

# Red Hot, and White

THE open season on hot combinations continues and the hunting is great. After last month's adventures with Bob Wilber's new little band in the New Orleans manner, we come upon some superb Dixieland from Doc Evans's new Dixieland Five. This column's distinction between the New Orleans and Dixieland styles, by no means an unusual one, is simply that Dixieland is the white musicians' adaptation of the original free-style polyphony of the colored New Orleans jazz bands. The basic musical language is the same but, in general, the colored boys pronounce it with a vibrant lyricism as against a cooler, and often irresistibly subtle, polyphony on the part of the whites. So much for the pedagogy. Doc Evans was long immersed in Minneapolis and St. Paul. He has been getting around more recently, and two albums for Disc records have further extended his reputation as one of the finest cornets in jazz history. He is in the clean, jetting, highly melodic tradition of the late Bix Beiderbecke; indeed, to these ears he is the best thing that has come along in that line since Beiderbecke's untimely departure. And Evans need make only the most brotherly of bows to Beiderbecke's shade. He is very much his own man.

His new output is an album called "Jazz Heritage," the first product under the arresting label Art-Floral-Record-Shop (AFRS album 1, \$5). Whatever that may mean, the contents

is a newly assembled Dixieland five of the first water. In addition to Evans there is his Minneapolis crony Don Thompson, playing an eminently just and snorting trombone à la George Brunies, and there are three Detroiters! Johnny McDonald on the clarinet, his wife Joyce, very much at home at the ragtime piano, and Doc Cernardo at the drums. This band has just about everything the Dixieland addict could ask. Its leader is a brilliant soloist. Thompson gives a stirring exegesis of the term sliphorn. And the ensemble playing has the buoyancy, the infectious and lucid interplay of parts—everything audible—that is only to be heard from the best. The piano and drums, especially the latter, have been under-recorded, but even this, perversely, may contribute by way of emphasizing the exciting musical game between the front-line instruments.

There remains a complaint from this corner. It is on the score of the tunes chosen. Now it is one of the clichés of jazz criticism—and an egregious error, to boot—that the tune does not matter except as a base for improvisations by the players. This blithely overlooks the fact that, in any musical ear, even when the theme is not being played by any single instrument, it will continue to sound as an unplayed part (which, of course, is precisely what allows the musicians to improvise upon it). In other words, the tune is there whether anyone is playing it or not, and if it is a poor

tune it contributes its poorness to the general effect just as if someone were playing it. Our complaint with Doc Evans's tunes is not that they are poor. On the contrary, they are all jazz classics—"Georgia Cake Walk," "When the Saints Go Marching In," "High Society," "That Eccentric Rag," "Basin Street," "Ballin' the Jack," "Shim-me-sha-wabble," and "Strut Miss Lizzie." Our complaint is, rather, that they are forever being revived, and that we would like to hear a band of Evans's stamp go to work on some of the less ubiquitous classics. In an effort to be helpful, we will name another eight: "Maori," "Play that Barbershop Chord," "Hesitating Blues," "Tishomingo Blues," "Milenberg Joys," "Copenhagen," "Memphis Blues," and "Walkin' the Dog."

The colored musical population has, of course, been the ultimate source of just about everything in jazz, from folk blues to bebop. This department, in its usual catholic vein, owns to being an admirer of one Afro-American contribution which has received a good deal less recognition than many of the others, but is quite as inimitable. This is a purplish kind of dance music, so lush of instrumentation and voice that a few more accumulated drops of the juice would cause the swollen fruit to drop from the vine. It may be thought that a good deal of Duke Ellington's music fills this bill, and so it does. But we usually do not care for it in Ellington, preferring his bronze to his purple. The purple music is always precarious, but we sometimes have a taste for it when it doesn't quite squash. The latest example is a treatment of Harold Arlen's fine, long-spun tune "That Old Black Magic," which slips almost by itself into the magenta register, at the hands of the bebop master, Dizzy Gillespie. The treatment is not bebop. It consists of the ripe baritone of John Hartman against a prime-moving bongo and maracas background by the veteran arranger Jimmy Mundy. The effect is voluptuous in the extreme, if not in excess. The disc is contra-indicated for the Ladies Aid and Haydn Society.

And since so many unkind words have been said of bebop in this column, we hasten to note that the other side of the record, "Jump Did-le Ba" (RCA Victor 20-3481, 79¢), also gave us much pleasure. Great and skilfully directed energy is always impressive in itself, and in this record the musical mannerisms of bebop get such dynamic expression that we were carried along with the wind. And Gillespie, no question, is a tremendous trumpeter. His entry after the vocalizing is an event of the month.

—WILDER HOBSON.



Doc Evans—"in the clean, jetting, highly melodic tradition of the late Bix Beiderbecke."

# Report on LP:

## How They Sound—IV

THE latest stack of LP's provides a steady demonstration of high merit and general acceptability, without either of the flaws (difficult tracking and unsettled pitch) which in the earlier experiences of the microgroove method were so disturbing. Of the newer editions only a rare LP falls below the 78 level, and the event causes surprise. If one looks backward a year the progressive mastering of the new technique appears spectacular.

FALLA-KOCHANSKI: "Suite Populaire Espagnole"; HINDEMITH: *Sonata* (1940). Isaac Stern, violin, and Alexander Zakin, piano. (78 rpm of "Suite" in Columbia album X-314, \$2.95. LP of both on Columbia ML 2050, \$3.85. Duration of Suite 12m 10s; Sonata, 12m 20s.)

LP is characterized by fresher projection of Stern's many-hued instrument. This has become an improvement to be taken for granted in the later LP's, and if other features are equivalent or nearly in the two versions it should make LP the better purchase.

GOULD: "Spirituals for Orchestra"; COPLAND: "A Lincoln Portrait." Artur Rodzinski conducting the N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra. (78 rpm in Columbia albums 832, \$3.95, and X-266, \$2.95, respectively. LP of both on Columbia ML 2042, \$3.85. Duration of "Spirituals," 16m 12s; "Lincoln," 14m 4s.)

All of these show a pretty high level of recording skill, but there is so much more bright metal in the LP of the "Spirituals" that no one could prefer the 78. The violins, too, shimmer where they are a little clouded on the 78. In short the LP gives a truer example of how very good an orchestra the N. Y. Philharmonic is than any 78 has given.

MOZART: *Quintet in D, K.593; Quintet in C Minor, K.406. Budapest Quartet, and Milton Katims, viola.* (78 rpm in Columbia albums 703, 3.95, and 830, \$3.95, respectively. LP of both on Columbia ML 4143, \$4.85. Duration, K.593, 24m 10s, K.406, 20m 37s.)

This C Minor Quintet, a reworking of a "Serenade for Wind," is only fair in both 78 and LP. Happily, the greater work in D which occupies the

obverse of the LP is smoother in both versions, and the choice thus goes to the microgroove whose vinylite re-sounds warmer and clearer than the shellac.

RAVEL: "L'Enfant et les Sortilèges." Soloists, Choir, and Orchestra of the French National Radio. (78 rpm in Columbia album MOP 29, \$6.95, LP on Columbia ML 4153, \$4.85. Duration 43m 40s.)

A work almost ideally sized for LP, but the very fine 78 is superior to the adequate microgroove in those details wherein we expect LP to excel: enunciation, timbre, clarity, and vitality.

"Philadelphia Orchestra Program." Eugene Ormandy conducting. (78 rpm on four single discs, \$4; LP on Columbia ML 2043, \$3.85. Duration of four works, 31m 15s.)

The LP is goulash but rich indeed when tasted. In "Invitation to the Dance" and the Overture to "Freischütz" there are magnificently fat horn outbursts equally creditable to orchestra and engineers; the essential tone of the Philadelphians is candidly

presented in all four works and the deep bass is easy and unobtrusive. The Polka and Fugue from "Schwan-da" offers opportunity for brilliance which is not abused. In fact this LP is not brilliant; it is warmly effective, and its components with the exception of the Overture to "Ruslan and Ludmilla" are definitely preferable to the 78's.

STRAVINSKY: "Symphonie des Psalumes." CBS Orchestra and Chorus conducted by the Composer; and "Symphony in Three Movements." N. Y. Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra conducted by the Composer. (78 rpm of first in Columbia album 814, \$3.95; of second in Columbia album 680, \$3.95. LP of both on Columbia ML 4129, \$4.85. Duration of first, 21m; second, 20m 50s.)

The unification of the vocal choir in the "Psalm Symphony" is so thoroughly neat on the LP that it is not necessary to labor other points of advantage. The "Symphony in Three Movements" is excellent in both short and long-play, with the superiority of the latter type cogently illustrated in the expansion of cyclic range, with the usual benefit to plangency and strength. Here the usual is unusually compelling: here the microgroove's advantage is at the expense of a very good 78.

—C. G. BURKE.

### Summary

For the convenience of readers a recapitulation of some earlier impressions is appended below. An asterisk means that the indicated superiority is considerable. "Indeterminate" means either that one version resembles the other very closely or that there is a conflict of merits or defects defying dogmatic opinion.

#### Preferable on LP

BARTÓK: "Conc. for Orch." (Reiner)  
BEETHOVEN: Sym. 1 (Walter)  
" Sym. 9 (Ormandy)\*  
" Trio 4 (Busch-Serkin)\*  
BIZET: "Carmen" excerpts (Stevens et al)  
BRAHMS: Conc. 1 (Serkin; Reiner)  
DVORAK: Sym. 4 (Walter)\*  
FOSTER: Songs (Eddy)  
MOZART: Operatic Arias (Pinza)\*  
" Quintet in C (Budapest)\*  
SCHUBERT: Sym. 9 (Walter)\*  
SIBELIUS: Sym. 7 (Beecham)\*  
STRAVINSKY: "Fire-Bird" and "Sacre" (Stravinsky)

#### Preferable on 78

BEETHOVEN: Conc. 4 Casadesus)  
" Conc. for Violin (Szigeti)\*  
" Qt. 14 (Budapest)\*  
" Sym. 6 (Walter)\*  
" Sym. 8 (Walter)\*  
HANDEL: "Messiah" (Sargent et al)  
HAYDN: Sym. 88 (Ormandy)  
MOZART: Sym. 39 (Szell)  
RAVEL: Quartet (Budapest)  
TCHAIKOVSKY: Conc. for Violin (Milstein)

#### Indeterminate

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| <p>{ BEETHOVEN: Qt. 4<br/>HAYDN: "Horseman" Qt. (Budapest)<br/>FALLA: "Amor Brujo" (Reiner)<br/>MAHLER: Sym. 4 (Walter)</p> | <p>{ MOZART: Conc. for 2 Pianos<br/>" Conc. for 3 Pianos<br/>PROKOFIEFF: "Classical" Sym.<br/>RIMSKY-KORSAKOV: "Russian Easter"</p> |
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