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# Musical Express

FRIDAY, APRIL 16, 1947

No. 28

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## FALLON GIVES THE B.B.C. A NEW PROPOSITION.

### Solution to most problems

(MUSICAL EXPRESS STAFF REPORTER)

**JACK FALLON**, energetic general manager of the Jack Hylton Agency, known throughout the entire entertainment industry for his unparalleled practical experience of bands and show business, has given the B.B.C. a proposition which, if accepted, would not only revolutionise the system of radio entertainment as we know it to-day, but would be a blessing to the musical profession in general. At the same time it would sound the death knell for many anomalies now in existence with tremendous beneficial repercussions. In an exclusive interview with "Musical Express" Mr. Fallon outlined his ambitious scheme as he presented it to the B.B.C.

"Two weeks ago," he said, "I was afforded an interview with an important B.B.C. official and a member of the actual Committee now dealing with the song-plugging question. Regarding this anomaly I said I believed implicitly that the solution to the problem lies in offering a greater financial reward to orchestras broadcasting."

"I offered to place at the disposal of the B.B.C. a large ballroom in the heart of London with a capacity of over 2,000 dancers. I suggested that they could either sub-let it or leave the control to us. In either case I said I was prepared to control it personally, drawing their attention to my incomparable practical experience in promoting ballrooms, bands, etc. My idea was that the B.B.C. should offer bands an inclusive contract (with binding clauses prohibiting plugging) to play for dancers and to broadcast from that hall at the same time.

"I guaranteed payment of the bands' fees in addition to the radio fee due to them from the B.B.C. Obviously the remuneration for bands broadcasting under these circumstances would be quite handsome and would satisfy even the most expensive orchestra leaders.

"The general idea is for the B.B.C. to broadcast a different orchestra nightly while I would be presenting a different attraction nightly. I pointed out the tremendous advantage to the B.B.C. of having a permanent establishment for their installations, to say nothing of being able to offer unprecedented rehearsal facilities all day long. Such rehearsal arrangements are, to my mind, vitally important.

## PREAGER TO TOUR COUNTRY FOR 4 WEEKS

Commencing April 20, Lou Preager will take his band on a four weeks' tour of the country, doing one-night stands. This tour has been ably arranged by his brother, Alf Preager, who feels that Lou should visit provincial towns in order that fans who are unable to visit London will have an opportunity of seeing the band. Preager has not been out on the road for two and a half years, and all credit must go to his brother for convincing him that a tour would be a good opportunity to entertain the public, who listen to the band on the air but are unable to see him in person.

Preager has just signed a contract for another year at Hammersmith which will make his sixth consecutive season at that popular Palais de Danse. During his absence Ronnie Pleydell will take a ten-piece band into the Palais. Pleydell has recently been resident at the Ballerina Restaurant, Bournemouth, and has broadcast a number of times.



Eileen Orchard pictured here is the new vocalist with Lou Preager and his orchestra.

Eileen Orchard, who toured with the Ebebe Daniels, Ben Lyon overseas show "Hi Gang" and broadcast over the American Forces Network with the A.A.F.H.Q. Band, "The Esquires," has joined Preager and will be seen with him on tour.

The places at which the band will appear, commencing April 20, are as follows: Southsea, Ventnor, Southampton, Folkestone, Dulwich, Margate, Bath, Derby, Nottingham, Wigan, Bedford, Cheltenham, Weston-super-Mare, Cardiff, Southport, Scarborough, Grimsby, Buxton, Leicester, Stoke-on-Trent.

## £500 "WRITE A TUNE" COMPETITION WINNER



Musical Express picture at the Hammersmith Palais during the broadcast showing Margaret Lockwood, Paul Rich and the winner of the £500 prize, Miss Jennie Parker, composer of "You went away and left me." Box and Cox took the number up and found they had published a winner.

## RABIN-DAVIS

On April 28 the London dancing public will be able to see Oscar Rabin and Harry Davis at the Cricklewood Palais for two weeks from that date. The band will be broadcasting on April 18 and 25 at 6-6.45 p.m. in the Light Programme.

Last Sunday the band made its fiftieth visit to the Capitol, Cardiff, and broke all previous records by playing to a capacity crowd of three thousand eight hundred people. New additions to the band are Don Rendell, the well-known tenor player, George Taylor, trumpet, who has taken the place of Ernie Watson, Norman Farnham, baritone, who takes over from Frank Dowie. On April 22 the band will play at the Albert Hall for the finals of the "Star" Ballroom dancing championships. The Cricklewood engagement was, of course, arranged by Jack Fallon of the Jack Hylton organisation.

Oscar Rabin and his band with Harry Davis have just been signed to a long-term contract by enterprising E.M.I. chief Wally Moody. The band will record for the Parlophone label and its first sides are scheduled for June release.

## BLUE ROCKETS' Second BROADCAST IN 8 DAYS

This Saturday, April 19, at 10.15 p.m. the Blue Rockets will be heard in a programme called "Saturday Night Out." Harry Gowan will be the vocalist with the band. This is the Rockets' second broadcast in eight days.

## SMITH'S TALKING GUITAR

Last week at the Nut House Roger Smith astounded the patrons with his electric Hawaiian guitar that actually speaks. Smith told our reporter that it has taken him four years to perfect this instrument that he calls the "Electra-vox." It faithfully reproduces the human voice and sings songs. No equipment is used other than the guitar itself and it is uncanny to hear the instrument say "Good evening, Harry," or whatever name is suggested by the visitors to the club. Roger Smith will be remembered mostly as a bandleader at such clubs as both the Old and New Panama, Mudies and the Blue Lagoon. He is now doing a solo act with his new guitar and is booked up in variety for one year solid.

## L.S.O. SUNDAY CONCERT WITH SOLOMON

Solomon was the soloist at the Albert Hall last Sunday, with George Weldon conducting the London Symphony Orchestra, and we thank them all for making the Liszt Hungarian Fantasia for piano and orchestra so thoroughly enjoyable. Liszt's works can at times be very dreary, particularly the more typically Hungarian, but on Sunday we found ourselves wondering how we could ever have been indifferent to him. Here was a brilliant virtuoso work played by a brilliant virtuoso artist—what more could we ask?

Incidentally, the famous—the infamous—Albert Hall echo also appeared with Solomon in a most exasperating form, and accompanied him throughout the treble passages with a succession of dull thuds, and we were reminded, even during the rondo in Beethoven's Second Concerto, of the old acid comment, "The Albert Hall is the only English concert hall in which a British composer can hear his works performed twice!" A pity which ever way you look at it.

D. H.

## MENZIES LEAVES CHURCHILL'S JACKSON REORGANISES BAND

FROM Jack Jackson we learn that Hamish Menzies will leave the band this week-end. Menzies is currently appearing in films and feels that filming all day and appearing at the Club until the early hours of the morning is too great a strain. He will in future be concentrating mainly on his motion picture work.

Jackson also tells "Musical Express" that the complete band will be reorganised due to the fact that Pete Chilver and Jack Fallon will be joining another organisation and Ronnie Scott and Tomie Crombie are also leaving the band to fulfil other arrangements. At the time of going to press there is no statement as to who will comprise the new band.

## ADAM BROADCASTS TO FRANCE

Although the B.B.C. insist on adhering to their policy of not broadcasting late-night dance music from night clubs, this does not worry the French Radio Diffusion, who have scheduled direct relays from several well-known West End night spots within the next few months.

On May 22, Paul Adam and his stylish nine-piece band will broadcast for 40 minutes from the Milroy Club. The transmission is scheduled to begin at midnight.

This sophisticated combination are to branch out into a wider field of popular entertainment within the next few weeks, when they begin a series of Sunday concerts. At present time no details of engagements were available, but dates will be announced in a forthcoming issue of "Musical Express."

## MUSICAL EXPRESS HEARD ON A.F.N.

A CHARMING gesture was made to "Musical Express" on A.F.N. last week when ace record spinner Ralph "Muffat" Moffat praised our paper and Stuart S. Allen's American Commentary "Transatlantic" on his "Midnight in Munich" show.

Moffat thanked "Musical Express" for doing a swell job and said that Allen's column was his main contact with all the latest developments back home. We thank YOU Ralph. Keep up the good work.

## HEATH DEBUT IN VARIETY

THIS week, at Finsbury Park Empire, Ted Heath and his Music made their debut in variety. This band is first class entertainment for variety audiences of all ages.

Your reporter was present on Monday night and the audience consisted mainly of family people so different from the staunch Heath followers. They showed their warm approval at the end of the show. "Musical Express" learns, on going to press, that two numbers that slowed the running of the show have been altered, and we feel that with these changes Heath will play to capacity wherever he appears in variety.

## MOSS KAY UNDERGOES OPERATION

Moss Kay, well-known tenor player, has entered the Royal National E.N.T. Hospital, Grays Inn Road, for an operation for sinus this week. Moss will be in the private ward and will be very pleased to see any of his friends who care to visit him as from this week-end onwards.

## Stapleton's first visit to Southampton

This Sunday, April 20, Cyril Stapleton will take his band to the Guildhall, Southampton. This will be his first visit to the South Coast and will give the fans a chance of seeing the band they have heard so much on the air.

Fine support to the bill will be given by Gerry Willmott and Jean Cave, and Stapleton will have with him as vocalists Dinah Kaye and Dick James. The concert has been ably arranged by Bill Elliott, in conjunction with Gerry Willmott.

## DANIELS BACK FROM AUSTRIA Holds Conference for Austrian Musicians



Joe Daniels addressing a Musical Conference during his recent tour of Austria.

Joe Daniels, who returned last week from a tour of Austria with his band, told "Musical Express" of a musical conference they held while in Austria. Promoted by the Public Relations Officer and Welfare Services, the conference was held in order that Austrian musicians could ask the Daniels band questions regarding music, arrangements, types of playing and any new trends in the British field of music. Austrian musicians were forbidden to play dance music during the occupation and have, therefore, been greatly retarded during latter years.

One of their greatest complaints is the fact that they cannot get up to date music and arrangements, and have to rely on listening-in to British and American broadcasts in order that they can take down the arrangements. The Austrians enquired who has the best band in England at the moment, to which Daniels and his boys replied that, in their estimation, the Ted Heath band was the best. Daniels tells us that the general standard of musicianship is not very high there at the moment, but that this is quite understandable due to recent restrictions. He heard several very good musicians and said that the section work is good, but outstanding soloists are very few and far between.

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## Squads busy period prior to Butlin's

The Squadrons, who will be broadcasting this Saturday, April 19, have several very busy weeks in front of them prior to their engagement at Butlins commencing June 1. Week commencing April 21 they are at Birmingham Hippodrome followed by weeks at Cardiff, Brighton, and May 26 week Swansea. During the weeks of May 5 and 19 they will be doing one-night stands and broadcasting and on May 11 will appear at the Palace Theatre for a Charity Concert in aid of the Variety Artists Ladies' Guild Orphanage.

## DINAH SHORE ON A.F.N.



Exclusive Musical Express picture of Dinah Shore and her firm star husband George Montgomery taken just before they went on the air last Friday as guests in the C.B.S. Army Recruiting Show "Sound OR." The series is re-broadcast regularly by A.F.N.

## LUCRAFT AND DOUGLAS ON BAND PARADE

On Monday, April 21, Howard Lucraft and his Music and Leslie Douglas will be the two orchestras on Band Parade. Douglas and Lucraft are old friends, due to their long association when they were in the R.A.F. together. Douglas will have as vocalist that very fine singer Pearl Carr, and will, no doubt, be using his vocal group The Serenaders, and Lucraft will have Bette Roberts and a welcome visitor in Johnny Green.

## Lombard takes Band on Mauretania

Paul Lombard, well-known tenor sax playing bandleader, will take his band on the Cunard White Star liner s.s. Mauretania when she sails from Liverpool for New York on April 26. The line-up of the band will consist of Lombard leading and playing tenor, clarinet and doing the vocals, Max Harris pianist and arranger, George Latham trumpet, Stan Fraser drums and vibraphone, and D. Raine Young on bass.

Geraldo, who is contracting the bands for the Mauretania, will also supply a straight quartette for the voyage.

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THE VOICE

HARDIE RATCLIFFE IN "DAILY WORKER"

Hardie Ratcliffe, Assistant General Secretary of the Musicians' Union and Secretary of the D.B.D.A., writes an informative article in the "Daily Worker" of April 5. He explains accurately and at some length the situation between bands and B.B.C. created by the Holmes enquiry.

B.B.C. INFLUENCE

Mr. Ratcliffe rightly says, in the "Daily Worker," that the influence of our broadcasting service is enormous. That it does not follow public taste—it CREATES it! How right he is.

THE BARROW BOYS

Our contemporary, "The Melody Maker," in its editorial column last week, deplores the wearing of the gay and colourful ties (so popular in America) by our own leading musical personalities.

THE ROSE ROOM

It is to be deeply regretted that the Rose Room as we always knew it at Chez Auguste is no more. New premises are to be found before that musical rendezvous becomes possible again.

MARCH-APRIL RECORDS

Parlophone and H.M.V.

New Orleans Masquerade (Melssner, Mills). Leavin' Town (Jarvis, Melssner). By Zep Melssner's Dixieland Band. Parlophone R.3028.

"MASQUERADE" is aptly titled: it is not so much a composition as a pot-pourri. Starting out as "Fuzzy Wuzzy Rag," it goes into "High Society" by way of "Alexander's Ragtime Band" before settling down as an unabashed crib of "South Rampart Street Parade!"

The only good purpose served by jazz revivalist groups is that they do, in fact, revive antique styles in all their fullness. At best, however, old-Dixieland is pretty shallow—but when, as here, hardly an attempt is made to recreate the traditional polyphonic ensemble, the whole business is a futile mockery.

There is some pretty trumpet playing by Chuck Mackey, whom I noted in the Chicago Loopers' recording of "Can't We Talk It Over?" (Tempo A2) a couple of months ago, and Melssner's clarinet playing is quite pretty, too. . . . But then, is prettiness a quality to applaud in this kind of music?

Don Stoval is the most consistent and the most consistently exciting musician in this little band. His playing strikes a balance between the terseness of Pete Brown and the fluidity of Willie Smith.

"MASQUERADE" is aptly titled: it is not so much a composition as a pot-pourri. Starting out as "Fuzzy Wuzzy Rag," it goes into "High Society" by way of "Alexander's Ragtime Band" before settling down as an unabashed crib of "South Rampart Street Parade!"

"Swamp Fire" (Mooney). Just Squeeze Me (Gaines, Ellington). By Duke Ellington and his Orchestra. H.M.V. B.9636.

Even when it made its first appearance as "Subtle Slough" a few years ago, the tune of "Just Squeeze Me" had little enough to recommend it except Rex Stewart's marvellous trumpet embroidery and a superb beat. There is all too little of Taft Jordan's tinsel Rex in this reincarnation, and all too much of Ray Nance's singing, which would disgrace a self-respecting castrato!

It may be that I am hypercritical, or that I have been put off by unworthy material, but I get a distinct feeling of "sloppiness" about these performances, a sort of "don't give a damn" attitude that I've never before associated with Ellington's music.

Jazz

Edited by DENIS PRESTON

PLEASE, MR. MOODY . . .

Rumour reaches me that at least one of the recordings for whose early release I made a special plea in these columns about seven weeks ago may shortly make its appearance in the lists—Woody Herman's "Your Father's Mustache." If and when, here is an issue that should win your wholehearted support.

Be-bop is still woefully absent from our monthly record supplements. As Hugues Panassié would say: "It is indefensible!" "H.M.V." have immediately available the finest small band Gillespie recording yet made, by title: "Anthropology." This, together with its original Victor backing, "O! Man Re-Bop," would be an admirable coupling for local release. A good sister-cd by Dizzy's big band is the double-sided "One Bass Hit," from the Musicraft catalogue.

With the sole exception of two Mezzrow-Ladnier discs it is three years to the month since we had a recording of truly historic interest from "H.M.V.," and that was Sidney Bechet's "Maple Leaf Rag" (B.9408). Surely, therefore, it isn't too soon for us to expect one of those vintage Jelly-Roll Morton's for which I keep pressing, or, alternatively, a coupling like "Indigo Stomp"—"Blue Piano Stomp," by the Johnny Dodds Trio, available for some time on Swiss "H.M.V." JK. 2197?

FOULER ENGLISH USAGE

Edgar Jackson . . . was educated at Claymore and Cambridge. . . . (Vide "Rhythm on Record"—1936).

"Best part of the side is Esie piano solo—even though he does come in (and keeps going) at a slightly slower tempo, which he certainly no more should have done than one can imagine he intended to do."

(Edgar Jackson, "The Gramophone"—April, 1947).

FAMOUS CONDUCTOR IN ACTION



A series of striking pictures of Toscanini in action rehearsing with the N.B.C. Symphony Orchestra.

Part three in our series . . . THIS STUDIO QUESTION

by George Melachrino

EDITOR'S NOTE

PURPOSELY avoiding the word acoustics as much as possible while delving into the studio problem appertaining to recording of orchestras from the standpoint of the musician, we may be able to obtain a new slant on a much discussed problem.

Too often this problem is disguised or subjugated to scientific jargon which, while in itself accurately describes many of the fundamentals, in no way brings us nearer a solution.

Acoustics is a highly mathematical science that explains everything except the one thing that so often bobs up and ruins all theories, the accidental building of an acoustically perfect hall, the reason for which no-one can rightly explain.

Many studios built on sound scientific principles have been miserable failures. Sometimes new factors and new microphone technique has upset pre-conceived theories and we find all kinds of additions to the wall panelling to fit in with the new theory.

A short time ago the Chief Recording Engineer of Gaumont-British (now re-named Gainsborough Studios) at Shepherds Bush, began to re-design the main recording theatre. Adapted from the acoustic system devised by the Disney Studios in America, its chief point is to prevent cross reflections and reduce the number of microphones used to a minimum, viz: one or two. This scheme instigated under great difficulty due to shortage of material, has proved a tremendous success.

It follows that as with all inventions appertaining to the recording and reproduction of sound, the fundamental problem is that of the studio itself. The blitz in its destruction of concert halls and studios, greatly added to the present-day difficulties also increased by the expansion of recording due to increased British Film Production etc.

It is surprising that the B.B.C. when building their headquarters at Portland Place could find no-one with sufficient knowledge or foresight to design a concert hall and a series of studios suitable for large and small orchestras.

We could continue in this strain for some length but this is merely reiteration of things already known without in any way portraying the problem as a whole. It is therefore interesting that George Melachrino's ideas so aptly sum up the points that we have been making in this introduction.

Musical Quiz By FRANK DIXON

- 1. A well-known folkie celebrates the infliction of traumatic lesion of the caudal vertebrae upon a trio of myopic rodents. Is it a canon?
2. "His marriage was that of a homosexual to a nymphomaniac." Whose?
3. "Per accompagnare il CANTO." Introdúz. (6 battuto); I STROFA, dalla C alla D (12 battuto); COLO, dalla A (16 battuto); II STROFA, dalla D al (12 battuto). BAILO, se ricicciato, dalla B.

Solution on Page 4.

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MASTER KEYS AT PALLADIUM



The Master Keys appearing in "Here, There and Everywhere" now show at the London Palladium.

IN common with everything else in this country, the world of music suffers from a housing shortage. Somehow we manage to get by, but it is really a most serious problem.

In the sphere of gramophone recording it is not too bad, for someone with considerable foresight built a first-class, all-purpose studio at St. John's Wood, and happily it came through the war undamaged. This studio, however, is greatly in demand with a veritable queue for bookings, and is, in point of fact, not one quarter sufficient for the need, a factor occasioned by the shortage of studios in other fields of the musical world as well as by the excellence of the studio in question.

It is perhaps surprising that constant enquiries for the hire of this studio come from film companies, for the film industry though not desperate or severely held up by it, is in a bad way for sound recording accommodation. There are a few good film recording theatres, a few bad ones, and a few "closed sets", but a HIGH PERCENTAGE OF OUR MUSIC FOR FILMS IS RECORDED IN LOCAL TOWN HALLS.

I must hasten to add that this is no bad thing really, because the said halls are excellent as far as the purpose goes. They are acoustically good, but the recording gear used must of necessity be mobile and housed in a van, sound cables and telephone lines must be laid and taken up before and after a session, mikes, music stands, etc., must be humped and, of course, a screen must be set up and dismantled. Lack of essential amenities complete a picture of slight discomfort which probably makes no difference to the result, but makes one wonder what a builder would say if asked to construct a modern house with an axe.

Leaving the film makers to lock up the Old Town Hall, let us examine the position of the biggest studio users of all time—the B.B.C. Here the situation is grave. Apart from an appalling lack in the number of studios, the size and acoustic value of most of them is inadequate except for small combinations and plays.

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# Transatlantic

## AMERICAN COMMENTARY BY STUART S. ALLEN

I HAVE just received important news about the latest developments in the American Federation of Musicians' Foreign Musicians' dispute. This ban prohibits foreign players and orchestral combinations from appearing in the U.S. without official Union permission, and many people over here are under the false impression that the order is aimed principally at British performers. The domestic music situation in America is highly unsettled just now and the Unions are having a difficult job ensuring that their members get a square deal. The ban was intended originally to restrict the flow of South American musicians and bands into the States, where they were willing to work for less money than their North American cousins, thus resulting in hundreds of native music makers losing their jobs.

Since individual orders covering certain nationalities would have been bad policy, a general resolution was drafted to cover all foreign countries, and it is unfortunate that its effects are now being felt very strongly in Britain and other European countries. The position is apparently becoming equally embarrassing to American band leaders, who are anxious to make foreign tours but find that these will only be possible on a reciprocal basis. A big Union conference has been called for June, and I have it on the highest authority that the case for British, if not all foreign bands, will be brought up for review at the meeting. All the big New York booking agencies have made representations to the executive, pleading that their plans for sending such outfits as the Basie, Ellington, J. C. Heard, Barnet and Goodman orchestras abroad are entirely dependent on their decision as to whether or not they will permit the importation of British bands like the Squadronaires, Ted Heath and Geraldo for seasons in the U.S.A.

Oh Brother! Reports have it that vocalist Bea Wain and husband Andre Baruch almost named their new baby boy "Hey Baba Rebab" because they thought it would sound kind of cute to call him "Hey Baba Re-ba-ba-Ruke" — that's

# AT THE CONSOLE

## with ROBIN RICHMOND

This week, my friends, I'm putting my column at the disposal of my fellow organ-grinder, JOHN MADEN, the popular radio star, who gave the following very interesting talk to the Association of Theatre Organists... It's all yours, John...

The title of my talk is "The Touring Organist." They say "A rolling stone gathers no moss"—but on the other hand it gets a heck of a polish. Remember the Crosby tune "Running around in circles getting nowhere"? The question is—Is the touring organist getting anywhere, or is the resident organist getting in the groove—and I don't mean that necessarily in a swing sense. However, I'm here to give you some of my experiences as one of the travelling variety.

I would like to give you first of all a few factors which in my opinion help towards the success of a guest organist. Firstly, Temperament. All musicians are supposed to be temperamental, probably 90 per cent. temper and 10 per cent. mental. I have no reason to believe that the average organist is any more temperamental than his brother musicians, but he is still susceptible to atmosphere. After a few months of touring, he can almost sense, as soon as he enters a theatre, whether that audience will be organ-minded or otherwise.

The manager plays a big part in creating this atmosphere, and if he can give the organist a feeling of "It's good to see you back again" this has a decided psychological effect on that man's performance. But if on the other hand he is made to feel that he is an intrusion in the programme, I'll wager that the organ show will sound exactly like that. There are some very understanding and very organ-minded managers in the theatres today and the Granada circuit is by no means backward in this respect. One of them, with justifiable pride, showed me the organist's room in his theatre. There was a comfortable chair, a lamp shade over the lamp, a well-tuned piano, curtains at the window, running hot water—and even a letter of welcome on the wall! There are exceptions however, but even they would admit that it takes an organist to break the house record—if only to clear the house!

Second on my list is co-operation and publicity. This is essential for both resident and guest organists, but for the latter I think it is doubly important. I say this because a resident is, so to speak, on home ground, and if his bill space is cut down a little one week, he may have double the amount on the following week. But with a guest it is THIS week or NEVER.

I remember visiting a theatre on one circuit and such was the lack of publicity, that far from being a guest organist, I was definitely a surprise item.

The resident organist has certain advantages over the touring type. Take for instance the organ itself. If there should be anything wrong with the instrument he will take good care to see that this is put right because HE is the organist next week. A guest suffers a big disadvantage here, but my circuit try to overcome that by having a complaints book on every console, any defects are— or should be— entered in the book so that the tuner can rectify the trouble on his next visit.

On the question of a music library the resident scores again. He would probably keep all his music and slides etc. at the theatre, whereas the traveller can only take a small part of his library around with him, the rest would have to be at home. Heaven help the wife of the touring organist who lives in a pre-fab. Talking of wives—a touring organist can have a wife who doesn't expect to see too much of her husband.

Choice of music to suit the varying types of audiences calls for a good deal of thought, but generally speaking I find that an organ show is very much like a film, if it's good it will go down equally well in all districts. Mr. Cecil Bernstein gave organists some sound advice in his article in "The Theatre Organ World." He said that our audiences want good music now. After hearing the reception given to the London Philharmonic Orchestra by an audience of 3,000 school children at Tooting the other week, I am convinced that our audiences of tomorrow are going to be even more critical of weak shows, but on the other hand they will be even more receptive to the kind of music which every musician likes to play.

One of the things I miss most since returning to "civvy" street is the good natured companionship which existed in the forces. I find that the life of a touring organist is a fairly lonely one, because I never stay long enough in a place to get to know people.

I have very pleasant recollections of my five years' stay at the Gaumont, Coventry. I made many friends there, and was able to take part in local musical and other social activities. Some organists have been resident for even longer periods than this, but to play sufficiently varied shows and maintain one's popularity for that length of time is a little difficult to say the least.

Most of my work in the R.A.F. was on the welfare side of the service. I was a musician and my job was to entertain. A famous pilot once told me that he rated entertainment as second in importance to flying. That is a matter of opinion, but in these days of austerity and shortages, I know that the theatre organist can do a lot to lighten and brighten the lives of the public, and I feel that our job as entertainers today is as essential now as it was in the darkest days of the war. The organist is the only human element in an otherwise 100 per cent. mechanical show, and although our lighting plots are reduced to a bare minimum, we can still "shine" if we put our shows in an individual and polished manner.

Every organist's "pipe dream" job is probably one where he has choice of instrument and conditions—but until that dream materialises I'm afraid I must be content to remain—"A wandering minstrel."

What has happened to those musicians who went to America? They were Albert Harris and Benny Winestone, tenor. If anybody knows I should be interested to hear.

Like very much the George Mitchell Swing choir; though not as great musically as their American counterparts they are very pleasant listening.

Famed for his training of blind musicians, pianist teacher Claude Bampton is coming back as an instrumentalist. In order to get the feel of things he is playing club dates with a small outfit.

Was delighted to read the story of a man who gave up thirty pounds a day in order to lead a band for some O.R.B.S. recording sessions by the end of April. What, no Sundays?

Cabaret is the latest attraction at swing sessions these days. Hamish Menzies at Feldman's, then Jimmy Edwards, the Windmill's trombonist comedian—How soon will they have the Windmill gate?



"I can't help this coupon business, after all I've got to stand in front of the band so I should be the one to have the trousers!"

# Accordion Times

Edited by J. J. BLACK

ONE of the questions which I am most frequently asked by beginners and advanced players alike is: "How long should I set aside every day for practice?" Many players seem to find this quite a problem, and ask for my candid opinion. They also ask for advice on what types of material to concentrate on in the time which is given over to "the daily dozen."

The amount of time to devote to the daily practising period will, of course, have to depend on the individual, the amount of spare time which he has available, and the particular direction in which he hopes his accordion playing will take him. If he is preparing for an examination or a stage or broadcast audition, for instance, he will be well advised to devote as much time as is humanly possible to the perfection of his technique. In a case of this sort, success or failure may hang upon the amount of daily practising time which he is able to put in.

I have known several outstanding players, who drew their livelihood from playing the accordion, who did not consider their day's work complete unless they had put in eight hours of solid practising. These players were in the virtuoso class of course, but they recognised the fact that constant practice was essential if they were to stay in that class. One man I knew

would spend hours repeating a comparatively short phrase until he felt he had achieved his own high standard of perfection. Then he would set it into its context, and spend perhaps the best part of another day playing, time after time, the section of the particular piece of music of which it was a part. I speak with first hand knowledge on this matter, since for some time it was my misfortune to work in an office adjoining the room in which my friend did his practising!

However, there are few of us who can devote the best part of every day to practice, and perhaps it is just as well from the point of view of good relations with our neighbours that we cannot! For most of us the problem will resolve itself into deciding how much of our leisure time at the end of a normal day's work we are able to spend in this way, and, as I said above, this will largely have to be decided by each individual player for himself. The "daily dose" is a very good thing. Better to give up a few minutes daily than an hour once a week, or an hour daily rather than even eight hours on one day of the week only.

If it is late when you are able to start, and you do not want to disturb the neighbours, remember that you can use the accordion as a "dumb" instrument simply by omitting to operate the bellows. This is not an ideal method of practising of course,

but it will assist in developing facility in fingering. It is worth while putting a little thought and patience into the preparation of a plan of work, so that whatever time we are able to devote to practice will be spent in the most profitable way possible. The first rule, then, should be exercises first. These are most important, because they are—or should be—designed to help you to develop the technique necessary to spend plenty of time on scales and arpeggios, playing them very slowly at first, and taking great care with the fingering. Practise with each hand separately at first, and then, very slowly, with both hands together. Master everything thoroughly at slow speed before you attempt any speeding up, and never pass over a mistake thinking to correct it "next time." Remember this new version of an old proverb: Never put off until tomorrow what you can get right today!

For those who are beginners, I do not think I could do better than conclude this discourse on practice by repeating the words of Frank Barton, well-known teacher at the British College of Accordionists in the years before the war. "Whether or not you become a good player," said Frank, "and how long it will take you, are matters which rest entirely with yourself.

Examinations will be held during the present month at Wolverhampton (April 22) and Birmingham (April 23). During May, examinations will be held in the following towns: Reigate, Grimsby, Scunthorpe, York, Rochdale, Wakefield, Halifax, Manchester, Walsley, International Orchestra in the Royal Albert Hall. This time he will be playing with an orchestra under the baton of Mr. A. Gregory, who arranged the previous performance.

Tollefsen will also be playing in Tuesday Serenade on April 22 in a programme which will also include the B.B.C. Theatre Orchestra under its conductor Walter Goehr, and the B.B.C. Theatre Chorus, trained by John Clements. "Tolly" is also booked to give a recital in the Central Hall, Southampton, on April 26.

It is a symptom of increased activity in the accordion world that the British College of Accordionists is planning further extensions of its examination centres. Unfortunately several of the pre-war centres have not yet been re-opened because of the difficulty of finding suitable organisers. The B.C.A. examinations have proved their value to pupils and teachers alike, and the overwhelming majority of teachers are glad that there is a centre which is recognised throughout the country as an official examining body, a "place of resort" to which any questions relating to general musical knowledge and the playing of the accordion can be referred. It is hoped to contact suitable local organisers in the districts which are not already covered by existing centres, and anyone who thinks that he has the necessary qualifications is invited to apply in the first instance to the National Accordion Organisation, c/o these offices.

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When the B.B.C. inaugurated their "Accordion Club" series a few months ago they had no idea that it would prove to be such a popular show. For that reason they scheduled it only for six broadcasts, and, despite the enormous public and press response, were unable to continue the series due to previous programme commitments. Undaunted, producer Charles Chilton and bandleader Tito Burns persuaded the planners to return "Accordion Club" to the air. At last, after many postponements "Musical Express" is able to announce that this popular programme will definitely return to the air on April 24, scheduled for a ten-week series.

But, and this is the catch, "Accordion Club" is not to be heard by Home listeners. The broadcasts will take place from 1.30 p.m.-2.0 p.m. and will only be relayed abroad in the Overseas service—unless the fuel restrictions are restored. "Accordion Club" will not be broadcast in the Light Programme.

On the night following the broadcast, (April 25), Tito and his Sextette will travel to Bradford, where they will appear, by arrangement with Sid Phillips, with the Stardusters at an experimental dance promoted by a big engineering firm. Should this dance prove successful, Tito tells us that the Company intend to promote similar affairs at their other factories in the provinces.

## IN THE NORTH

by Billy Butler



Neville Bishop well known Bandleader discusses his summer plans with M.E. Northern Representative Billy Butler. Bishop is still interested to hear from musicians with a flair for showmanship.

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### Stardusters at Norwich

The Stardusters, the well-known small co-operative outfit who are establishing themselves very firmly these days, will play at the Sampson and Hercules Ballroom, Norwich, from June 3 to September 28 in place of the regular band who are taking a period off. They will be playing from Tuesday to Saturdays only and this will leave them Mondays and Sundays free for one-night stands, broadcasts and concerts.

On May 12 they will pay their second visit to Seaburn Hall and May 15 will mean a return visit to Cleethorpes where they will play until the end of that month.

### Niedzielski Plays Chopin at Wigmore Hall

The Chopin recital, which included the four scherzi and four ballads given by Niedzielski, the Polish pianist, at Wigmore Hall on Saturday, April 12 was conspicuous for its tempestuous vigour. In three of the scherzi (excluding the E Major) we had, of course, all the defiant turbulence and poignant anguish, but here was a Chopin who not only cried and shrieked against the storm, but at times, it seemed, thundered with it.

The other Chopin, of delicate and faint stirring breezes, who appears and reappears with such tender reassurance in the ballads (notably the F Major) was, for some of us, lost in the force and the brightness of the storm.

The concert was most enthusiastically received and finished on the more cheerful and heroic mood of the well-known A Flat Polonaise.

D. H.

### New Band at Beach Ballroom Aberdeen

Al Lever and his new dance orchestra have opened at the Beach Ballroom, Aberdeen. Lever has been director of dance music and light entertainment for the Weston Super Mare Corporation for more than eight years and last year was M.D. at Ilfracombe. The line up of his band, which is receiving great approval from the patrons of the Beach Ballroom, is as follows:—Fred Hayden, violinist and deputy leader; Arthur Gibson, pianist; Freddy Webb, drums; Jack Hill, bass; Tom Henry, doubling trombone and trumpet; Bill Maher, trumpet; David Charles and Al Alexander, alto; Harry Singer and Wally Bishop, tenors.

### Billy Amstell on Orbs Again

Billy Amstell and his Quartette did another Orbs programme last Wednesday. Amstell, who believes in getting variety into his programmes, gave a programme of numbers written by all the members of his band. The line-up of the Quartette was Alan Metcalfe guitar, Malcolm Lockyer piano, Ronnie Peters bass and Norman Burns drums. Vocals were capably handled by Alan Dean, who also sang a number he had composed himself.

### Mouthpiece Stolen

Vic Knight of the Blue Rockets Dance Orchestra had his Arnold Brihant mouthpiece stolen from his flat during the interval on April 8 at Grafton Rooms, Liverpool. The number is Alto 8386 and it is in white and black Tonalin. If anyone has any news of this mouthpiece would they kindly contact Mr. Chevalier at 23, Albemarle Street, W.1.

### AEOLIAN STRING QUARTET

At the invitation of Austrian organisations the Aeolian String Quartet (Alfred Cave and Leonard Dight, violins; Watson Forbes, viola, and John Moore, cello) are giving five concerts of Chamber music in Austria at the present moment. Evelyn Rothwell, the oboist, whose husband, John Barbirolli, is conducting in Vienna this month, is appearing with the Quartet in a performance of the Moeran Fantasy. The British Council has assisted with the arrangements and the following British composers' works will be included in the programmes:—Benjamin Britten, Purcell and Moeran.

THIS column will always be glad to report school musical activities and would like to hear from people like young red-headed pianist-organist Peter Greenwood, who to-day told me something of the activities of the Burnage County Grammar School Music Society. The Club has been going strong since last September and works along ambitious lines, for it is shortly to send a string trio to wax some hitherto un-recorded works by Corelli and other early Augustan composers. It is possible for the young musician to achieve recognition more quickly on the dance side of the business; but many youngsters do sterling work for classical music, and we feel they should receive due publicity.

Now is the time when leaders in provincial towns start lining up their summer sea-side engagements. Among the best of this type of engagement are those presented by Neville Bishop at Great Yarmouth and Gorleston. The line-up for the Floral Hall, Gorleston, comprises one of Manchester's best-known bands, that of Morris Mack. With Morris himself leading on alto, we have: Bernard Bowler, trumpet; Vince Vaughan, Los Tucker, Jack Rider, saxes; Dave Ryan, bass; Charles Maycock, piano; and Ralph Green, drums. Incidentally, the talent of this group is by no means confined to music. When you want some chemicals analysing you would be well advised to consult Dave Ryan; and Charles Maycock has a strong flare for radio dramatic scripts. . . . his latest contribution was aired in Radio Rhythm Club on March 29 when the Overseas Service, presented "Collectors Corn," which he had written in collaboration with "Musical Express" scribe, Frank Dixon. Bishop has not yet settled the personnel of the orchestra. Yarmouth. But when his engagement starts concurrently with that at Gorleston on June 12 he hopes to be directing an all-star line-up.

Latest Hotel to open in Yorkshire—the Ilkley Moor Hotel, at Ilkley, has interesting musical arrangements, as you would expect in an establishment managed by noted West End hotelier, Elwyn Jones. The band is Stan Smith and his Tunemasters. Stan tells me that he has been leading outfits for broadcasts from Rome, Algiers, Athens, A.E.F. and B.F.N. during his six years with the R.A.F. and he has worked with such notabilities as Reggie Forsythe, Isay Bonn, the Southern Sisters, the Western Brothers and many others.

After a season with Eric Winstone at Skegness, Stan accepted his present engagement where he leads Jack Newstead, piano (late of Norman Collins); Freddy White, bass (late of Joe Orlando and Louis Levy); Mike Adams, drums (late of various B.F.N. studio groups and recently demobbed from the Army). I have an invitation to see them when I am in the district, and, given an opportunity, I will accept it. It's a pity the band has no brass section, otherwise it would be entertaining to see it confronted with the traditional problem of Ilkley Moor.

George Irving with his Orchestra, which has been operating from Manchester during the winter months, has now returned to his native Warrington where he is both lessee and musical director at the popular Embassy Ballroom. Business is very brisk for the six nights a week that they operate, and the old-time nights are a special attraction.

At Altrincham, Cheshire, one of the few 100 per cent. M.U. bands is that of Bert Clegg, who leading on first trumpet, directs: Charles Rogerson, trumpet; Eric Calvert, Charles Berry, Percy Barlow, saxes; Bert Humphrey, piano; Bill Gregory, bass; and Bert Pugh, drums. Manager Bob Hesford keeps this band busy; they play regularly every Tuesday at the Stamford Hall, Altrincham—and they do many one-night stands both at this and other venues in Cheshire, where their all out swing policy has made them very popular. However, they are equally capable of providing sweet and light music, as is evidenced by their recent engagement for the Altrincham Mayoral Ball.

BILLY BUTLER.

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## CLARENCE RAYBOULD VISITS FINLAND

Clarence Raybould leaves England to-day to conduct concerts in Finland until April 28 under the auspices of the British Council and at the invitation of Finnish organisations. His programme includes the following British works:—Vaughan Williams' "The Wasps"; Elgar's Two Interludes from "Falstaff"; Bantock's "Helena" Variations and "Pierrrot of the Minute" and Moule Evans' "Spirit of London." Raybould's visit is a return one as the result of many requests since his last appearance in November, 1946. He will also be conducting in Sweden on his way to Finland and Norway on the journey back to London.

## M.U. Holds Big Recruit Meeting

On Sunday, April 20, the Musicians' Union is holding a meeting at the Woolwich Labour Institute at 12 o'clock midday to recruit and enrol members for the Musicians' Union. Speakers will include members of the London District Committee and Alex C. Mitchell, the General Organiser, and their speeches will be followed by questions and discussions. To give the meeting an informal tone Harry Gold and his Pieces of Eight have been invited to appear and give the meeting a musical appeal. Central London is practically one hundred per cent. organised, and this recruit meeting is to organise outer London districts and make London a one hundred per cent. Union organisation. Entrance fee to the Musicians' Union is 10/- and a weekly subscription of 1/-.

## SOLUTION TO QUIZ

(on page 2)

- Yes, "Three Blind Mice" is a round.
- Tschalkowski.
- At the top of the band parts of "Julien" — Tango-Milonga, published by Ricordi.
- He was probably a Frenchman. "Les sonnettes des cuivres" et de la batterie etait trop forts. The tone of the brass instruments and the drums was too strong; though "cuivre" means "copper" as well as "brass instrument."
- (b) is correct. "Anche" is a reed.

## Barrymore Dedicates Concerto

Katharine Hepburn is the inspiration for Lionel Barrymore's latest musical composition, "Piano Concerto No. 1." It is dedicated to the "Memory of Clara and Robert Schumann," in honour of the actress's current Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer picture, "Song of Love," story of the Schumanns.

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