

Recordings Reports:

Jazz LPs

Data

Eddie Bonnemère: *Missa Laetare*. Bonnemère, conductor and organ; with eleven-piece band and the Lutheran Seminary Choir of Philadelphia. Fortress stereo, 32-2153-74, \$5.98.

Billy Butler: *This Is Billy Butler!* Butler, guitar; Houston Person, tenor saxophone; Ernie Hayes, piano and organ; Bob Bushnell, Fender bass; Rudy Collins, drums. Prestige stereo, 7622, \$4.98.

Wild Bill Davis: *Doin' His Thing*. Davis, organ; Bob Brown, alto and tenor saxophones, and flute; Dickie Thompson, guitar; Orville Mason or Jymie Merritt, Fender bass; Pretty Purdy, Chris Columbus or Earl Carry, drums. RCA stereo, LSP-4139, \$4.98.

Edmond Hall and Art Hodes: *Original Blue Note Jazz, Vol. 1*. Hall, clarinet; Sidney DeParis, trumpet; Vic Dickenson, trombone; James P. Johnson, piano; Jimmy Shirley, guitar; Israel Crosby, bass; Sidney Catlett, drums. On the second side Max Kaminsky replaces DeParis, Art Hodes replaces Johnson, Sid Weiss replaces Crosby, and Danny Alvin replaces Catlett. Blue Note stereo, B-6504, \$5.98.

B.B. King: *Live and Well*. Side 1: King, guitar and vocal; Patrick Williams, trumpet; Lee Gatling, tenor saxophone; Charlie Boles, organ; Val Patillo, bass; Sonny Freeman, drums. Side 2: King, guitar and vocal; Paul Harris or Al Kooper, piano; Hugh McCracken, guitar; Gerald Jemmott, bass; Herb Lovelle, drums. BluesWay stereo, BLS-6031, \$4.98.

Quintet of the Hot Club of France: *First Recordings*. Django Reinhardt, guitar; Stephane Grappelly, violin and piano; Joseph Reinhardt and Roger Chaput, guitars; Louis Vola, bass; Arthur Briggs, Alphonse Cox, Pierre Allier, trumpets, on two tracks; Eugene d'Hellemes, trombone, on two tracks; Alix Combelle, tenor saxophone and clarinet, on one track; Pierre Ferret replaces Chaput on two tracks. Prestige stereo, 7614, \$4.98.

Various Artists: *Boogie Woogie Rarities, 1927-32*. Meade Lux Lewis, Wesley Wallace, Blind Leroy Garnett, Cripple Clarence Lofton, Will Ezell, Charlie Spand, Jabo Williams, Cow Cow Davenport, Henry Brown, Charles Avery, pianos. Milestone mono, MLP-2009, \$4.98.

Pat Williams: *Think*. Williams, arranger and conductor; with big band. Verve stereo, V6-5056, \$5.98.

Report

Bonnemère is a Catholic who has successfully written music for masses in his own church, but here, filled with the ecumenical spirit, he has written one for the Lutherans. Unlike some of the others who have striven in this area, he uses jazz discreetly and simply. He knows that it has to be interpolated as a related element rather than a distraction, and that this somewhat depends upon familiarity. The jazz element and soloists

The first under his own name, this album gives Butler the prominence he has deserved ever since he was heard in Bill Doggett's band. He is a versatile musician, careful of his tone even when "bending" it to achieve bowed or singing effects, and he has a very positive rhythmic feeling that enhances numbers like

Although it is not specifically directed at the jazz audience, this contains several good examples of Davis's authoritative organ playing. His full, orchestral approach is laid aside from time to time, and on "Generator" he shows just how "wildly" he can swing. Thompson remains a very rewarding guitarist—lucid,

The all-star Hall session doesn't gel as well as might be expected. There are two takes of "High Society," and Hall and Dickenson are very much themselves on this and three other titles; but Johnson is rather subdued throughout, and what should have been a remarkable rhythm section is ill-recorded. Sidney DeParis redeems everything with playing that has "depth," as annotator Hodes claims. The first of his two muted trumpet choruses on "Blue at Blue Note" has

The first side was recorded live with King's regular group, the other in a studio with "some of the best young blues musicians in the country." Despite intimations to the contrary in the producer's notes, it is the younger men who sound tired. King is such a powerful emotional force that he succeeds in lifting most of the second side to an acceptable level, but his confidently swinging

The 1934-35 Ultraphone recordings in this collection effectively introduced Django Reinhardt to Europe and the world. At that time, the instrumentation of the group was extremely intelligent, for it gave the quintet an entree into rooms where jazz might not otherwise have been welcome. Both as soloist and accompanist, Reinhardt dwarfs his colleagues (he remains the one major jazz innovator Europe has produced), but

The original "Honky Tonk Train Blues" by Meade Lux Lewis opens this set, and none of the other selections matches it in terms of scope and execution, although Wesley Wallace's "No. 29" is a vividly evocative description in words and music of riding a freight train. Despite primitive techniques, consequent repetitions, and limited conceptions, the

This set seems to have been produced for the busy new breed of conglomerateurs, and Williams's part in the preparation of Noxzema, Diet Rite, Kent, and Dodge television commercials may have suggested his fitness for the task. The writing for the brass is handsome indeed, and so is the playing, but an album that must have been very expensive to

come to the fore in the long, concluding "Help Me, Jesus," which is joyfully performed; but Bonnemère's ability as a writer is best revealed in the moving instrumental background to the "Seasonal Gradual" on the first side. The choir does well, although it is required to sing a multisyllabic "Amen" too often. The word loses finality with more than two syllables.

"The Twang Thang" and "The Soul Roll." On the six-minute "Bass-ic Blues," he proves that the bass guitar could profitably be used more frequently in jazz. Hayes and Bushnell are admirable accompanists, and Person sounds like a much more mature saxophonist than on earlier records.

tasteful, and always recognizably himself. Brown does his talking-flute act again on "The Groaner," and it is certainly amusing when first heard. Two tracks by trio suggest that Davis, if organ bass recorded better, really needs nothing more than guitar and drums.

a quality of tragic nobility that should give the connoisseur a frisson or two. With one exception, all the performances are from previously unissued takes. Another Blue Note album, *The Funky Piano of Art Hodes* (B-6502), does more justice to Hodes's understated approach, offers a glimpse of that great trombonist, Sandy Williams, and, in the very last track, delivers a lesson to the other clarinetists via spare, sorrowing blues choruses by Omer Simcon.

solos tend to emphasize the stodginess of his accompaniment. Like other best-selling bluesmen, King's popularity was originally built on ungimmicked simplicity. In part, this album is another sad example of the tendency of record companies to back such artists with imitators and popularizers in an attempt to push them toward the excesses of poppyrock.

Grappelly has always been underrated, perhaps because of prejudice against his instrument. One of the more attractive performances is "Blue Drag," a number well worth reviving; the definitive version was, oddly enough, made for the same French label the previous month by Freddie Taylor.

work of the ten pianists reveals the fascinating variety within the blues world of the period. *After Hours Blues* (Biograph, BLP-12010) makes an illuminating supplement, most of the material in it having been recorded about twenty years later by pianists Little Brother Montgomery and Sunnyland Slim.

make turns out, in sum, to be a boring waste of time. Occasional solo statements by Zoot Sims (tenor saxophone), Marvin Stamm (trumpet), and Bill Watrous (trombone) are heightened in validity by their surroundings, just as Bix Beiderbecke's were long ago when he was part of Paul Whiteman's musical conglomeration.

—S. D.

NEW ORLEANS, JAZZ CAPITAL?

In terms of production, presentation, and programing, the second New Orleans Jazzfest (June 1-7) was probably the best and most uncompromising jazz festival yet. Paul Desmond, the famous saxophonist, referred to it during a television appearance as "the most civilized I have ever attended."

Many people were responsible for the artistic triumph and the "civilized" atmosphere that prevailed, but three must be singled out: the Voice of America's Willis Conover, who acted as musical director and MC; George Sanchez, who was production stage manager; and Doug Ramsey, who headed a hospitality committee that outdid itself in making the musicians and press feel really welcome and comfortable.

Conover's programs were primarily conceived for those who could appreciate "the difference between jazz vaudeville and jazz theater." Deliberate contrasts invariably preceded a well-planned climax, and everything ran to time as a result of lengthy rehearsals. The last was an especially significant gain, for at most previous festivals popular "hams" have milked audience applause, overrun their allotted time, and proportionately reduced that of worthy artists. At the final concert, devoted entirely to New Orleans music, one musician did, in fact, try to upstage everyone else, but the attempt was so ludicrous that he became an object of pity rather than scorn. As it was, the biggest success that night was scored by a solo pianist, Bob Greene, who re-created the musical idiom of Jelly Roll Morton with skill, sympathy, and taste.

Several other pianists emerged with great credit. Eubie Blake, eighty-six years old, was in sparkling form, playing a wonderful variety of styles and tunes that ranged from his 1899 "Charleston Rag" to "I'm Just Wild About Harry" and his perennial "Memories of You." On the way, he remembered Luckey Roberts with "Spanish Venus" and John Philip Sousa with "Stars and Stripes Forever," breaking from march to swing on the latter in the accepted New Orleans manner. Jaki Byard, one-fifth of a formidable house band, saluted Louis Gottschalk by building an extremely imaginative improvisation

with blues and other elements around the New Orleans composer's "Banjo" and "Bamboula." (Gottschalk died just a hundred years before.) But the pianist most acclaimed was Count Basie, who delivered a sequence of matchless blues choruses with a totally unassuming air.

He and his band had flown in from Los Angeles a couple of hours before the concert began. Because no really appropriate venue existed in the city, big bands had seldom been heard there in recent years, so Basie's was received with special enthusiasm.

"It's great to have you here, Count," shouted an enthusiast in the audience.

"Thank you. It's great to be here," Basie answered. "I've sure been trying to get here a long time."

After the band had played an exciting set, four of the early alumni—Buck Clayton, Dicky Wells, Jimmy Tyler, and Buddy Tate—were joined by Basie and his rhythm section for "I Found a New Baby" and "St. Louis Blues." The unity and tremendous authority of Basie's present rhythm team was startling in this context, and not merely in comparison with its nearest rival at the festival. Then the full band, with Clark Terry and Zoot Sims as added soloists, returned for

a rousing finale on "One O'Clock Jump."

An hour afterward, at midnight, the band was swinging again, this time for dancers in the Royal Orleans Hotel, the scene of informal jam sessions on two previous nights. A dance has always been the place to catch Basie, and this occasion was in many respects the festival's peak. Spurred on by the presence of many musicians on the floor, the band played superbly until 4 a.m. Two hours later, it was on its way back to Los Angeles, apparently unruffled.

Other highlights included a warm, relaxed Sarah Vaughan singing "Just a Closer Walk with Thee" with a gospel choir, trading humorous scat vocal phrases with Clark Terry, and demonstrating brilliant musicianship within the context of three Benny Carter arrangements played by the University of Illinois Orchestra. The presence of this twenty-piece ensemble was an example of the festival's vision, for its standards were professional and it was used as part of the program in a fully professional capacity, not as a curtain raiser. There was a novel grouping of four veteran clarinetists—Tony Parenti, Raymond Burke, Harry Shields, and Louis Cottrell—playing "High Society" and another that contrasted the trumpet styles of three masters—Roy Eldridge, Bobby Hackett, and Clark Terry.

Terry was part of the house band—another praiseworthy Conover idea—that did yeoman service throughout the festival. With him, and Byard at the piano, were Zoot Sims (tenor



—Jack Bradley.

"A novel grouping . . . that contrasted the trumpet styles of three masters— Roy Eldridge [center], Bobby Hackett [right], and Clark Terry [left]." Also visible are bassist Richard Davis, pianist Jaki Byard, and Alan Dawson, drums.