himself fully with the dynamics of a set of modern orchestrations by hearing them played through a couple of times and making notes prior to the band taking the air.

Only by following the score could he cope with all the intricacies of

orchestration and give the band anything like ideal balance throughout. While the routine checks, and placing of mikes, during rehearsal give a fair approximation of correct balance, they make no allowance for the "human element"—the tendency of musicians to give to the full only when the red light goes on—or for the subtler nuances of scoring.

To us it seems necessary for the band to be skilfully balanced from the score during the actual broadcast by an engineer who knows what the combination should sound like. Naturally, this practice would not take the place of the customary balance, but would supplement it. A tall order, you may think, but one which is practicable, and which has already been put into service on certain U.S. networks. And we'd go further, to the extent of saying that both producer and engineer should have a wide knowledge of the subject—should be 100 per cent. dance-band-minded, in fact—if they are to present consistently successful programmes of dance music.

"SPECIALIST" BALANCER

The Rabin Orchestra solves the problem by having its own copyist—Al Sirota—sitting next to the engineer, plus Oscar Rabin alongside, both prepared to give such advice as may be needed. But we still contend that the balancer should be able to follow a full score, and appreciate the finer points of dance music. And we claim that this "specialist" balancer should be available to a band for the whole of a series of broadcasts so far as it is in the BBC's power to arrange it.

After all, a man must be fully conversant with a band's style before he can properly assess its requirements in terms of balance and control. The late great Glenn Miller, who encountered such difficulties as we have outlined when he broadcast in this country, carried his own balancer, Teddy White. Glenn realised that ideal balance could only come from knowledge of the broadcasting medium combined with full understanding of his orchestra's capacities. He believed what we believe—that the programme engineer can make or break even a first-class broadcasting band.

Reverting to Jerry Dawson: in his concluding paragraph, Jerry claimed there should be no such thing as bad balance providing the leader knew what he wanted and was prepared to give the producer time, and so on. In our opinion there isn't a bandleader broadcasting regularly who doesn't know what he wants from his band. It is up to the BBC to bring out of the studio the noise that the band produces. And if the sound doesn't come over right, where does the fault lie? Not with the bandleader or the musicians.

SQUADS AT Q.P.R. CUP-TIE

A NEW type of gig for the famed Squadrinaires Dance Orchestra takes them to Loftus Road football ground, Shepherd's Bush, London, on Saturday (11th).

They are playing before the game and during the interval of the Queen's Park Rangers versus Middlesbrough cup-tie, and the capacity crowd that is expected will have the double treat of good dance music and good football.

There is no truth in the rumour that they are busily rehearsing "We'll be glad when you're dead, you rascal, you" in the event of their not agreeing with the referee's decisions...

The Squads are also in the news as they are stated to be receiving one of the highest fees ever paid to a dance band at the end of the month when they go up to Scotland to play at two big affairs, along with quick-fire commentator, Gerry Wilmot.

On January 31, the Squads are at the Douglas Hotel, Aberdeen, home town of leader-vocalist Jimmy Miller and drummer-manager Jack Cummings, with a broadcast—Gerry included—on the morning of February 1, before travelling to Perth to appear at the Salutation Hotel in the evening.

Prior engagements include dances at Wakefield (January 18th), Darlington (17th), a N.B.L. concert at the London Casino (19th), and a show for the National Charities' Aid Fund at Grosvenor House (25th).

FILLIS AIRING

ON January 14, Reg Leopold's "Southern Serenade" introduces again to the listening public, for the first time since his return to this country, famous pioneer guitarist Len Fillis.

Len, who will appear as guest artist in this programme, makes another guest appearance on the air on January 25, and also has a spot in "Variety Band-Box" on the 26th.

It was in 1917 that 12-year-old Len played the banjo on the Variety stage in South Africa. In the early 1920's he was playing at the Kit-Kat Club in London, when the Mound City Blue Blowers—including Eddie Lang on guitar—were featured at this venue. Len completely stole a march on his contemporaries by taking band-room instruction from the master, and immediately jumping into the forefront of British guitar players.

In 1937 he went to South Africa and then on to Australia, where in Melbourne he became manager of the nation-famed Hawaiian Club, with its 20,000 guitar-playing members.

By now a confirmed Hawaiian fan, Len Fillis returned to S. Africa in 1945 leading a five-piece at the O.K. Club, and came back to the Homeland a few months ago. (Photo inset.)



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Mobilised Music

ONE of the most significant features of post-war policy as it affects dance bands and dance music is the belated, but welcome, mobilisation into organised units of sections of the profession.



ESSENCE - by Pat Brand

THERE is one fundamental and apparently ineradicable difference between ourselves and those we (misleadingly) call our cousins, the Yanks. It is a difference that applies not only to members of the dance music profession on both sides of the Atlantic, but to the two nations as a whole.

FAN CLUB FIESTA



A Doulton Arts Ball in miniature is how Ted Heath fans described their New Year's Revel at the Seymour Hall, London, W.1, last Thursday (2nd), where the festivities were high-lit by the appearance of swing-kings Ted's own band.

MY KIND OF JAZZ, No. 3 COLEMAN HAWKINS

"M.M." New York Correspondent LEONARD FEATHER has been making a series of "blindfold" tests on well-known figures of jazz, so as to obtain unprejudiced reactions.

I like it modern!

Next, on a record featuring trombonist Kai Winding and tenor man Stan Getz: "You notice how heavy and full the tenor and trombone sound together. What a rich, thick sound they get compared with the two horns on the last record, the trumpet and alto."

It's All ACCORDION

OUT-OF-LONDON accordianists and fans will soon be asking when they will be hearing Toralf Tollefsen, now that he has given two concerts recently and a third to come next Sunday.

CARTOON by Betts



Listen for the Dante Accordion Quartette when they broadcast in the Light Programme at 10.30 a.m. on January 13. I think you will enjoy their choice of numbers and this airing should be something quite different from anything the BBC has offered in the accordion line for some time.

1947 Emblems of Success

These are the three 1947 Emblems of Success, which the winners of the County and District Championship winners, the All-England winners, and the All-Ireland winners, in the various divisions of MELODY MAKER Dances and Contests.

HEARD AT THE ROSE ROOM:

"Since they've promised him a three months' series on the air, he keeps humming, 'You Keep Coming Back Like a Songplugg'."

CLASSICS from the CLUBS

THESE certainly have it and are rich in good tunes which you might like to remember. As only one list would have to omit too many good ones, here is a selection to be going on with, and next week there will be some more.

HITS & PIECES by Sammy Queser

NEW YEAR opened with blue skies brightening Tin Pan Alley. Music hit teed off to unexpected hypo, sheet sales figures surprising everyone.

Carlo Kraemer

BACK in Town after their highly successful Christmas season at the Northumberland Hotel, Cliftonville, Howard Lucraft and his Music face another succession of broadcasts, with a week at Bentall's, Kingston-on-Thames, later in the month.

Britain's Top Tunes

(In Alphabetical Order)
All Thru' The Day—Chappell.
Bless You—Gay.
Down In The Valley—Leeds.

Desmond A. Hart

I shall be down in Bristol when you read this article, having been invited to represent the British Association of Accordionists at the first meeting of the West of England Accordion Club organised by Ron Nolan.

Lucraft's Airings

First of these airings will take place tomorrow (Friday) from 10.30 till 11 a.m. on the Light Programme, followed by their appearance in Tawny Neilson's "Cafe on the Corner" spot from 3 till 3.30 p.m. on January 22, with, next day, another airing from 8.15 till 8.30 a.m. (Light).

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MUSICIANS PRESS LTD.
114, Charing Cross Road, W.C.2**COLLECTORS' CORNER**

by REX HARRIS and MAX JONES

IT takes a long time to get some of the current record releases these days, and some never come in at all. That makes it harder for us to run the Corner efficiently and impossible to give our choice of the month's records until the month in question has become ancient history.

But if we had been giving our selection for last October it would unquestionably have been Josh White's "House of the Risin' Sun" record that would have been chosen.

There are many, of course, who would complain that these sides are not jazz. And their objection would have to be sustained if it were agreed that jazz means band music and that alone. But there are several allied music forms which we accept along with basic jazz. Swing music, Harlem "live," *raxtime, piano blues and sundry types of Negro singing find ready acceptance by some among collectors. And often the Negro singing comes near in emotional content to the true jazz that is the collector's first consideration.

These Josh White pieces are a type of music not easily placed into a convenient category. Were they blues, simply, as so many of Josh's songs are, it would be necessary only to enlarge on the debt that instrumental jazz owes this song-type, pointing to their common features of scalar pattern, polyrhythm, cadenza-like breaks, Negro intonation and the rest of it. But "Risin' Sun" is not quite blues for all its possibilities (and it has been sung in the traditional blues fashion), while "Strange Fruit" is nothing like the blues.

So we are faced with two ballads, one of white origin and the other a very self-conscious creation with studied political overtones. With his instinct for giving every song the treatment it seems to call for, Josh interprets them in a rather straight fashion, although this record alone is sufficiently stylish, in hard-to-define ways, to convince the most sceptical of his undoubted jazz ability. It is almost a pity, too, that Josh's "speaking" guitar is so silent here. For even on ballads and protest songs—what he terms his "fighting blues"—it is likely to provide an exciting rhythmic accompaniment to his vocals; a case of the instrument being jazzier than the voice.

GOOD MUSIC

We have secret faith, like most critics, that underneath those carefully constructed relative standards by which we judge this kind of jazz and that, there exists some kind of ultimate artistic criterion, one possibly bound up with skill, conviction and what is called personality. It prompts many of us to venture the opinion that orchestrated swing music is not only different from improvisatory jazz, but inferior to it as a music type. In much the same way we believe that these songs of Josh White's are good in the manner of folk-songs (and that applies especially to "Risin' Sun," the more satisfactory of the sides), and pretty good music all round, because the performance does credit to the material.

"Risin' Sun" is a folk-song, the other is not; but both have something of the quality of Afro-American folk-song, although the singer imbues them with more specific meaning, perhaps, than they would possess in the hands of "the folk." And, as a blues singer, he also imparts to them a certain degree of jazz feeling that would no doubt have been absent from a purer performance.

JOSH ON A CRUSADE

Josh White is often accused of smart and commercial tendencies, and it has been said that his interpretations lack sincerity. If that is so, it must at once be said that no trace of this insincerity communicates itself to us through his music. "A song is like a guitar string," says Josh. "It's got to ring true." How like Bunk Johnson's: "Playing jazz is talkin' from the heart!" Josh's songs do indeed ring true.

If his repertoire is overfilled with propaganda songs it is because he is intensely preoccupied with politics. In fact a troubadour on a crusade as one writer put it. No matter how we regard the artist with an axe to grind, the fact remains that this particular singer is both class conscious and race conscious and it inevitably finds expression in his work. To quote from "Folk Review":

"Josh White's political feelings are not confined to songs, but manifest themselves in his private and professional life; he is militant in his

struggle against the colour bar which is raised even in New York's entertainment industry."

Josh won't touch a song, or appear in any play or movie, if he feels that it is detrimental to his race. On the positive side, he likes to sing about what he feels: "It's the best way to get a message across," says Josh. Which should explain why he picked upon Lewis Allan's lynching song, a broadside at racial intolerance.

As we've said, this is not as pleasing as the reverse. At first it struck a very false note, perhaps because of long familiarity with Billie Holiday's version, which is smoother and less mannered, but after repeated playings we got the feel of Josh's approach to the piece and found it a refreshing change from Billie's enervated style.

"RISIN' SUN"

His "Risin' Sun" is a restrained, but nonetheless dramatic performance. Good lyrics and White's compelling delivery of them combine to make an almost perfect record—we might have omitted the "almost" but for recollections of his superior performance of the same song in the American Music Festival put out over here a while back by the B.B.C.

Josh's falling voice and controlled smears, his clear diction, muted expressiveness (in this, as in so many of his songs, bitterness is the keynote), and overall sureness, are demonstrated to the full. The typical Negro humour that relieves many of his songs before they're finished is absent here, and so are the jazz rhythms. But the strong beat that characterises his work is implicit in this very slow-paced number in some kind of 3/4 time.

Of the song itself, the Lomaxes wrote: "We have heard it sung only by Southern whites. 'Risin' Sun,' as a name for a bawdy house, occurs in a number of unprintable songs of English origin." Like all folk-songs and neo-folk-songs, its lyrics are far from standardised, although their approximate shape and meaning have been determined by tradition. The words Josh sang over the radio were almost identical with four of the seven or eight verses collected by Professor Lomax and printed in "Our Singing Country," and on the record he uses the same lyrics with insignificant variations.

JIM CROW BLUES

Those who question Josh White's ability as a singer of folk-songs, and impugn his integrity, might reflect on his close contact from earliest childhood with a wide field of Southern folk-music, both white and Negro, and ponder his insistence upon singing live, meaningful blues and ballads and in general adopting a line of conduct inimical to his professional interests. With his vocal equipment and personal charm, it seems to us, Josh could aspire to the ranks of the nation's leading coloured crooners. Instead he prefers his Jim Crow blues, simple ballads, "bad man" and "bad woman" songs.

No one will class his silky executions with the rough hit-and-miss performances of the many excellent but untrained singers whose records can be found among a welter of good, bad and indifferent "Race Music." But they have directness, fine musicianship and the almost universal appeal of the folk-song.

Even with more popular material, like the renowned Meat Ball song, Josh is able to work miracles of transformation. A trifling comedy piece becomes again the satirical and even bitter social comment that it once was. Indeed, his "One Meat Ball" is a more obvious protest song than the parent "Fish Ball" ballad.

And just as he scorns the trivialities of Tin Pan Alley, so Josh overcomes the environmental obstacles of his present work, refusing to succumb to the atmosphere of a cabaret and sacrifice artistry to showmanship, sincerity to sentimentality. When he sings he expects the courtesy of a hearing, and will idly strum and stare until he gets it. Successful but not content, Josh is to-day a serious artist and, in the words of Alan Lomax, "one of the great living singers of American folk-song."

SWAP and BUY.

J. Kickinside, 41, Manville Road, S.W.17, wants Lewis's "I'm in the Mood," Armstrong's "Coal Cart," Jechet's "Blackstick," Bessie Smith's "In the House B," McKinley's "N. Orleans Parade," and any boogie discs on Am. label.

CHATTER by Chris Hayes

SINCE I last saw him, burly Scots singer and guitarist Bobby Bruce has been nursing some angry boils which turned septic, one almost causing the amputation of an arm. Unable to tour, Bobby had to leave Felix Mendelssohn, but, thanks to M. and B. and penicillin, he has now recovered his health and is kicking his heels at Bermondsey 3659.

Positively my last request for gramophone records I make on behalf of William Thompson, a patient in R5 Annexe, Bangour Hospital, Broxburn, Scotland, who is willing to pay for any classics by Red Nichols and the Five Pennies or the Mound City Blue Blowers, but if anyone can afford to offer them as a gift to a bedridden fan, so much the better!

When Ronnie Munro's melodic radio pot-pourri, "Sunday Serenade," was rested nine months ago, we were told it would not be absent for long. Listeners are becoming impatient, and as Ronnie cannot explain the delay, perhaps the B.B.C. should be reminded that he is only a mile or so from Broadcasting House, acting as M.D. for Jack Hylton in "Red Riding Hood," at the Adelphi Theatre.

Greetings to all his friends in the Midlands come from pianist George Young, who is doing mighty fine with B.A.O.R. leading Caerphilly tenor-sax Gordon Perry, Carnarvon bassist Tony Brown, and Herne Bay drummer Don Davies, who aim to air on BFN following a "Piano-Playtime" solo recently by George Young, who was formerly with Reg Bartlam and his Band at the Civic Hall, Wolverhampton.

When his trim, red-headed wife, Mona, promised him a surprise for Christmas, journalist Andy Gray contemplated something momentous. Sure enough, on December 27, James Andrew Gordon Gray arrived, weighing 8 1/2 lb. Newshawk Andy, once my editorial chum on MELODY MAKER and "Rhythm," served as a captain in North Africa and Italy on "Union Jack," and is now with "Weekly Sporting Review." Congratulations, Andy. Fleet Street awaits J. A. G. G.

Arriving in England early in February, Indian bandleader Cedric H. West hopes to do as well as his two fellow-countrymen, Ike Isaacs and Reub Solomon, who have joined Leslie Douglas. Cedric West, who plays electric guitar and trombone, has had a long run at the Officers' Gymkhana Club at NAAFI EPI HQ, Rangoon, where his contract ended on New Year's Eve.

Welcome home to semi-pro drummer Cpl. Roy Vaughan, who has been doing his bit on the Continent for four years with the RAP, unable to drum, but learning all about pro-

motion while serving on his unit entertainment committee. Seems a bright boy, with a pocketful of sound ideas. Anyone care to offer him an administrative post? I have his address at the office.

Gunner Art Collins, who was with bandleader Frankie Brown, under Harry Parry, until conscripted for the Army in 1944, should some day be a famous drummer. Right now Art is with the Resergens Dance Orchestra in Egypt, but when his term with the Royal Artillery terminates, he will continue his tuition under masterly coach Max Abrams, who taught Jack Parnell, Eric Delaney, Billy Lonsdale, and John Blanchard.

Enterprising Court Royal, at Horsham, has seized Peggy Positon and her Band for dancing every Thursday and Saturday. . . . Should like to hear from Banbury drummer-leader Brown Lay. . . . Sought by Stan Freeborn, of 43, Chapel Street, Diss, Norfolk, an orchestration of "Modre'nebe" ("Blue Sky Romance"), which apparently is out of print.

HE DIDN'T LOOK UNDER THE BED!

Cobden Hotel, Cherry Street, Corporation Street, Birmingham 2.

To the Editor.

I WAS very surprised to read in this week's MELODY MAKER an article describing the "theft" of two Brilhart mouthpieces from one of Oscar Rabin's saxophone players—Jimmy Powers.

They are here in my possession and quite safe. Let me explain. . . . I am a receptionist at the above hotel, and a few days before Christmas Oscar Rabin's men were staying here. Mr. Powers reported the loss of his mouthpieces here at the hotel, and the CID were called in immediately.

Half an hour after the band had left, the mouthpieces were found by a maid in Mr. Powers' room, and brought down to the reception desk. I have guarded them here in the drawer ever since, expecting the CID to call and continue their investigations, or further inquiries from Mr. Powers.

I assure you there has been no suggestion of theft whatsoever, and would be obliged if you would inform Mr. Powers of the whereabouts of his mouthpieces, which are awaiting collection. One question: Why did he not look under his bed?

DOROTHY M. PAYNE, Receptionist.

CALL SHEET

- (Week commencing January 13)
- Carl BARRITEAU and Band. One-night Stands.
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 - George EVANS and Band. One-night Stands, Midlands.
 - Teddy FOSTER and Band. One-night Stands, North.
 - Morton FRASER and Harmonica Rasicals. Palace, Dundee.
 - Henry HALL and Band. Empire, Oldham.
 - Joe LOSS and Band. Green's Playhouse, Glasgow.
 - Felix MENDELSSOHN and Hawaiian Serenaders. Pleasure Gardens, Folkestone.
 - Syd MILLWARD and Nilwits. One-night Stands.
 - Oscar RABIN and Band. One-night Stands, South.
 - Charles SHADWELL and Orchestra. Concerts for Harold Fielding.
 - Eric WINSTONE and Band. Victoria Ballroom, Nottingham.

CONSEQUENT upon the sudden illness of trumpet player Margaret Hibbert, who recently had to undergo a sudden operation for appendicitis, Blanche Coleman is still very urgently in need of girl brass players. Apply direct to Blanche at 4, Northfield Road, Stamford Hill, London, N.16.

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Your Queries

The well-known London coach, Claude Bampton, answers the following query:

E. Mallaby, Co. Durham: Unless the sax is actually marked H.P.—i.e., high pitch—there is not a lot to go on with what one might call the naked eye, but the difference can be clearly seen if you compare the size with that of a low-pitch instrument, the latter being quite obviously somewhat larger.

Except for learning purposes there is no great use for high-pitch instruments, brass bands being the only ensembles using this pitch, but they do not use axes, anyway. . . . military bands use them, of course, but these are all low-pitch now, with the exception of a number of private works military bands, who use the older-type high-pitch instruments for reasons of economy.

Dance bands are universally flat pitch, and you would not be at all happy, or popular, using a sharp-pitch instrument, as it is not really possible for even a first-class firm to lower the pitch sufficiently to put the instrument properly in tune.

In other words, high-pitch instruments are virtually obsolete for dance band use, but there is nothing against them for a year or so's preliminary practice and study, so long as you bear in mind that you would definitely need a low-pitch instrument in the long run if you found yourself suited to sax playing and were going to take it seriously.

