

Recordings Reports on Current Pop Releases

HITS AND MISSES

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PERFORMER, SONG, DATA	REPORT
Cole, King: Volume 3. Capitol album 59, \$3.12	The always tasteful Nat offers some evergreens well worth shelf room against a nostalgic winter evening. The piano playing of the leader is, as ever, supple, the vocalizing typical. Good ensemble work, too.
Fina, Jack: "Piano Portraits Boogie" and "Samba Caramba." MGM 10135, 79¢	There are a lot of things that could be Fina in Carolina, but he manages deftly with his "Boogie" to combine tune with take-off, no easy job. The "Samba" is also aptly done, and both sides are well-recorded. There's also an orchestra.
Jeffries, Herb: "My Blue Heaven," "If I Could Be with You." Exclusive 12-00, 79¢	The Jeffries voice is pleasant enough, especially when backed by such able instrumental work. This includes a jumping trombone choir in "Heaven," a mildly twinkling piano in "If I Could Be with You."
Maxwell, Robert: "Harpist's Holiday." Columbia album C-149, \$3.75	The holiday Maxwell offers is probably All-Saints' Day, for the musicians he venerates include Debussy, Liszt, Kern, and Cole Porter. But the playing is all ingratiating, the listening easy.
Munro, Ronnie: "Wine, Women and Song," "Fledermaus," "Roses from the South," "Artists' Life," "Emperor Waltz," etc. London 130-133, ea. \$1.05.	Four discs of Strauss waltzes in dance tempo, notable for the full, brilliantly distinct recording, in the FFRR manner. Munro has apparently listened to a Harry Horlick disc or two, or else they have a common background. It's certainly not Vienna.
Morales, Esy: "Jungie Fantasy," "Easy Does It." Rainbow 10050, 79¢	Some fantastic, oddly derived flute playing here, against a rhythm section of the sort associated with Morales. The "Fantasy" is easily the preferable of the two sides.
Piaf, Edith: "La Rue Pigalle." Vox album VSP 305, \$3.90	Six lessons, not from Mme. La Zonga but from Mademoiselle Piaf, show why she is a reigning favorite. Much vocal variety, and an always compelling sense of musical drama.
Ross, Lanny: "Moonlight and Roses," and "Winter Song." Majestic 1196, 79¢	An old favorite and one that Ross no doubt hopes will be a new favorite sung with the easy voice and fine control this singer has so well mastered. Stephen Kisley leads the orchestra, and the Amory Brothers—how many can there be of them?—provide a vocal background here and there. "Moonlight" has rarely been better, and the recording is first class.
Scott, Raymond: "I Love You, Yes I Do," "A Sad, Sad Story." MGM 10132, 79¢	The once enterprising Scott is here working with rather shoddy material. "I Love You" is an attractive ballad, neatly arranged, well-sung by Collins, who is more Sarah than her leader is Vaughan (Monroe). The companion item sounds suspiciously like "A Maiden's Prayer." Not so much fun as "Huckleberry Duck."
Sinatra, Frank: "You're My Girl," "Can't You Just See Yourself?" Columbia 37978, 75¢	A pair of tunes from "High Button Shoes" which strive for the gingham-nostalgia of "Oklahoma." Hard to do without Hammerstein and Rodgers.
Spivak, Charlie: "The Gentleman Is a Dope," "You Are Never Away." Victor 20-2600, 63¢	If Miss Daye sang "The Lady Is a Tramp" when she was with Gene Krupa, this would give her prior rights to a flat Rodgerstraton on both sexes. This job is effective, and well supported by Spivak's orchestra. Tommy Mercer is heard on the other "Allegro" excerpt.
Stubby, Capt.: "Buffalo Gal," the "Dum Dot Song." Majestic 1205, 79¢	A splendid old minstrel tune and a current novelty, done with vocal cuteness and a budget of effects more appropriate for a cartoon sound track. The "Bucaneers" are Capt. Stubby's musical chattel.
Stafford, Jo: "Haunted Heart," "I'm My Own Grandma." Capitol 15023, 79¢	The first of these is solid enough to become a standard—a test which will be proved, c. 1960, when Dinah Shore's youngest revives it. Paul Weston does a sound, balanced effort with the accompaniment. The second title is a bid for the fans of Stafford's "Tim-Tay-Shun," and not very terrific.
Torme, Mel: "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," "Three Little Words," "I'll Always Be in Love with You," "Love, You Funny Thing," "The Day You Came Along," "Fine and Dandy." Musicraft 528, 529, 530, ea. 79¢	Each of these is as much melodic rope as a singer requires to string us along; or, together, enough to hang himself. The sound is high, thin, and breathy; the manner without grace. His employers call him the "Velvet Fog," which is one kind of weather forecast; we'd say the "Cotton Mist" and be done with it.

up for the movie version of "Forever Amber." Bearing that title, composed by David Raksin, it is an appropriately glamorous strain encumbered with one of the lyrist Johnny Mercer's rare lapses into solemnity. He has crowded on enough emotion to stir a whole convention of book clubs.

You may hear Mr. Mercer make it difficult for Mr. Raksin through the fairly relaxed agency of Tony Martin (Victor 20-2576-A, 63¢)—the reverse is good, old "My Sin"—or in the comparatively lurid setting of Harry James, his trumpet, his orchestra, and his vocalist Marion Morgan (Columbia 38039, 75¢).

And now for the month's pleasures unalloyed. A perfect definition of style is Frank Sinatra's revival of Irving Berlin's "What'll I Do?"—tender, sustained in feeling, musically poised, with fine counter-melodic turns in the accompaniment of Axel Stordahl (Columbia 38045, 75¢). Another very pleasant Sinatra performance is "If I Only Had a Match" (Columbia 38053, 75¢), in which Stordahl gets credit for a plaintive, muted orchestration which makes an agreeable tune sound almost like a big one. One of my favorite efforts of recent months is a "Siboney" by Joe Liggins and his band (Exclusive 1170, 79¢). This little colored combination of two saxophones and a rhythm section, with Liggins at the piano, manages to give the utterly offhand, casual effect to be had from good pick-up bands in the heat of lively and unpretentious parties. The atmosphere reminds me of the late Fats Waller's small group. The wonderful "Siboney" is played this time, for wallop; Liggins takes a vocal which is nothing but a string of Latin-American clichés; in one passage someone produces a rhythmic sound which a member of my household describes as "the smacking of great under-water lips"; the playing throughout is full of ease and pulse and musical fresh air. Such meetings of good basic material and simple, high spirits are hard to beat.

Another modest disc which has rewarded me is Phil Brito's rendering of the classic "Where Do You Work-A John?" and a nice, unadorned piece of Brown and Henderson schmalz called "An Old Sombrero" (Musicraft 531, 79¢); the latter may also be heard in a placid rhumba version by Buddy Clark and Xavier Cugat's orchestra (Columbia 38046, 75¢). A new album, "Blues" (Victor P192, \$3.57) contains examples of the form, by experts, ranging from the good to the indifferent.

WILDER HOBSON.

