

# FAN-DANGO

A STORMY PETREL UNTO YE

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## SATCHMO AT BILLY BERG'S.

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On Vine, just south of Sunset, there is now appearing the dean of all living jazzmen, old Satchmo Louis Armstrong. Billy Berg's, a nitery devoid of dance-floor and devoted usually to rebop, is now the jazz center of America (at least for me) with that golden horn of King Louis' pouring out those wild flights of musical fancy that have made Satchmo the king for a couple of decades or more.

We've only heard him once, so far, but that evening was one of the greatest musical events of my life. ~~xx~~ Come on, FAPS! Spend an evening with Armstrong vicariously.

Louis, for the first time in fifteen years, is playing with a small and intimate group. Forgotten are the unwieldy big bands which have so often gotten in his way, forgotten are the hit parade and the demands of the more unmusical public. Armstrong is now just playing what he wants to, usually one of the numbers he first waxed for the old Okeh label--and while he no doubt will eventually organise another big band and go commercial once more, he seems to be enjoying his vacation even more than I did, which is saying a lot.

There are six pieces in the band: trumpet, trombone, clarinet, piano, drums, and string bass. Piano and bass are nothing outstanding, just a couple of local white musicians. The trombone is in the capable hands of Jack Teagarden, who for my money is one of the two or three greatest tram men of all time in addition to being the best white singer. Clarinet is Barney Bigard, one of the two greatest New Orleans reed men and for a decade and a half a mainstay with Duke Ellington. Drums are the province of Sid Catlett, one of the best. And if that were not enough, there is Louis himself. What a band!

In each set, the band follows pretty much a fixed pattern, Armstrong featuring himself on every other number; and taking turns featuring Teagarden, Bigard, and Catlett on the others. One of the biggest kicks of the whole performance was the way Louis himself would be sent by the other men, particularly Teagarden, and the way Teagarden and Bigard would get so enraptured with Armstrong's solos that they'd just stand there open-mouthed and rolling their eyes like a couple of bobby-soxers. Those boys really love each others' playing.

Superlative among a whole evening of outstanding performances were Armstrong on THEM THERE EYES and BLACK AND BLUE (you should have heard the audible gasp of pleasure from the crowd when Louis announced the latter!); Teagarden on GOTTA RIGHT TO SING THE BLUES and one unnamed blues; Bigard on TEA FOR TWO; and Armstrong and Teagarden ductting on ROCKIN' CHAIR.

I could have done without one of the two drum solos by Big Sid, expert as they were; and even my tough ears suffered from the smallness of the room, which made one feel as though he were sitting up inside the bell of Louis' trumpet. But these were minor flaws indeed!

I have heard it said that Armstrong is all through, that he is a tired old man, that even if he were in his prime his music is passe. Nuts! True enough, this was not the Armstrong of the late 20's or very early 30's. After all, Satchmo is 47 years old, and has been blowing that horn for around 35 years. Not unlike an athlete, a brass man loses some of his oomph as he gets older. Louis no longer tries to see how high he can get, nor does he try to carry the whole show with that slender horn. But any question as to his being a has-been evaporated early in the evening when he took ONE O'CLOCK JUMP for the wildest ride it ever went on, playing a series of choruses that no brass man today could match, and which could have been surpassed only by the Armstrong of 1929-33. And his tone is just as warm and rich and compelling as it ever was, that joyously sad vibrato still tears your soul out just as much as it ever did, and that unsurpassed inventiveness is still right in there. And his singing, I do believe, is better than ever. When he finished singing BLACK AND BLUE half the people in the place had tears in their eyes. So did Louis.

And you should have heard that horn back up Teagarden's blues singing!

And then you should have heard Teagarden return the favor when Louis sang BLACK AND BLUE!

And heard Bigard play himself into such a complicated spot on TEA FOR TWO that it was even money if he'd come out of it--then pull himself out of the #hole with the wildest and most super break I've ever heard in my whole life! (That right there was a once-in-five-years kick.)

And the way Louis and Jack would look at each other and then go off on another of those unbelievable brass duets, with Bigard--great as he is--relegated clear off to one side.

That is the jumpinest band there ever was, the bluest, the sweetest, the hottest. If Earl Hines had just been on that piano, I'd quit listening to jazz, knowing that I'd never again hear anything that satisfied me.

No wonder Jess Stacy burst into tears when he heard them.

Man! You should have been there!

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#### THOUGHTS WHILE BAND-SAWING.

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Burbee is partly responsible for the name of this column. It seems that I never have a chance to mull anything over any more except when I get on the bandsaw at work and saw discs for a while. So it is that every time I do get to band-sawing I start getting wild ideas and immediately start rushing around the shop telling people about them. This column will be something of a rambling editorial, will also have what mailing comments I care to make. I refuse to be held responsible if I put something in here I thought of while I was NOT band-sawing.

---ooOoo---

About a year ago I mentioned in FAN-DANGO that I was losing interest in fandom and outlined the restricted scope under which I then intended to operate. The metamorphosis is now complete. My only remaining interest of a fan nature is FAPA. I neither collect nor read fantasy or stef, except incidentally, so I'm not a fan. My LASES participation is a thing of the past, though I still write for Burbee

now and then for old time's sake, and very rarely (three or four times a year) attend a meeting.

Fandom, in its ayjay facet, can still offer me something I want--the opportunity for occasional written self-expression. So long as I feel this desire, I hope to satisfy it through FAPA, though how often I neither know nor particularly care.

---ooOoo---

It probably will strike some of you as being rather odd that I should agree to help the OE, and even file for FAPA office, what with my oft-reiterated statement that I'm through with fandom. While I may be somewhat of an alarmist it seems to me that the collaboration between Vidner and Perdue came mighty near to wrecking this organization; I regard the small amount of official duties I have agreed to perform as a necessary evil that I must endure to try to keep FAPA from foundering altogether. Others could perform these same duties much better and much more enthusiastically than I will. But some few of us are going to have to make a certain amount of sacrifice to put FAPA back on its feet; if even as carefree a pair as Burbee and I can on occasion feel dutiful, can't some of you more solid members get off the dime? Huh?

I'm through preaching now, people.

---doOoo---

An interesting sidelight on national fan organizations may perhaps be worth jotting down for those of you who Believe in New Fandom, the NFFF, Cosmic Circle, and other similar groups. I just received the NFFF membership roster for July 1947, and was stunned to find that I am carried on the rolls as a member paid up through 1948. Well, I definitely paid NFFF dues in 1944 and 1945. 'Yes, there are skeletons in my closet too!') I may have paid dues in 1946, though I'm not entirely positive. But I do know that I've paid nothing for 1947 or 1948, nor do I intend to.

I've a notion to send NFFF a back issue Alhambra phone book, so that they can pad their roster with names of people who are more interested in their Movement than I am.

---ooOoo---

When I first came around the LSEFS, one of the choicer bits of gossip was the gory account of how Yerke and Bradbury got the club kicked out of Clifton's. Oddly enough, during the past year or so this story has been amended to "how Yerke got the club kicked out of Clifton's".

That's fannish gratitude for you; denying a guy his just due just because he lost his amateur standing.

---ooOoo---

That mushroom cloud in the west is not another atomic bomb on Japan, it is Helen Wesson reacting to my asking her if she was bragging or complaining when she remarks that she was "the only woman who has kept Fran Loney up half the night just gabbing".

And Helen, we used to have lots of ayjay affection on the staff of the college newspaper, but we had to cut it out--too many of the girls got pregnant.

Wesson's a swell gal. That evening I spent bullfesting with her was one of the most interesting and stimulating conversations I ever participated in. If she can hang onto her present sunny disposition and charmingly impractical idealism through another decade or so of adult life I'll be tempted to retract everything I told her that night when I was attempting to defend an attitude of down-to-earth realism against her head-on attack.

---ooOoo---

Laureate Nominations: Best Editing, Crane and Wesson, Warner,

Speer. Best Article: Burbee (AL ASHLEY, DISTINGUISHED NOVELIST), Wes-  
son (THE LONG WAY HOME), Warner (THIS HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH FANTASY).  
Humor: Burbee one-two-three (the articles on Al Ashley). Deserving  
of a Special Word: the anonymous character (according to Perdue it was  
Dunkelberger) who submitted that atrocious doggeral about the bedpan.  
That was childish, unfunny, and distinctly out of place in the mailing.  
Had I been OE I would have banned it on the perhaps shaky grounds that  
it does not "represent substantially the work of a member of FAPA".

---oo0oo---

Would some of you folks be so kind as to ~~xxx~~ air your views  
on the matter of cover-ups versus muckraking? I've always been one to  
speak my mind and to come out right straight from the shoulder, and  
often before I've gotten into hot water over it. My inclination is  
to rip right into any abuses I may encounter.

I recently had it very  
forcibly brought home to me that the LASFS is rotten with homosexual-  
ity. With a mixture of motives--a desire to have some excitement and  
a hope that by dragging the matter into the light I might force the  
LASFS to clean house--I ripped into this situation in a couple of  
articles which most of you have probably seen by now.

As might have  
been foreseen, the LASFS is irked at me. But I am stunned by the  
fact that the three loudest objectors are three of the most definitely  
heterosexual men in the place: Hodgkins, Daugherty, and Hart. They  
apparently are not annoyed by having the club filled with ripe fruits,  
but only enraged at me for having had the temerity to mention it. I  
would have thought that these fellows would approve of any attempt  
to make the club into a place that one could take his wife or sweet-  
heart; at least would not have jumped into a position which leaves  
them in the awkward position of almost defending the homosexuality  
which I know all three of them abhor.

I am well aware that there is  
a distinction between mere muckraking and an honest attempt to expose  
a rotten situation with the hope of clearing it up. Anyone, inclu-  
ding myself, is bound to have a few shameful things in his past that  
he would hate to have brought out into the open. If a man or a group  
refrains from misleading posturing and hypocrisy, no one but a heel  
will gratuitously tell his friends about that time he got caught  
with a stolen tire on his car. (The illustration is fictitious, and  
does not apply to a member of the LASFS who, according to Al Ashley,  
had that very thing happen to him a few months ago.)

But when a man  
explains away the time he spent in the penitentiary for homosexuality  
as being secret war work, or when a group poses as a Shangri-La uto-  
pia at the same time that an impartial survey of its membership re-  
cords has shown that only half of its members over a four year period  
have ~~not~~ been sexually acceptable according to the mores of mankind  
--then I maintain it is past time to resort to surgery to let the  
pus out of the infected area.

But I may be wrong. What do you people  
think about it?

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FAN-DANGO is composed on the stencil by Francis T. Laney for quarterly  
or less frequent distribution to the members of FAPA. Unless other-  
wise stated all material in this magazine is written by the said FTL,  
who at present is all spread out--sleeping at 321 Union Ave., Los  
Angeles 13, California; but with most of his things at 816 Westboro  
Ave., Alhambra, California--an address which will be permanent as  
soon as he can get married.

Back in FAPA's early days, the group had a very delinquent OE, who muffed up the mailings just about like Perdue has, and who finally sat down on the election mailing, just like now. So Milt Rothman, Jack Speer, and Elmer Perdue made a weekend jaunt from Washington, D. C. to Philadelphia, captured the mailing, and brought it out in a totally illegal performance which still saved FAPA from extinction. Now history has tried to repeat.

During the past year, we in LA got increasingly provoked at Perdue and his perversion of the editorship into an excuse to don a cloak of godlike distinction. For a whole year we listened to such remarks as "So-and-so sent me a magazine for the mailing, but I lost part of it" or "I got a report from Rothman but I lost it in a war" or "I don't like Crouch's magazine so I'll ban it" and so on ad nauseum. In most instances these statements were fictitious, a mere pandering to Perdue's consciousness of having a Fine Mind.

As each mailing grew progressively later, Elmer seemed to expand as the local FAPS kept asking him when. He almost basked in it.

Well, this got to be too much. When Burbee and I had waited one month past the constitutional deadline for the mailing, we boiled over, and Burb wrote Rothman a letter asking him what he thought about a blitz. A presidential appointment as emergency mailers promptly reached us, so one Saturday afternoon we drove out to Perdue's, presented him with the letter from Rothman, and asked him what he was going to do about it.

Switching into his outraged dietary facet, Perdue showed us the stuff for the mailing, and laid the blame on Widner who had sent no report. Being of a chicken-hearted nature, Burb and I decided that Perdue should be given one last chance, and gave him a deadline (which he set) of August 12--Burbee agreeing to help mimeograph the FA, and making arrangements with Ackerman to borrow mailing money from the Foundation.

So on the 19th, Burbee spent a fantastic evening with the Perdue's, an evening in which Elmer, among other constructive accomplishments, got the LASTS evicted from its clubroom, wasted Burbee's evening to such an extent that he refused to have anything more to do either with Perdue ~~xxx~~ or the mailing. This seemed to make no difference, since Elmer agreed to mail the mailing right away.

On the 21st, Perdue called Burbee to say that his mother-in-law had died, he was going east to the funeral, and would Burb like a good fellow take care of the mailing. Why yes, said the obliging Burbee--but within three hours he discovered that Elmer had hung up from telling him he was leaving town, and had then immediately dialed Myrtle Douglas to say he was not leaving town. A picaresque deception, scarcely worthy of the person who was once termed "God's big brother Bill", but it made Burbee explode the only time anything of a fan nature ever has done so.

So on the 22nd he brought the mailings to work and loaded them in my car, with the understanding he'd pick up the money from Ackerman the 28th, give it to me the 29th, and ~~xxxx~~ I'd mail the mailings the next day.

((My gosh, I just discovered I've been looking at the wrong line on the calendar! Subtract 7 days from each date listed above! Who said I was infallible?)

The putative mailing date was the 23rd! Sorry. Anyway, when Burbee

asked Ackerman for the money, Forrest J refused on the grounds that "FAPA had never done anything for the Foundation; why should the Foundation do anything for FAPA--besides, the eastern fans hate the Foundation". Or so it was reported to me.

In the meantime, I'd found the mailings unaddressed, and incompletely assembled. Also, Perdue had made a cover bearing a legend "Published in a limited edition of 65, of which this is number \_\_\_\_\_, for \_\_\_\_\_. Stand up, \_\_\_\_\_, and take a bow!" Not only had he filled these in with ink, thereby voiding 4th class mailing privileges, but in at least one instance, he had filled in the blank following "Stand up" with an unrepeatably obscene epithet. So Cecile and I spent a whole evening finishing the assembling of the mailings, tearing the covers off all the FA's, and addressing the envelopes.

When I learned Ackerman had refused to loan Foundation money (of which there is not far from \$400) to FAPA, I blew up, airmailing Rothman, telling him what all had happened, and announcing my intention to sit on the mailing until I had some money. Not only was I rather unwilling to make a loan, but I simply did not have the money if I had wanted to loan it.

The check from Rothman arrived on the 29th of August; I intended to get the mailing out on the 30th, but got sick as a dog with a summer cold. So they finally went out of the Alhambra post office on September 2, after a comedy of foul-ups unsurpassed in modern times.

An interesting sidelight is the fact that nothing in the mailing was unmailable, ACCORDING TO PERDUE HIMSELF. How do you like that, Messrs. Hart, Dunkelberger, and Croutch? I wanted to send the mailings express collect, but Burbee got me to see that the resulting tangle would be too much to iron out, what with 47 plus members making deductions the next time they paid their dues.

Rothman made a personal loan to FAPA of \$15. The mailings cost \$12.16 to send out, so I will send the new secretary, whoever he may be, \$2.34, and he can send Milt \$15.

So far as I can learn, at this writing (September 9) there has still been no report from Widner.

Another interesting sidelight is that the mailings, as turned over by Perdue, were lacking four complete mailings and one Fantasy Amateur. It is to be hoped something can be done about this, but I'm not very sure what.

This sad tale of a blitz has a number of morals, doesn't it? In the first place, never try to write anything when you don't feel in the mood, as witness this article! Secondly, if you ever conduct a blitz, don't be a gentleman---take the stuff away regardless of past ties of friendship, excuses offered, or anything else. There is a constitutional deadline for each mailing; the editor volunteers for the job knowing of these deadlines, and sickness is about the only excuse that should stand up. If the CE misses the deadline, that in itself is *prima facie* justification for a blitz.

And the third moral?

to ANY OFFICE:

NEVER elect Elmer Perdue

Bah!