

JAZZ

Jazz Fan is an MJM Publication. Companion to TYPO and BURROUGHSania. Free but articles and art-work connected with jazz are very welcome. Issued irregularly from: 36, Semley Rd., Norbury, S.W.16. For March 1957. No.5

EXPLAINING

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THE VIPERS
LEARN A
NEW CHORD

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+ by Bob Lumley +
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My friends persuaded me to buy the Vipers' Skiffle Group's first disc - "Pick a bale of cotton"/"Ain't you glad" and after awhile I got to like it. In fact, I went as far as ordering their next disc in advance. When "Don't you Rock me Daddy-O" came out, I wished I hadn't, it was noisy and very badly arranged, the other side - "10,000 Years Ago" - was little better. I gave up - "No more Vipers' for me," was the verdict. But a new disc was

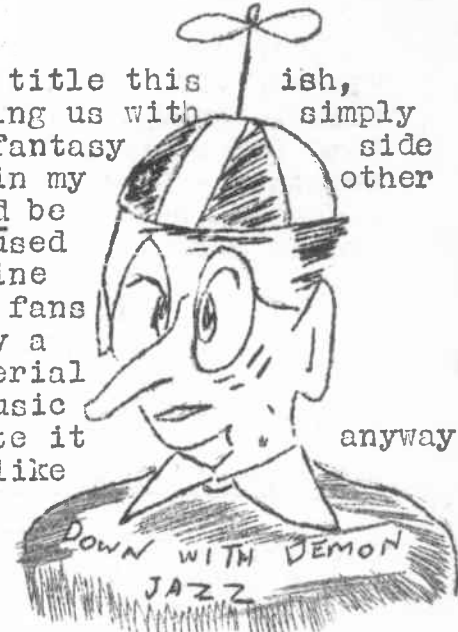
A further change of title this dropping "Fantasy and -" leaving us with "Jazz Fan," as I think the fantasy is sufficiently dealt with in my two zines. This title could be confusing if you are confused easily - this is not a zine aimed at pleasing Jazz fans - it's a zine edited by a Jazz Fan and the material used is about the music I like (when I write it so if you don't like it - er - find another use for it.

ON SKIFFLE.

cut by the group and I was curious - so I asked to hear it - "Cumberland Gap" backed by "Maggie May". Well, I bought it and I admit that I enjoyed it as much as their first disc. But this brings me to the title of this thing. The Vipers' have at last found that there are more than four strings to a guitar - there are two more at the bottom they'd missed - the high ones. Earlier discs all started off in much the same way - a sort of 'Low, high,high,low' effect - don't ask me to name the notes. (continued over)

ish, simply side other

anyway)



I do like some skiffle although I won't pass any verdict on it - I may be musically moronic (a phrase which is fast becoming a cliché in the musical Press) - but I enjoy some of it. Especially when it's untinged with later Donegan commercialism or the slickness of, say, Ken Colyer's group, which I like but don't recognise as skiffle. I like my skiffle pretty crude and loud on the whole. (continued on next page)

FAN



HEADING BY ATOM
Bottom corner pic
by Bob Lumley.

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J.F.'s First Lettercol.

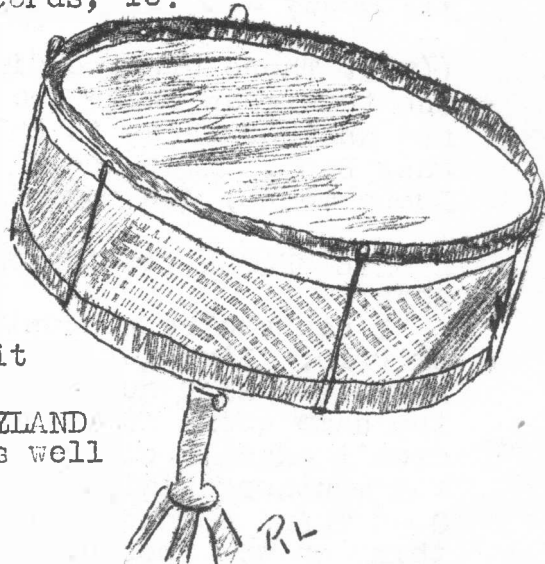
Obviously, these letters were not intended for publication in JF when they were written. All the following are extracts from personal letters sent to me over the last few months which I think will interest the readers. And the first comes from

RON BENNETT

"I should get some real jazz ? Like Bunk Johnson ? Who's he ? To be so marvellous that is ? He played - or rather rasped - a semi-tone sharp, frequently dried up in the middle of a session and his improvisation definitely lacked ideas. Actually his later recordings are excellent examples of classical jazz in that you have a trumpet lead, a trombone filling in and a clarinet overriding the melody. Of course he was backed up by George Lewis and Jim Robinson. But you should get on to Archie about Bunk and his brass band recordings. Archie knows them more or less inside out. Me, I have only three Bunk records, ie:

TISHOMINGO BLUES/ALEXANDERS RAG TIME BAND
SISTER KATE/ONE SWEET LETTER FROM YOU
SAINTS/DARKTOWN STRUTTERS BALL but I do like 'em."

((Just recently, a couple of Bunk minigroove discs have come out - an EP and an LP, I don't have the LP but the EP is, in my opinion, one of my best examples of real Dixieland. Perhaps I'm undiscerning when it comes to my jazz tastes ? The EP includes TISHOMINGO, ALEXANDERS' RAG TIME BAND, MARYLAND and YOU ALWAYS HURT THE ONE YOU LOVE. It's well worth getting)).



ALAN DODD - letter dated 17th January 1957.

"Skiffle ? Now yer talking. I got for Xmas an LP called 'Lonnie Donegan Showcase' - some real classic old American railroad numbers in this, all a la skiffle and a skiffle version of Frankie and Johnny. I saw Lonnie Donegan on TV Sunday night again too with his latest record "Don't you Rock me Daddy-O" which is a lot too much like imitation Rock than skiffle. I've seen the Vipers Skiffle Group too on TV - Donegan about five or six times though he never really seems to get allowed enough time to put over sufficient numbers. Don't recall personally having heard Lu Watters and his - presumably Yerba Buena Jazz band. Heard of them but not them of course. The only Yerba Buena stuff I have is a red label Good Time Jazz 78 of Benny Strickler & his Yerba Buena Jazz Band with "Fidgety Feet". There's a new LP of Turk Murphy out I see, I must try and get it. I only have 4 LPs - Kid Ory and "Goodtime Jazz", "Harlem Piana Roll" (All old time piano roll Jazz) Early Waller, Japes P. Johnson - a type of nostalgic stuff I like to sentimentalise over, Bing Crosby's "Favourite Hawaiian Melodies" - a chance to get away to the South Seas for a little while and the Lonnie Donegan one I mentioned. Only one titchy EP - the Ferko String Band which comes from Dave Jenrette's home town of Philadelphia - I love em - Bennett doesn't approve. Throws up his hands in disgust - no true appreciation of the finer things of music, that's him.

((A brief mention of Lonnie Donegan and all the unkind things said about him nowadays. I agree with the critics who say that he is getting commercialised. But there's a lot to be said in that Donegan is essentially a good guitarist and has worked damn hard to get where he is. So maybe he's entitled to change his name from Tony to Lonnie and wear fancy clothes. What I don't like to see is people with absolutely no talent in any direction - like Tommy Steele and Elvis Presley for instance - get to the top and milk the moronic public of its money without giving them anything decent in return.))

((P.S. There are two different (apparently) Watters bands, One that goes under the simple title of LW's Jazz Band and another which is called LW & his Yerba Buena Jazz Band. Alan and I want to find out what Yerba Buena means, can anyone tell us ?))

ARCHIE MERCER (letter date 15th Jan '57)
says:

"I see you're seasoning your letter with skiffle. I've got Leadbelly's record of Ain't You Glad but it doesn't seem to have the same words as yours. Of course, his words aren't exactly clear - they're drowned out by the mouthorganist, which anyway is strictly a Good Thing because I think his counterpoint's the best thing on the record. Which doesn't mean I don't like



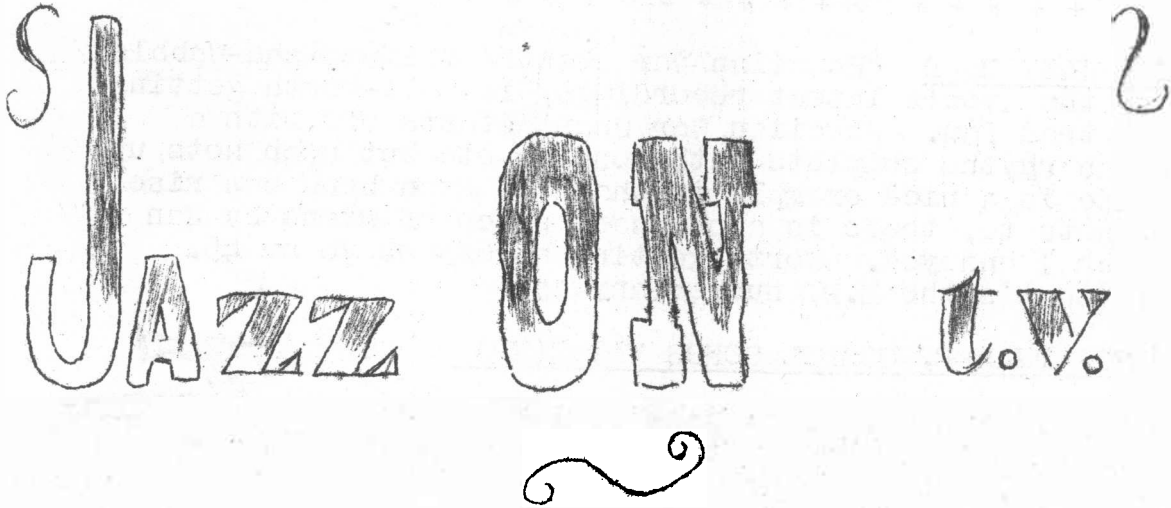
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leadbelly-type singing, but I like the mouth-organ counterpoint even better. But L.b. seems to be singing "Ain't ya glad - that the first one signs your name." seems to record a bit of under-hand business somewhere - probably in prison. Whereas the Vipers' words you quote make it sound like a temperance hymn. I wonder which came first? Suggested repertoire for Vipers: Snake Rag, Garden of Eden, There's a Worm at the Bottom of our Garden, Shake Ratter'n Roll, Cobra's song from Chu Chin Chow, Numbers Boogie.

I'll have to hear some of those new records of yours some day. I haven't got anything in that line recently, I'm aiming at converting my 78s to slower speeds and getting real NO-style jazz and more country-dance type music. Mainly Irish - I've GOT bags of Scotch. (Music, not whisky) ((Then it should be Scots, illiterate)) (Wish I had) I got two Ory EPs and a Paul Barbarin LP (wonderful) recently, and I've got another piano-roll ragtime record on order. ((Same as Alan's ?)).

((I think that Leadbelly's record must have come first, for the way they moidered all the other numbers they've played so far, it's not likely that they've left this one alone. I see I've put an extra r in temperance up there, no extra charge, though. I'd like to get hold of the L.b. record of Ain't you glad - with the current popularity of his kind of music I think I noticed that a new EP was out, also one of Big Bill Broonzy))

JAZZ ON T.V.



"Cater for the teen-agers" seems to be the slogan of the television companies these days and there is strong competition between BBC and ITA to 'give the youngsters what they want'. So far the BBC have got way ahead with their star-packed '6.5 Special' programme. 55 minutes of entertainment especially slanted at the kids. Although pop stars appear regularly, Tommy Steele, Dennis Lotis and the Southlanders for instance, there is usually at least one jazz group featured every week. The Vipers' Skiffle Group and an amateur (I think) group from

Hastings who play in the caves were featured a few weeks ago together with Big Bill Broonzy, what a great guitarist and blues singer he is. Last week (16th March) Humph was featured as well as the resident Tommy Steele, although about all that can be said in Steele's favour is that he has an ability to be likeable, in my humble opinion, I think that there was far too much Steele (who played, I use the term loosely, about 5 numbers) and too little Lyttleton (who played The Saints at the beginning a Calypso in the middle and his recently recorded Red Beans and Rice at the end) but maybe we shall see more of him in future programmes. Lonnie Donegan is to make his final broadcast from this programme before he leaves for his second States tour, again I hope that we'll see more of Humph than Donegan if Donegan continues to play semi-rock 'n' roll. If you like Skiffle, it's worth tuning in for rock and skiffle are the predominant forms of music in the programme but the inclusion of such stars as Lyttleton makes it worth looking at even if you don't like the commercial products of jazz music.

Mike.

DISC

NEWS

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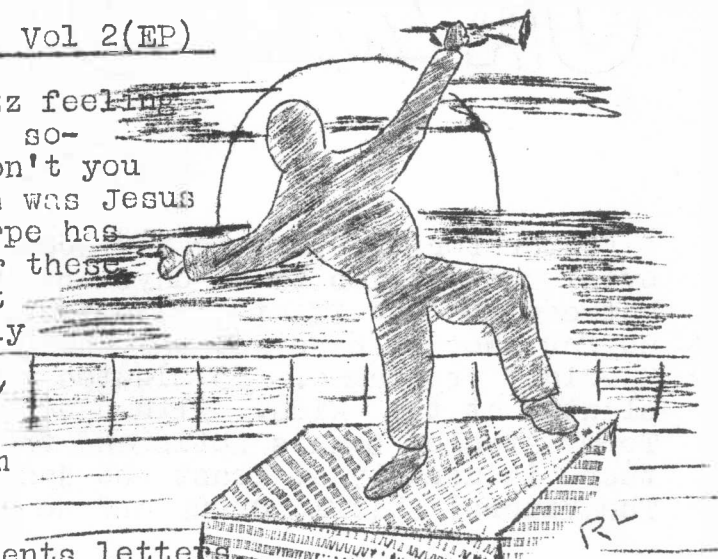
RECOMMENDING A FEW OF THE
LATEST JAZZ RELEASES.

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AVON CITIES' JAZZ BAND "Hawaiian War Chant"/"Shim-me-sha-Wabble"
This, one of the Avon's latest recordings, is well-worth getting if you are a trad fan. Hawaiian War Chant starts off with a Latin-American rhythm complete with bongoes etc but soon hots up. The other side is a nice example of what the Avon band can rise to when it wants to, there is a pleasant piece of piano by Jan Rid here which I enjoyed. Worth getting at 6/3 on 78 or 45. Tempo A 151 (that's the E.P. number anyway).

SISTER ROSETTA THARPE, GOSPEL SONGS Vol 2(EP)

Four songs here, with more real jazz feeling in any one of them than many of the so-called jazz bands. The four are Don't you weep, O Mary; I've done Wrong; When was Jesus Born ?; In Bethlehem. Rosetta Tharpe has a strong, earthy voice, perfect for these spiritual numbers. By far the best is When Was Jesus Born ? Thoroughly recommended for all jazz lovers. Also worth getting: /OE 9284/
CHRIS BARBER SKIFFLE GROUP (EP)
Four tunes, with Can't You Line 'em being the best and most rhythmic.
NJE 1025.



DON'T FORGET, I want comments letters

118 Mar 1957

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