



## Light from Paris

**B**Y far the most impressive study of jazz music I have read is now awaiting translation into English. This is "Hommes et Problèmes du Jazz" by André Hodier (Paris: Au Portulan, chez Flammarion, 650 frs.). The French author is sufficiently remarkable among jazz writers because he is at once a trained musical analyst, a composer, and an experienced performer of jazz as well as other kinds of music. But in addition to this he has one of those lucid, orderly minds which have so often ornamented French criticism. If, as in the case of other Frenchmen, his logic is sometimes more apparent than his sense of life (or, in this case, of music), that does not happen often; this is obviously a man who puts a first-rate intelligence at the service of a first-rate set of sensibilities.

The book is not a history of jazz, but an examination into the nature of the music—true probing with fine scalpels—and a set of conclusions with which I find it very easy to agree. Foregoing any lengthy comment until Hodier appears in English, I will simply say that he emphasizes the evolutionary nature of any art form and distrusts the whole tendency in jazz to hark back to the past. The New Orleans pioneers, he would say, have done their work. Perhaps the greatest figure of the New Orleans tradition, Louis Armstrong, is still very much with us—a jubilant master. Meanwhile, like any other art, jazz has continued to feel out new directions. Hodier's contemporary idol is the spirited and super-subtle inventor, Charlie Parker. In the true French polemic spirit, Hodier ends his book with a scorching and detailed attack on Hugues Panassié, who in France represents New Orleans nostalgia at its most dogmatic and intolerant. It is a pleasure to have jazz writing of such learning and élan.

A new and promising little band blends arrangements in the modern vein with fine group improvisation: "Jazz Idiom" by the Dick Sutton Sextet (Jaguar JP-082). The group consists of trumpet, valve trombone, baritone saxophone, string bass, drums (there is no piano), and is particularly fortunate in the light, lyric soprano saxophone playing of Steve Lacy. Trumpeter Sutton is his own arranger, the tunes being "Avalon," "Softly As in a Morning Sunrise," "I'm Coming

Virginia," "I Would Do Most Anything for You," "Liza," "How About You," "You're Lucky to Me," and "Peg O' My Heart." These favorites emerge with a very fresh, musicianly accent.

The busy California breeding grounds have yielded another attractive modern alto saxophonist, Lennie Niehaus, who plays a lively reed session with Jack Montrose and Bob Gordon, tenor and baritone saxophones; Monty Budwig, bass; and Shelly Manne, drums (Contemporary C-2513). Over at RCA Victor the album annotator Bill Zeitung seems to have sustained a rather dizzying experience. Referring to "The Panic Is On," by the Nick Travis Quintet (RCA-Victor LJM-100), he writes: "Cherry bombs, roman candles, and skyrockets could not possibly produce a greater display of pyrotechnics . . . a cumulative, stunning effect which cannot be vouchsafed even the products of nuclear fission . . . Freddie Elssasser, the genial engineer who has recorded everything from bop to Bartók, developed the worst headache of his career; and, in general, the electricity produced by the tempestuous music was echoed in a kind of thunder and lightning which could be distinctly heard in the neighboring Third Avenue saloons." I am at a loss to account for the seizures of Messrs. Zeiting and Elssasser, for when I



Alex Kallao—"on a spree."

place "The Panic, etc." on the phonograph what I hear is competent, thoroughly disciplined modern jazz by trumpeter Nick Travis, tenor saxophonist Al Cohn, and a rhythm section. Agreeable enough, but in no way jolting.

There is a dulcet guitar program by the excellent Barney Kessel (Contemporary C-2514) with a quartet including drummer Shelly Manne. The tunes include such romantic matters as "Speak Low" and "A Foggy Day in London," and Kessel himself is the author of detailed program notes which will be of special interest to other guitarists. The late French master of the instrument, Django Reinhardt, was also a light composer of special piquancy, and a new album contains eight of his pieces played by himself and the Quintette of the Hot Club of France, with Hubert Rostaing on the clarinet (Period SPL-1101). The reproduction is faulty technically, but it will do for Reinhardt addicts with a set of tone controls.

**O**F A number of piano albums, I have specially enjoyed a Bud Powell program (Norgran MG N-23). The flashing jazz master, one of the faster and most original men in the business, is here heard in a ruminative, rather lush mood, playing such numbers as "Moonlight in Vermont" and "My Funny Valentine." I suppose many would call the disc "commercial," but I have never felt that the handsome treatment of good popular songs deserved that opprobrium. Alex Kallao, a blind young pianist, plays popular music with elaborate virtuoso embellishment, suggesting a concert artist on a spree. In this manner, however, he is deluxe, and his "An Evening at the Embers" (RCA-Victor LJM-1011) also features the stunning string bass playing of Milton Hinton. A new French find, Martial Solal (Contemporary C-2512) sounds altogether too taut for me; he seems to be strung tighter than the piano wires, and so far as I am concerned rhythmic ease, at any tempo, is a cardinal jazz principle.

The revival of traditional, New Orleans-style jazz on the West Coast was originally the work of Lu Watters's Yerba Buena Jazz Band (with today's favorites, Bob Scobey and Turk Murphy, at the trumpet and trombone respectively). Its great recording year was 1946. A full thirty-six sides of the 1946 series may now be had for the first time on LPs (Good Time Jazz GTJ L-12001, L-12002, L-12003). This is a trove of vintage numbers, from ragtime to Watters originals, played by an outfit of strong, simple appeal. —WILDER HOBSON.

# Hear why "Toscanini's Orchestra" refuses to die

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The men have said their piece, in the words of Berlioz, Wagner ("Meistersinger" Overture), and Tchaikovsky ("Nutcracker Suite"). Critic Irving Kolodin of The Saturday Review has said he was "astonished" by the Toscanini qualities of these remarkable performances.

It is to you, the music-loving, record-buying public of America that we appeal for the all-important oxygen of dollars needed to make this resolve a reality. A ten-dollar contribution brings with it our gift to you of this remarkable document. More, much more, would be welcome. Or if you want to contribute without receiving the record—use the other coupon. . .

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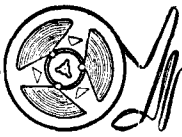
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## "Ipsophone" Is on the Line

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** This is an excerpt from "Techniques of Magnetic Recording," by Joel Tall of the CBS technical staff, to be published by Macmillan in January 1955.

**T**HE "Ipsophone," manufactured at present in Switzerland, is one of the most ingenious machines ever devised to record and answer telephone calls automatically. In order to achieve its various purposes it makes use of a multiple-spool wire recorder, seventy-one telephone relays of various kinds, amplifiers, timing cam-gears, and manual switching circuits. The Ipsophone has been in use for several years in Europe, largely taking the place of the "personal telephone-answering service" in the USA. In addition to recording incoming calls, this machine may be used to record dictation and telephone conversations and by means of a secretly-coded, voice-impulse-operated relay system, will play back to its owner, calling it from any telephone set in the world, all the messages that have been recorded in his absence. The owner may then, either from any remote point or his home or office, cause these messages to be completely erased and the Ipsophone readied for any new messages. It has provisions for recording or transmitting messages over either of two independent telephone lines. This is how the Ipsophone works:

Suppose that you were to call Mr. Smith, whose telephone line is connected to an Ipsophone. If your call is not answered within thirteen seconds the automatic answer of the Ipsophone (previously recorded on one of the reels of wire), after twenty seconds at most, will be "This is Mr. James A. Smith's Ipsophone. Your message will be automatically recorded—wait—please start speaking now."

After this invitation to you the Ipsophone is switched over to recording (on the second pair of wire reels with a capacity of five minutes) and your voice, whose sound intensity has been increased or decreased as needed, by an amplifier, is recorded on the wire. If you do not begin speaking within twelve seconds after the invitation "please start speaking now" the Ipsophone automatically disconnects from the line. It also automatically disconnects when you replace the receiver and no further

acoustic impulses reach it over the line.

Ten push-buttons on the Ipsophone control panel, numbered from 1 to 9 and 0, are the "secret code" buttons. Any desired combination of ciphers can be formed by means of these buttons. The one selected to form the code is pressed down. Turning the key on the panel sets the code according to the ones selected, let us say 3, 5, and 9, and pushes out the depressed buttons which cannot be pressed down from that time on. Only Mr. Smith knows this code or someone in his confidence.

Your call to the Ipsophone has been recorded now, along with some others. Mr. Smith, whose phone and Ipsophone are in London, is in Paris on a business trip. He calls his phone from Paris for his recorded messages. The Ipsophone answers the phone, since no one is there to forestall its going into action by picking up the receiver and, about fifteen seconds later, announces: "This is Mr. James A. Smith's Ipsophone. Your message will be automatically recorded—wait—" The word "wait" informs Mr. Smith that he may cause the Ipsophone to play back by twice saying the word "hello." The first "hello" must be said immediately after he hears the word "wait," that is, within  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a second. The two "hellos" must be clearly separated from each other, since they actuate voice impulse relays. The Ipsophone, after "hearing" these two "hellos," instead of repeating "Please start speaking now" calls out the numbers 1 to 9 and 0, leaving an interval of two seconds silence between each number and the next. Mr. Smith will then enunciate the words "hello-hello" after each of the numbers which constitute his own secret code—that is, after each of the numbers, 3, 5, and 9. If he follows procedure correctly the Ipsophone will then begin playing back all the previously recorded messages just as soon as it finishes counting up to 0.

If Mr. Smith makes a mistake in saying "hello-hello" after the wrong number, or by saying "hello" only once, the machine will not play back. Instead, after counting up to 0, it will send out a buzzing sound lasting ten seconds, and repeat the previous routine, thus giving Mr. Smith another chance to get his messages played back to him. If Mr. Smith

does not get his "hellos" said after the correct code numbers this time, the Ipsophone switches off and disconnects the phone.

If Mr. Smith has followed procedure correctly all the messages will be played back. At the end of this reproduction period, which is indicated by the machine emitting a short buzzing signal, Mr. Smith may avail himself of these three possibilities:

1. To record after playback. If, after playback has been completed of all the accumulated messages, Mr. Smith wants to transmit a message for recording by the Ipsophone, he calls "hello" twice within two seconds after hearing the first buzz following the completion of playback. The Ipsophone is then ready for recording. When that is completed Mr. Smith replaces the receiver and the phone is automatically disconnected.

2. Erasing recordings after playback. If Mr. Smith, after having heard the messages, decides to erase them, he waits for the second buzzing signal which is sent out by the Ipsophone about two seconds after the first buzz which indicated the end of playback. After this second buzz he says the words "cancel-cancel" into his telephone mouthpiece. Again, these two words must be spoken separately from each other and clearly. The "message" recording reels of wire are then reeled back into starting position, undergoing erasure in the process.

3. Repeating playback. Should Mr. Smith decide, after hearing his messages, that he wants to listen to them over again some time later, he need only put the receiver down immediately after hearing the first buzzing signal. In this case, any subsequent message will be recorded in correct order and no erasure will take place.

If Mr. Smith, for some reason, does not put down his receiver after the first buzz, and gives no orders (either "hello-hello" after the first buzz or "cancel-cancel" after the second buzz) a third buzzing sound of slightly longer duration than the other two will be emitted, indicating that the Ipsophone is being disconnected from the line.

If Mr. Smith should have forgotten his code, or have said only one "hello," or have made a similar error in his approach toward getting the Ipsophone to play back its messages, after counting up to "0" the machine will have an intermittent buzz for ten seconds and then repeat its "call Text." If Mr. Smith,

