

## LEGIT

### 'Righteous' Is Brilliant, But Lacks BO Appeal

By BOB FRANCIS

It can usually be left to Eddie Dowling to do the theatrically unexpected — and do it well. "The Righteous Are Bold," Frank Carney's Irish drama, which enjoyed success on the agenda of Dublin's Abbey Theater, is no exception. It is easy to see why its mysticism would have Eddie fairly itching to get his directorial hands on it. He has made a brilliant job of its production, but I don't feel that it has the commercial appeal to meet Broadway competition.

Carney's central figures are a be-hexed young colleen and domi-

nating and devoted priest bent upon exorcising the evil spirit or spirits which possess her. The girl has been dabbling in spiritualism while on a London visit and returns to the parental farm in a parlous mental state.

The tension mounts as she fights off any attempts to aid her either medically or spiritually, until even her family and doctor are won over to the belief that she should be let alone. But the zeal and the fearlessness of the cleric prevail in a tremendous dramatic final scene in which he frees her of her curse by sheer force of will and sacrifices himself in the doing.

Dowling, as usual, has assembled an excellent corps of players, nearly all of them with an authentic Dublin brogue. Denis O'Dea endows the priest with tremendous force of character. His Father O'Malley could have been a great militant leader in the Church's early annals.

There are sound contributions from Len Doyle and Nora O'Mahoney as a pair of puzzled and sorrowing parents, and another from Bryan Herbert in the role of a local medico. Watson Barratt has designed an excellently effective farm living room for them all to work in.

Eddie has given "Bold" the best of everything, but I still think its customer appeal with be limited.

#### Estrallita and Raul Steuben's Vienna Room, Boston

Dancing and singing, without comic relief, take the spotlight at this intown bistro which has been all set up for big Yuletide business. Among the better Spanish dance duos is this handsome pair whose off-the-beaten-track numbers draw "oles" from the patrons. Near-authentic flamencos, jotas and "bull fight" dances are new to the Hub niteries, but they found favor with the big crowd.

Singing emcee Don Dennis continues to thrill with his personalized versions. His "Valencia" brought nostalgic applause and a nicely arranged "Barcarolle" was solid. He is teaming with Jennie Collins, svelte and stylish little coloratura, held over for the new show. Going over big was Harold and Lola's "Dance of the Cobra," and with good backing by Tony Bruno's ork, patrons are getting a better than average holiday bill. Dewar.

#### A Pictorial of Jazz By Orrin Keepnews and Bill Grauer Jr.

This year of 1955 has been the all-time best year for jazz recordings, and also for jazz books. First there was the Nat Shapiro-Nat Hentoff "Hear Me Talkin' to Ya," then Leonard Feather's monumental "Encyclopedia of Jazz," and now "A Pictorial History of Jazz," compiled and written by Orrin Keepnews and Bill Grauer Jr. (Crown Publishers, \$5.95).

The authors themselves describe their tome aptly as "a family album of Jazz," and it's a fascinating family all the way from "New Orleans Joys" to "Things to Come." In between chapters carry such intriguing titles as "Stockyard Strut," (Chicago period), "Stomp Off, Let's Go," and "Come Back, Sweet Papa," which covers the New Orleans revival.

The pictures themselves actually are more folksy, unlike the arty shots currently in vogue, and they fit neatly with the knowledgeable, nostalgic type commentary that links the whole business into a fascinating story. The quality of many of the old prints is far from perfect, but their imperfections only add to the legendary aura that surrounds the early days of the art form.

Keepnews and Grauer have established reputations in the record field as brilliant archivists. They are the producers and annotators of the Label "X" Vault Series, and also operate their own Riverside label. In addition, they are editors of "The Record Changer."

The "Pictorial History" deserves a place on every jazz record collector's shelf. Jazz disk dealers should be able to move some copies. Simon.

## NIGHT CLUB

### New Hildegarde Debut Skips Table Hopping

By BOB FRANCIS

Hildegarde is back in local East Side circulation after a prolonged absence. The scene is Pierre's Cotillion Room, which is a spot to showcase her for top advantage.

This is a new Hildegarde, perhaps because Anna Sosenko is no longer waving a wand in the background. On this I would not make a personal comment, except that somehow or other there is currently missing a spontaneous and frequently censorious customer touch which has been the Hildegarde trademark.

Very likely on opening night, the singer had no reason to shake a finger at a gathering of Hildegarde fans. She wouldn't have had time, or reason. But when she doesn't tell a few table-squatters off, I'm disappointed.

#### New Approach

At all events, it may be reported that she is likely to titillate dinner and supper trade in the room on thru January. Personally, I wish she would exert the w.k., charm salesmanship of table-hopping of

which she is past-mistress, but she has evidently decided that a new approach via floor chanting with naturally a bit of personal keyboard accompaniment is the proper order of the set-up. When she isn't assisting herself piano-wise, accompanist Martin Freed gives top support, the while she is on the mike kick.

"The Voice That Made Milwaukee Famous" again tees off with "Dahling, Je Vous Aime," etc., speaks of "I'm in Favor of Friendship" and ballads into "Love Is a Many-Splendored Thing." There is an amusing bit of fractured French material, written by Abe Burroughs, and an interval of English-French and German Lieder, self-accompanied. There is also a Dixieland finale, which somebody has sold Hildegarde, and the sooner she sells it back to whom—the better.

Her new hair-do keeps pace with an elegant wardrobe, but I do wish she'd get back to putting customers in their proper places.

## BROADWAY SHOWLOG

Performances Thru December 24, 1955

### DRAMAS

A Roomful of Roses...	10-17-'55	80
A View From the Bridge	9-27-'55	103
Bus Stop	3-2-'55	341
Cat on a Hot Tin Roof	3-24-'55	315
Diary of Anne Frank	10-5-'55	93
Hatful of Rain	11-9-'55	53
Inherit the Wind	4-21-'55	264
Janus	11-24-'55	36
No Time for Sergeants	10-20-'55	76
Six Characters in Search of an Author	12-11-'55	16
The Desk Set	10-24-'55	72
The Chalk Garden	10-26-'55	69
The Lark	11-17-'55	44
The Matchmaker	12-5-'55	24
The Righteous Are Bold	12-22-'55	4
The Teahouse of the August Moon	10-15-'53	919
Tiger at the Gates	10-3-'55	96
Will Success Spoil Rock Hunter?	10-13-'55	84
Witness for the Prosecution	12-16-'54	430

### MUSICALS

Comedy in Music	10-2-'54	825
Damn Yankees	5-5-'55	268
Fanny	11-4-'54	476
Pajama Game	5-13-'54	670
Pipe Dream	11-30-'54	29
Plain and Fancy	1-27-'55	380
Silk Stockings	2-24-'55	347
The Vamp	11-10-'55	52

### COMING UP

Red Roses for Me	12-28-'55
Third Person	12-29-'55

#### Gordon MacRae Fontainebleu, Miami

Occasionally, the Fontainebleu's La Ronde Room has an entertainer who can hold an audience indefinitely, and Gordon MacRae joins this select group with a homey act that runs an hour and could last longer if the management permitted.

His routine is built around a "This Is Your Life" theme, with his wife, Sheila, narrating the story from backstage between his songs. Here and there she throws in the needle for laughs and change of pace.

MacRae depends mostly on numbers from his past movies. Tunes are familiar and mostly oldies, and he finds the audience joining him in song, which results in a sort of old home week. Reprises from "Carousel" and "Oklahoma!" are a one-two punch that makes MacRae's act a natural. Kelly.

#### Mimi Benzell Seville Hotel, Miami Beach

Opening night at one of Miami Beach's newest plush hotels, the Seville, will be one Mimi Benzell will remember. Her competition included cement mixers, carpet layers, workmen completing the audio system and other plagues of the maiden night in a large hotel being rushed to completion to meet a deadline.

Forced to work with only a brief music rehearsal and no lighting preparations, Miss Benzell captured the Matador Room's sophisticated first nighters, despite flaws for which she was blameless. Except for "Autumn Leaves," which she sings in French, her repertoire is mostly nostalgic, Victor Herbert, "Floradora" and other yesteryear material. Costuming is excellent and she receives a nice assist from Warren Hays, Tom Williams and Hal Linden in vocals and a bit of hoofing. Kelly.

#### Lancers, Skeets Minton The Lancers, Skeets Minton Ciro's, Hollywood

Combination of the Lancers and Skeets Minton at Ciro's gives the Sunset Strip nitery a good holiday attraction. The both singing groups and ventriloquists are becoming slightly outmoded on the circuit, in this case they've got enough novelty to keep the customers applauding.

The Lancers are probably at their best when they're mimicking other groups such as the Ink Spots or the Crew Cuts. High spot on the repertoire is "Mr. Sandman," still going strong after all these times around the turntable.

Minton presents one of the most unusual bits in the ventriloquist business in his act. He has the stage darkened except for a blue spot, then trots out a pair of dummies with fluorescent faces. It gets good response. Spielman.

## NIGHT CLUB

### Shawn Heads Joyous Holiday Show at Copa

By BOB FRANCIS

Since Jules Podell's new Christmas show package at the Copa extolls the talents of one of my favorite, up-and-coming young comics, Dick Shawn, this report must necessarily be good. Shaw and his nonsense, and his perennially itchy scalp literally slay me and obviously plenty others to boot. It's no easy job for a comic newcomer to take over a Copa floor, but Dick more than fulfills the promise that he showed when burgeoning at the Palace a while back. He not only has still got it but he has improved it. Along with his standard clowning he is now sinking a harpoon into Harry Belafonte and Dean Martin for sock, belly-laugh reception.

However, Shawn's contribution is only a part of Podell's joyous Noel salute. The chorus line is loaded with new and titillating faces and figures in a variety of new costume confections. There is a duo of new production singers, Chic Layne and Teddie Vincent, to contrib effective vocal harmonizing, and a pair of steppers, Mickey Calin and Grace Genteel, to offer up the best dance routines the room has boasted in many months. Also on the agenda are the Delta Rhythm Boys, with the celebrated Negro quartet in top form. Their arrangements and delivery of such items as "Under My Skin" and "Ain't Necessarily So" are real gems.

Top of the bill, of course, sparks nitery debut of Dorothy Collins, radio and TV thrush. Over all, I would say it is auspicious. Miss Collins looks pretty as all get out on a club floor, much more so than a frequent TV camera shot would lead you to suppose. She has obviously a lovely way with a ballad, such things as "Autumn Leaves," "Mountain

#### Tex Beneke Ork Hotel Statler, New York

Tex Beneke, known for smooth danceable stylings, has brought his happy crew back to the Cafe Rouge here, long a stamping ground for pop name bands. In for a seven-week hitch, the boys play it straight for the most part, with a pleasant collection of pop tunes, mixed with a healthy share of arrangements from the catalog of the old Glenn Miller band, with which Beneke long worked as tenor man and upbeat vocalist.

Working out on tunes like "Chattanooga Choo Choo," "String of Pearls" and "Pennsylvania 6-5000," a strong play is made to the Miller nostalgia values, and, judging from the activity on the floor, it keeps the dancers happy. Beneke projects nicely to the crowd with genial smile and the same enthusiastic vocalizing, while Barbara Edwards offers her own pleasant brand of song-styling.

## NIGHT CLUB

### Lissome Lisa Corral's Crowd at Bali Opener

By BOB SPIELMAN

Lissome Lisa Kirk captures the imagination of her audience in a highly successful Bali Room opening at the Beverly Hilton. The Broadway star of such shows as "Kiss Me Kate" and "Allegro" scores a clean hit on the nitery circuit.

One of Miss Kirk's top assets is her scope, not only in the range of voice but choice of material as well. She can belt out "Anything Goes" one moment and slip into "Song of Love" the next as if her vocal chords had automatic coupling, and the rendition is a real moist-eyed one.

High" and "I Forgive" are vocal matters to be cherished. Swing items like "Hey, Mr. Flat Top" and a torrid "Ol' Man River" you can have, if your taste runs that way. Routine-wise, she is plainly new to the night club medium, and when she learns to unbend and let an audience come to her, she will improve tremendously in salesmanship. However, she's pretty darn good as she is.

Good, in fact, is Podell's whole show.

#### Josephine Baker National-Scala, Copenhagen

Josephine Baker is making her second appearance at this spot in two months. Originally set for 10 days, she was re-booked, after time out for a brief date in Sweden, and then prolonged for an added week. Pulling them in nightly, at added door fee—unusual for this spot.

The remainder of bill is spotty. Borac, a "pick-pocket," is okay if you relish such hokum, but hardly rates feature billing. The two Cincis are a hard-working Apache dance duo, with the girl committing most of the mayhem. She also appears as "Cri-Cri," in a novel routine in which she cleverly dances—as an acro team—by supporting two dummy figures on her back while doing the terp movements with her hands and feet. The Two Zeros present the usual type of knife-tossing stunts but lack personality. The Harlem Dancers, man and woman, are good hoofers and the girl is clever with comedy gags. Irene Jonsson has a good voice and puts across her songs well. Wolfram.

## TV Webs Face FCC Quizzing

NEW YORK, Dec. 24.—The TV networks are now getting ready to put their best foot forward with the Federal Communications Commission. A committee headed by Dean Barrow, representing the FCC, is here readying itself to talk to all three webs, CBS-TV, ABC-TV and NBC-TV, about the manner in which they conduct their business.

Each department of the networks—for example, programming, sales, merchandising, station-relations, etc.—is to appear before the committee and explain how their day-to-day operation functions. This is to give the FCC a comprehensive understanding of network operation. The aim of the webs, of course, is to show that all segments of American industry, large and small, are being given a chance to use TV and that the big advertiser does not dominate video.

Still tops in the repertoire, however, are the pieces from the Broadway shows she appeared in, and, if she ever loses her voice, she can always make a living displaying her gams. Miss Kirk's sex appeal, in fact, is not insignificant, and one number in which she plays games with the ringsiders is a real pleaser-teaser.

In spirit with the season, "White Christmas" winds up the show. Buddy Pepper is tops accompanying on the piano, while Frankie Carle ork does a nice job of back-stopping.

Comedian Bobby Van opens the program.