

Past Times

No. 21 THE NOSTALGIA ENTERTAINMENT NEWSLETTER \$5.00

New 6-CD Set Truly Is *Entertainment!*



Fans of the classic musical films produced by MGM between 1929 and 1958 should be overjoyed with a new 6-CD box set co-produced by Turner Classic Movies and Rhino Movie Music, **That's Entertainment!: The Ultimate Anthology of MGM Musicals** (Rhino R2 72182; \$74.98). This very impressive collection contains 129 recordings, taken from the original source materials of 82 films. With the exception of a quick "Singin' in the Rain" medley edited from four different movies, all performances are complete, not edited as in the documentary films (and earlier soundtrack albums).

Producers Marilee Bradford, Bradley Flanagan and George Feltenstein have struck a fine balance between classic numbers and rarities, but the lesser-known songs are still fun. Even with the expanded format, a few tunes contained in the original *That's Entertainment!* soundtrack

albums had to be omitted, so if your favorite song from an MGM musical is "Did I Remember?" sung by Cary Grant, or "Reckless" by Jean Harlow, hang on to your old LPs.

That very minor disappointment aside, it's hard to see how this collection could possibly be improved. The first two *That's Entertainment* films are allotted two discs each; last year's *That's Entertainment! III* is given one disc (identical to the soundtrack CD issued by Angel), with a few more of its numbers—and some songs not appearing in any of the documentaries—showing up on the sixth disc, entitled *That's More Entertainment*. The numbers have been sequenced in order of their appearance in the TE! films; the lavish 96-page booklet cross-indexes the songs, films and track locations, so it's easy to find your favorite number. (Full credits for each track are given, listing composers, arrangers, conductors, performers and recording dates.) George Feltenstein contributes two essays: a history of the *That's Entertainment* compilations, and a film-by-film description of each movie represented on the CDs. Original poster art for each film is reproduced in vivid color, along with dozens of black-and-white scene stills and production shots.

The sound quality is superb throughout (excepting two *Easter Parade* numbers for which only sub-par source material exists). Many of the tracks have been remixed in true stereo from original elements recorded at different perspectives.

Enough of the technical stuff — the six CDs, each running about 75 minutes, are a whole lot of fun. The tunes may be well-known (Gene Kelly's "Singin' in the Rain") or relatively obscure (Fred Astaire and George Murphy's "Please Don't Monkey With Broadway," Nancy Walker belting out "Milkman, Keep Those Bottles Quiet") but all of them are beautifully orchestrated and performed, and each packs a wallop. In MGM's glory days, the studio's formula for success was "Do it big, do it right, give it class." The producers of this collection have done exactly that.

Radio Sleuths Discovered on New CDs, Cassettes

Armchair detectives who enjoy listening to radio gumshoes should enjoy a new four-volume box set co-produced by Radio Spirits and the Smithsonian Institution Press. **Old Time Radio Detectives and Crime Fighters** contains twelve programs from the '40s and early '50s. Two will be familiar to longtime collectors (the 1946 *Academy Award Theater* version of "The Maltese Falcon" with Bogie, and a *Green Hornet* episode called "The Corpse That Wasn't There"), but the others haven't been commercially available before.

All have excellent sound quality; the *Gangbusters* episode has particularly clean, crisp audio that *really* makes it "come on like Gangbusters." Purists might lament the loss of the original commercials (trimmed in order to fit three shows on each disc), but the fine quality of the shows in content and audio will more than satisfy the rest of us.

The package contains some surprises. The fine episode of *Sherlock Holmes* from April 1947 has Tom Conway as the sleuth, not Basil Rathbone (although Nigel Bruce is on hand). A 1948 *Ellery Queen* features Peggy Lee as the guest detective. Dick Powell is wonderfully flippant as *Richard Diamond*, while Van Heflin is earnest in the debut episode of *Philip Marlowe*.

The 52-page book is very thorough and impressive; Stacy Keach, Sr., producer of *Tales of the Texas Rangers* (an episode of which is included) tells how the program was assembled. Detailed histories of each of the shows is provided by Joe Bevilacqua. (Available on four CDs for \$34.98 or four cassettes for 29.98 plus 5.00 postage from Radio Spirits, P.O. Box 2141, Schiller Park, IL 60176; (800) 723-4648.)

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Love Vintage Movies, Big Bands, Old Time Radio?
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Nostalgia Newswire

The Vitaphone Project's latest newsletter has a piece by film preservationist Dick May about the restoration of the 1929 Universal *Show Boat*. There's exciting news about recent discoveries, including many early Pathé talkie shorts and another collection found in France: 12,000 reels of American shorts and features. To join, or to donate to the preservation cause, write Ron Hutchinson, 5 Meade Court, Piscataway, NJ 08854.

Those who prefer films of the pre-Vitaphone era may want to subscribe to the following quarterly newsletters: **The Rudolph Valentino Newsletter**, c/o Patricia M. Lampinen, 1604 Long Lake Road, Eveleth, MN 55734 (\$15.00 US, \$25.00 foreign); **Limelight**, devoted to Chaplin, c/o Bonnie McCourt, 300 South Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga CA 90290 (\$20 US, \$25 foreign); **The Lloyd Herald**, c/o Annette M. D'Agostino, 46 Stokes Ave., Bethpage NY 11714 (\$20 US, \$25 Canada, \$30 overseas).

Animation fans will find compelling reading in **The Disney That Never Was** by Charles Solomon (Hyperion Books; 256 pages, hardcover; \$40.00), a collection of artwork for never-completed Disney films. It includes plans for unfilmed cartoons; early sketches for *Fantasia*; and art from the aborted Disney-Salvador Dali collaboration *Destino*.

The **Museum of Television and Radio** has established an International Museum Council to promote the preservation of programming, and has teamed with the Nickelodeon cable-TV network to find lost television programs. MT&R, now based in New York, will add a Los Angeles branch early in 1996.

A \$1-million renovation of the 18-year-old **Roy Rogers-Dale Evans** Museum in Victorville, California began October 4. The 28,000 square-foot site will have interactive video displays telling the saga of the Old West and Roy & Dale. According to Roy Rogers, Jr., his 84-year-old father is taking a "hands-on approach to every aspect of the museum's renovation. This is like Dad writing his autobiography." Speaking of which, just out from Fireside books is **Happy Trails: Our Life Story** by Roy Rogers and Dale Evans with Jane and Michael Stern; the 256 page book costs \$12.00.

Correspondents Wanted

Your humble editor currently writes about 90 percent of this little opus, and while he gets a charge out of seeing his own stuff in print (he's not *that* humble), he--and probably most of the subscribers--would appreciate having other viewpoints represented in *Past Times*. So, if you have the desire to see your own article and byline in these pages--and also have a modicum of writing and researching ability--send in your query letter.

Your article has to pertain to the entertainment of 1910-1950, and should run 500-1,500 words. We do *not* run poetry, nor articles that merely say, "Personality X: Wasn't He Great?" We pay off in copies of PT (the budget is awfully tight around here). If this hasn't dissuaded you, send us your pitch or article. Thanks.

When ordering books reviewed in *Past Times*, please note that prices are retail and do not include shipping. You should add \$4.00 for the first book, .75 each additional book, plus applicable state sales tax.

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Please send notice of forthcoming events to: Past Times, 7308 Fillmore Dr., Buena Park CA 90620. Be sure to include a phone number for additional information.

FILM EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Last Moving Picture Company 2nd Annual Movie Memorabilia Convention, Doral Inn, 541 Lexington Ave., New York NY, December 10. To be followed by a memorabilia auction in Columbus, OH, May 1996. Info on both events: (216) 781-1821; fax, (216) 579-9172.

Memphis Film Festival, Best Western Airport Hotel, Memphis TN, August 7-10, 1996. 25th anniversary of this festival has vintage movie and TV shows, celebrity guests. Info: send SASE to P.O. Box 40272, Memphis TN 38174.

Harold Lloyd Festival including shorts and *For Heaven's Sake*, December 29-30; Buster Keaton Festival including rare shorts *The Love Nest*, *The Hayseed* and *The Paleface*, December 31-January 1. Silent Movie Theatre, Los Angeles CA. Info: (213) 653-2389.

MUSIC EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Jazz on the Riverfront Traditional Jazz Festival, Bradenton FL, February 23-25 1996. Bands include the Coconut Manor Orchestra, Ed Stoddard's Panama Hat Band, ragtime pianist Terry Waldo. Info: (941) 729-9177 ext. 231.

Mid-America Jazz Festival, Stouffer Renaissance Hotel, St. Louis MO, March 15-17 1996. Guests include Ralph Sutton Trio, Original Salty Dogs, bassist Bob Haggart. Info: (314) 469-0255.

Fresno Dixieland Society Mardi Gras '96, Fresno Hilton Hotel, Fresno CA, February 8-11, 1996. Many trad jazz bands. Info: (209) 292-3999.

Dixieland Jazz Festival at the London Bridge, Lake Havasu City, AZ, January 12-14. Info: (800) 624-7939.

Muscatine Ragtime Weekend, Muscatine IA, January 26-27. Features symposiums, concerts. Info: (319) 264-8871.

Pasadena City College Record Swap, 1570 E. Colorado (at Hill), Pasadena CA, January 7. Held first Sunday of each month. 78s, rare jazz. Info: (818) 585-7906.

COLLECTIBLE SHOWS

100 Years of the Cinema Auction, Christie's East, 219 East 67th Street, New York NY. Rare and magnificent movie posters from 1895 to 1994. Viewing December 8-11; auction December 11. Full color catalog available. Info: (212) 606-0400; fax, (212) 879-0705.

For a virtually complete list of vintage film and traditional music festivals, consult The Nostalgia Entertainment Sourcebook, available from Past Times (see page 28).

Movies

Those Old Familiar Faces

Veteran actors in new and recent feature films: The late LIONEL STANDER and MAUREEN STAPLETON in *The Last Good Time*... ANTHONY QUINN in *A Walk in the Clouds*... VINCENT PRICE (voice) in *Arabian Nights*... JERRY LEWIS, LESLIE CARON and HAROLD NICHOLAS (of the Nicholas Brothers) in *Funny Bones*... ROBERT MITCHUM in *Dead Man*... SHELLEY WINTERS in *Jury Duty*, *Heavy* and *Firehouse*.

On TV: LLOYD BRIDGES in *The Outer Limits* (Showtime)... CELESTE HOLM in *Talking With* (PBS)... AUDREY MEADOWS in *Dave's World*... MEL TORMÉ in *Seinfeld*, and Mountain Dew commercials... BING CROSBY, CLARK GABLE, MARLENE DIETRICH, ERROL FLYNN (stills) for Mercedes-Benz... JANE POWELL for Polident... LAUREN BACALL (voice) for Fancy Feast... ROBERT STACK for Taco Bell.



MUSIC POSTERS

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20th Century-Fox Classics on Laserdisc

By Rob Ray

Fox Video has released one of its biggest box-office hits of the 1940s as a CLV laserdisc: **Leave Her to Heaven** (Fox #8623-80, \$39.95, 110 minutes, color). Based on the popular novel by Ben Ames Williams, the 1945 drama provided Gene Tierney with one of the juiciest roles of her career. She received her only Academy Award nomination as the obsessively jealous wife of Cornel Wilde. When it comes to her man, Miss Tierney's character thinks three's a crowd—and she sometimes takes that attitude to extremes.

The film was an Oscar winner for best color cinematography at a time when it was rare for a melodrama to be photographed in Technicolor. The extensive location shooting in California's High Sierras, Arizona's Sedona basin and the rocky Monterey coast (substituting for Bar Harbor, Maine) adds to the film's appeal. The interior sets depicting the idle rich of the era are also eye-popping, especially a ranch home in New Mexico seen during the opening sequences. The film has not had an extensive restoration, but its color is excellent. Alfred Newman's ominous score is well-transferred on the monaural soundtrack.

The story is strictly pulp-novel hogwash, filled with implausible coincidences. (To cite only one example, two strangers meeting on a streamliner are not only going to the same town in New Mexico, they are houseguests at the same hacienda!) Still, the film is extremely well-done trash that can be fun to wallow in.

Long before Bruce Wayne first flew out of the cave as Batman, there was another millionaire with a heroic split personality, as one can witness in Fox Video's new laserdisc of its 1940 talkie version of **The Mark of Zorro** (#1663-80; \$39.95; B&W, 93 minutes).

In his "true" identity, millionaire Don Diego Vega lives a life of extravagant pleasure in Old California. After returning from a trip to Spain, he finds his father, the Alcalde of Los Angeles, has been ousted from office and replaced by a regime of the evil Captain Pasquale. When the people of Los Angeles become oppressed by excessive taxes, Don Vega arrives on the scene as his alter ego, Zorro. With sword in hand, he routs the rascals, restores democracy, and leaves an early example of graffiti vandalism in his wake.

Zorro first made his filmic mark in 1920 when Douglas Fairbanks chose Johnston McCulley's story *The Curse of Capistrano* as the vehicle for his leap from light comedies into action-adventure films. Twenty years later, Tyrone Power tried to follow in Fairbanks' huge footsteps, doing an admirable job. Linda Darnell plays the damsel in distress, the always-reliable Eugene Pallette does a variant of his earlier *Robin Hood*-Friar Tuck role as Fray Felipe, and Basil Rathbone (reportedly one of the nicest guys in Hollywood) is villainy personified as Captain Pasquale.

The print used is sharp with excellent contrast, and a strong, clear soundtrack. There are the occasional light scratches common to Fox films of the era, but overall the print and the transfer are impressive. The two-sided disc contains 21 chapter stops.

In 1938, Twentieth Century Fox gave a 50th birthday present to Irving Berlin, who even then was a beloved institution of American music. It's now a present to laserdisc enthusiasts from Fox Video: **Alexander's Ragtime Band** (#1121-80; \$39.95; B&W, 109 minutes). In production for over a year, this elaborate retrospective of Berlin's already considerable career was a prestigious picture, boasting an all-star cast of Tyrone Power, Alice Faye, Ethel Merman, Don Ameche and Jack Haley. The film fits over twenty of Berlin's hits into its 109 minutes.

The story covers the entire span of Berlin's career, at least up through 1938—and who could have anticipated that the already-legendary composer had yet to write some of his most popular songs ("God Bless America," "White Christmas") and that his greatest score for the theater, *Annie Get Your Gun*, would be eight years in the future? The story starts a few years before one world war, and ends just before a second one—years which many agree were the apex of American popular entertainment. Messrs. Power and Ameche spend the decades alternately winning and losing Miss Faye, in between performances of 25 years' worth of Berlin's hits. It's terrific fun, of course. According to the laserdisc's liner notes, the film remained a sentimental favorite of all the artists involved.

The disc has 34 chapter stops, digital sound and closed captioning. The image is sharp and clear, although there are several scratches throughout the print used. The soundtrack, thankfully, is in fine shape and has excellent fidelity. A trailer issued in advance of the film's premiere is included as a bonus.

Mickey, Judy Still Put On a Great Show

Rhino Records continues its series of MGM film soundtracks with **Mickey & Judy** (R2 71921; \$64.98), a four-CD set that is, in a word, spectacular.

The songs and scores for each of the four 1939-43 Rooney-Garland musicals — *Babes in Arms*, *Strike Up the Band*, *Babes on Broadway* and *Girl Crazy* — are included, from the first-generation studio recordings. Many numbers appear here in longer versions than they did in the films, and there are some deleted songs. (Two demo recordings sung by the composers are also included, along with a complete "Leo Is On the Air" radio show in which the stars promote *Babes on Broadway* at the 1940 Santa Claus Lane Parade.)

Even if you're not familiar with these movies, the soundtracks are a genuine pleasure to hear. Granted, not much of Rodgers and Hart's original score for *Babes in Arms* was retained for the film by MGM, but the substitutions (including Arthur Freed's "I Cried For You") are great fun anyway. Similarly, only Gershwin's title song for *Strike Up the Band* remains, but Roger Edens and Freed's tune "Our Love Affair" is gorgeous, and the 19-minute "Nell of New Rochelle" medley of Gay '90s tunes is splendid. Rooney's impression of Carmen Miranda is a highlight of *Babes on Broadway*, while *Girl Crazy* boasts most of the original Gershwin score and Tommy Dorsey's band.

The sound quality, in general, is very impressive. Most of the tracks were painstakingly reassembled from multiple takes—which were in turn recorded from multiple "angles" to allow for flexibility in the sound mixing. This allows for the excellent true stereo mixes heard here. Portions of the *Babes on Broadway* score existed only in an overmodulated tape master, and slight distortion is apparent.

The 56-page booklet by John Fricke is a treasure in itself, filled with information of the production and plots of the films, details on the scores, and biographical notes on actors, producers and composers. It's liberally illustrated with scene stills and candid shots; an eight-page color insert reproduces artwork from posters, magazine covers and sheet music. Another superlative release from Rhino Movie Music. (Available from Rhino Mail Order, (800) 432-0020.)

Astaire's Film Songs Restored in French CDs

Unlike many film stars of the '30s, Fred Astaire was also a prolific recording artist. He began making records in 1923, while appearing on the London stage with his sister Adele. He recorded for the British division of Columbia Records through 1930, finally making discs for American Victor from 1931 through '33. In 1935, his partnership with Ginger Rogers established, he signed with Brunswick, an association which lasted through 1938 and resulted in 30 issued sides.

These wonderful records, which team Fred with the orchestras of Leo Reisman, Johnny Green and Ray Noble, are absolutely essential for anyone who loves the standards of the '30s. All of the key songs from the RKO Astaire-Rogers musicals were waxed ("Cheek to Cheek," "Let's Face the Music and Dance," "The Way You Look Tonight," ad infinitum). Miss Rogers never appeared on disc with Fred, although she did record many of the same songs for Decca and Bluebird. One would think that the duet numbers, such as "Let's Call the Whole Thing Off," would suffer in Fred's solo records—but the quality of the songs, the arrangements and the performances more than compensate for her absence.

Unfortunately, the reissues of these records have until recently been of very poor sound quality. In 1973, Columbia issued a two-LP set, *Starring Fred Astaire*, which made the well-recorded originals sound tinny and muffled. Columbia/Legacy CD releases in 1989 and 1994 weren't much better. At last, however, these tracks have been newly remastered from 78s and the difference in sound quality is tremendous.

Fred Astaire Ses Films et Ses Chansons/Songs & Pictures (EPM Musique 983452; \$42.75), a three-CD set imported from France, also includes eight of Fred's 1927-33 discs (including the rare "After You, Who?" and the original "Night and Day"), as well as 15 tracks made for Decca in 1940-42. With the exception of "They All Laughed" and "I Can't Be Bothered Now," all of the tracks have rich, vibrant sound, with the high frequencies and the bass fully restored. The booklet, in French and English, includes a discography and rare pictures. (Available from Qualiton Imports, 24-02 40th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101; (718) 937-8515.)

Busby Berkeley: Vivid Even Without Visuals

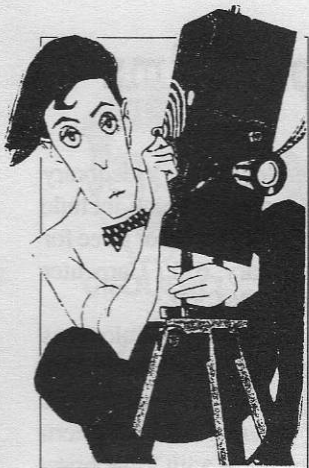
Even without the visual pyrotechnics, the musical sequences directed by Busby Berkeley can be delightful, as proven by the new two-CD compilation **Lullaby of Broadway: The Best of Busby Berkeley at Warner Bros.** (Rhino R272169; \$27.98). The 20 best numbers from the 1932-37 Warners musicals are presented complete, with many of the numbers running about ten minutes each.

Coincidentally, the commercially-issued 78s of many of the same tunes have just been issued on Columbia/Legacy's new Dick Powell CD (see the review on page 12). But those recordings, fine as they are, sound thin compared to the lavish orchestrations featured in the original soundtrack versions presented here.

The sound quality is excellent on the Rhino collection; any minor flaws are inherent in the original early-'30s recordings. Two of the numbers, "We're In the Money" and "Remember My Forgotten Man," are slightly edited, while "Hooray For Hollywood" contains a whole new chorus—replete with a vocal by Benny Goodman—not used in the 1937 film *Hollywood Hotel*. Another rarity is Ginger Rogers' version of "I've Got to Sing a Torch Song," deleted from *Gold Diggers of 1933* (Dick Powell sang it in the film).

The lavish booklet has Marilee Bradford's wonderfully detailed notes on the films and songs; an appreciation of composer Harry Warren by singer (and friend) Michael Feinstein, and an essay on Berkeley by film scholar and broadcaster Tony Thomas. The booklet and CDs are beautifully illustrated with details from Berkeley's filmic fantasies.

If you'd like to hear many of these numbers in true digital sound, we recommend **The Busby Berkeley Album** with John McGlinn conducting the London Sinfonietta and Chorus (Angel 5 55189 2; \$15.98). Vocalists Judy Blazer and Brent Barrett stand in well for Ginger Rogers and Dick Powell, and the Ray Heindorf arrangements are spectacularly well-recorded. A bonus is the complete five-minute "We're In the Money," which was interrupted midway in *Gold Diggers of 1933*. The booklet contains some excellent essays by historian Miles Kreuger, along with some rare photos and complete editions of Al Dubin's wonderful lyrics.



After 100 Years, Keaton Emerges

Buster Keaton's centennial was October 4, 1995, and the date was marked by the publication of a new biography of the great comedian. One might think that the hundredth-anniversary marketing angle is the sole reason for the book's existence; with dozens of books available about Keaton's films, and biographies by Rudi Blesh and Tom Dardis joining Buster's own autobiography, one would think there's virtually nothing about Keaton's life and work that hasn't been documented.

However, Marion Meade's new book is as surprising and startling as some of the gags in Buster's great films. **Buster Keaton: Cut to the Chase** (Harper Collins; 440 pages, hardcover; \$30.00) is filled with rich and vivid details about Keaton

the man; previous works, good as they might be, were superficial by comparison. Here, for the first time, we meet Keaton as a human being.

The author (whose excellent biography of Dorothy Parker was reviewed in *Past Times* #17/18) states at the outset that this book is not, primarily, about Keaton's films or his skills as a filmmaker, since those topics have been thoroughly analyzed by others. Indeed, only 93 pages are devoted to the 1920-28 period in which Buster produced his essential works. Ms. Meade is more interested in illuminating Buster's often unusual relationships with family members and co-workers.

One might quibble with some of her analyses. For example, Buster first came to prominence as the child star of "The Three Keatons," a rough-house vaudeville act in which he was literally thrown around the stage by his father. Ms. Meade tries very hard to convince us that Buster was suffering child abuse at the hands of an alcoholic father and an indifferent mother, and that Buster's deadpan expression was symptomatic of a withdrawal into himself as a defense against the abuse. Keaton would have scoffed at this. (In fact, he was very proud of his ability to take falls without hurting himself and maintained that his father was injured more frequently than he.)

One may not put much stock into this "childhood trauma" scenario, but Meade is persuasive in showing that Buster had great difficulty in developing close relationships, and that he was no more successful than his film personality in directly expressing his feelings. The emotions came out in strange ways: when his marriage to Natalie Talmadge was being stifled by her domineering mother and sisters, Buster made a film called *My Wife's Relations* which, Meade notes, "allowed him to say many awful things about his in-laws." After he lost his own studio and was trapped into making mediocre films at MGM with no creative input, he invited a couple of friends to his bungalow on the lot, grabbed a baseball bat, and methodically smashed the glass-doored bookcases. Certainly the alcoholism that plagued Buster during the '30s was a reaction to his personal and professional frustrations.

Most other books about Keaton give the impression that his life was over after he lost his studio in 1928, but Meade shows that his happiest period really began in 1940, when he married Eleanor Norris, a 21-year-old dancer at MGM. Earlier, Buster had passively allowed himself to be exploited by others, but Eleanor's even temperament, determination, clear-sightedness and aptitude for hard work made her a perfect helpmate. "Having never known the star," Meade writes, "Eleanor accepted him completely as he was now....She thought of her husband as an ordinary man who worked for a living and did the best he could, just like everybody else."

With Eleanor at his side, Keaton came alive again. In the mid-40s, he began doing summer stock, road shows, and nightclub appearances. He worked frequently in European circuses, often with Eleanor as a performing partner. He became enamored of television—watching it as well as appearing on it. (Between takes on Chaplin's *Limelight*, Buster would passionately defend what Chaplin termed "the stinking little screen.") Meade shows the older Keaton as being someone living very much in the present: summoned to a 1956 party given by Mary Pickford, he was amazed that some guests hadn't heard of Elvis Presley.

The book is briskly paced and exhaustively researched; Ms. Meade conducted over 200 interviews for this project, and the small details gleaned from Buster's associates combine to create the fullest portrait yet of a great artist and a complex human being. A detailed filmography and list of sources are included.

New Vintage-Movie Reference Books

Eugene Michael Vazzana, who edits *The Silent Film Monthly* (140 7th Avenue, New York NY 10011-1843), has compiled a **Silent Film Necrology** (McFarland & Co., 367 pages, hardcover; \$58.00 postpaid). The book lists the birth and death dates and places for more than 9,000 silent-era actors, directors, producers, writers and technicians.

Note that this is not an encyclopedia of silent-era personnel; in his introduction, Vazzana hopes for the day when such a book is compiled. The current volume lists only birth and death statistics, although the sources of obituaries and other key articles are noted for those who wish to do further research. (The author helpfully provides addresses for obtaining birth and death certificates and other information.) While there are no biographical sketches or filmographies here, sources for such data are listed. (McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640; (919) 246-4460.)

Biographical sketches and filmographies are combined in the 197 entries of **The Illustrated Who's Who of Hollywood Directors** by Michael Barson (Farrar Straus Giroux; 530 pages, hardcover; \$50.00). While directors as contemporary as Spielberg and Scorsese are profiled, the emphasis is on filmmakers of the '30s and '40s. Naturally, the undisputed greats are here (Capra, Hawks, Lubitsch, et al), but it's wonderful to read the profiles of so many lesser-known directors, such as Stuart Heisler, Lloyd Bacon, Archie Mayo, Jack Conway, Roy Del Ruth and Norman Z. McLeod. Barson's accounts of the directors' lives and careers are witty and straightforward. Each director is represented with a portrait still and most entries have original poster art.

Charles Matthews comes up with a novel approach to the Academy Awards in **Oscar A to Z** (Doubleday, 1,280 pages, paperback; \$20.00). The book fully details every feature film—almost 2,500 of them—to be nominated for the Oscar. Along with no-holds-barred critiques of the films, the winners and nominees are profiled, emphasizing the Award's importance in their careers. It's great fun to read about the forgotten films that were nominated (such as *She Married a Cop*, a 1939 Republic epic which lost its Best Score nomination to *Stagecoach*).

Before Stanley Met Ollie: The Laurel OR Hardy Solo Films

By Rob Stone

Most of the great film comedy teams came to the medium intact; they were already functioning as a team before they became film performers. Some came from vaudeville, others from Broadway or the nightclub circuit, but they all developed and matured away from the camera's eye. The primary exception is the greatest film comedy team of them all, Laurel & Hardy.

Oliver "Babe" Hardy made his film debut in a 1914 Lubin split reeler, *Outwitting Dad*. Stan Laurel made his first film in the summer of 1917, a short entitled *Nuts in May*. Separately they made over 350 films, and each gained a degree of notoriety in the film community and with movie fans as solo comedians. The two wouldn't meet until January 1921 (while filming *The Lucky Dog*) and although they began working together in 1926 there is still a serious debate over which film was the Boys' first as a "team". The comedians developed their rapport in a dozen early films, right before the eyes of 1920s moviegoers.

Many of the solo films of Laurel and Hardy are available for purchase on video cassette from three video distributors: Videobrary, A-1 Video, and Grapevine Video. As with most silent comedies available today there is a wide variance in print quality. Some of the films have been edited without mercy (often for TV packages) and original titles have often been replaced. That aside, the solo films available for viewing today give us a glimpse at embryonic versions of "Stan" and "Ollie" and also show us the two comedians in other characters. It is those other comic personas that show the genius of the two men. While the world loves the familiar derby-wearing innocents known as Laurel & Hardy, the solo films prove the actors behind the characters were comedic craftsmen of the highest order, regardless of the characters they were playing.

Videobrary has just released **Volume Seven** in the **Stan and Ollie Solo** series. Although the print quality on this volume is a bit weaker than others in the series, Videobrary strives to make accessible some of the rarely seen solo films. Included in this latest volume is a rare 1918 Charley Chase short (with Babe in support) called *Married to Order* (the tape bears a rerelease title: *The Near-Sighted Father*). Babe and Charley worked often together prior to their days at Hal Roach, but with the exception of this film Charley stayed behind the camera as the director. Babe is also seen in a 1916 Plump & Runt one reeler (*The Battle Royal*) and makes a brief appearance in Our Gang's *Thundering Fleas*. Stan's contribution is a 1923 Hal Roach short called *White Wings*. The tape concludes with one of those not-yet-a-team joint appearances by the two comedians in *Love 'Em and Weep*.

Other volumes in the series contain some great films and are highly recommended. **Volume Four** contains two 1925 Arrow comedies that Babe made just before joining Hal Roach, including *Stick Around* (the tape has the rerelease title *Paperhanger's Helper*) a very Laurel & Hardy-ish short with Bobby Ray that Babe himself felt was a direct precursor to his work with Laurel. For Stan fans **Volume Five** is recommended; it includes the hilariously funny Valentino spoof *Mud & Sand*, as well as a great print of a very early Rolin short *Hustling For Health*.

All in all a high quality series, both in print quality and comic effect, and a great chance to see not only Stan and Babe solo but also some of the great comedians they worked with in the early

days like Larry Semon, Clyde Cook, and Charley Chase (Videobrary also carries tapes under these comedians' names which include films that have Hardy in support). Each tape is \$14.95, or three for \$40.00; shipping is 4.00 per order. Videobrary, 6117 Carpenter Avenue, North Hollywood CA 91606; (818) 761-5265.

Another good place to acquire Laurel or Hardy solo films is A-1 Video; a dozen different tapes are available which feature the Boys' solo films. The films are often grouped along a thematic line (*Stan "Tex" Laurel Rides Again* features three Western parodies). Print quality again varies greatly, but as with Videobrary the tapes at A-1 Video are often upgraded as better source material becomes available. Highly recommended among the many available is the unique collection entitled **Directed By Stan Laurel**. For a brief time Stan gave up performing and worked exclusively behind the camera, directing the likes of Jimmie Finlayson, Clyde Cook and Mabel Normand. Babe Hardy appears on the tape, as does Ted Healy (minus his Three Stooges). In addition to the solo collections, A-1 Video offers tapes of two of Larry Semon's feature films with Babe in the cast, as well as Charley Chase, Our Gang and Larry Semon shorts in which Hardy appears. They also carry *No Man's Law*, a dramatic Hal Roach feature starring Rex, King of the Wild Horses, with Babe in support as the baddest of bad men. A-1 Video, P.O. Box 8808, Michigan City, IN 46360; (716) 731-2727.

Grapevine Video offers two volumes in a **Films of Stan Laurel** series. Volume One contains the earliest surviving Laurel film, the 1918 Rolin comedy *Just Rambling Along*. Babe shows up in a number of collections offered by Grapevine but he is most prominent in the **Films of Larry Semon** series. Perhaps the best volume in this series is Volume Three, which features Babe in a pretty good Semon short from 1921 called *The Bakery*; it also has the 1918 Vitagraph short *Frauds & Frenzies* which teams Larry Semon with a young comedian by the name of Laurel, soon to be banished back to vaudeville (for having upstaged Mr. Semon!). Grapevine Video, P.O. Box 46161, Phoenix, AZ 85063; (602) 245-0210.

We are truly fortunate to have part or all of 105 of the 106 films that Laurel & Hardy appeared in together. Our good fortune continues with the availability of a good number of the Boys' solo films. The video dealers mentioned above actively seek out new material and more films will be made available soon (Videobrary already has **Stan & Ollie Solo, Volume Eight** in the works). Even the holy grail of Stan Laurel solo films, *Dr. Pyckle and Mr. Pride*, is known to exist in a private collection (a nearly complete, beautiful nitrate print); with luck it will become available to video consumers. In Holland, Movies Select Video has released a series of solo films in the PAL format, including the rare Fox comedy *A Bankrupt Honeymoon* featuring Babe. A few of the solo films are now becoming available on laserdisc for devotees of that format (see related article in this issue). We have the unique opportunity to explore, and enjoy, the work of the greatest comedy team ever to grace film—before they became a team.

Rob Stone is the author of the book, *Laurel or Hardy: The Solo Films of Stan Laurel and Oliver "Babe" Hardy* soon to be published by Split Reel Books. Information: (800) 586-2418.

Multi-Media Madness From the Marx Brothers



Most Marx Brothers aficionados treasure the team's films for Groucho's witty insults, Chico's awful puns and Harpo's magical pantomime. The people who run the French Chansons Cinema CD label must figure that there's a sizable public for a 3-disc collection of just the musical numbers from the Brothers' films; that's what

they've released with **The Marx Brothers Sing & Play** (Chansons Cinema CIN 004; \$55.00).

The collection largely bypasses the funny dialogue to give you the musical portions of the Brothers' (not very) musical comedies, from *Cocoanuts* through *The Big Store*. And they give you *all* the numbers, so along with the expected tunes by the Marxes (Groucho's great song "I'm Against It" from *Horse Feathers*, Chico's rendition of "Beer Barrel Polka" from *At the Circus*) you'll hear Mary Eaton and Oscar Shaw warbling "When My Dreams Come True" from *The Cocoanuts* and Tony Martin doing all 5:48 worth of "The Tenement Symphony" from *The Big Store*.

The sound quality here is acceptable (although *Cocoanuts* doesn't sound as good here as in the U.S. home video versions). MCA and Turner *could* combine their resources and make a definitive audio collection of the best dialogue and musical sequences from the Marxes' films, but since that's not likely to happen, this collection will do—although the highlights could easily fit on a single CD. (Available from Qualiton Imports, 24-02 40th Ave., New York NY 11101.)

A lot more musical fun for much less money can be had from the new MCA Special Products CD, **Here's Groucho** (MCAD-20847; \$7.98). The disc is short (32 minutes), but sweet—with all eight of Groucho's recordings for Decca from 1951 supplemented by

two tracks of great moments from the Marx Brothers films, originally assembled for a 1969 LP narrated by Gary Owens. Highlights include "Father's Day" and "Dr. Hackenbush," and two performances which team Groucho with Jimmy Durante, Danny Kaye and Jane Wyman: "Black Strap Molasses" and "How D'Ye Do and Shake Hands."

For about seventy-five bucks, you could get all five of the Marxes' Paramount comedies on VHS. They've been newly repackaged by MCA/Universal Home Video and repriced at \$14.95 each. Oddly, the cover art now emphasizes Groucho, as if someone in MCA's executive offices has decreed that the current generation doesn't recognize Harpo or Chico. In any event, the transfers are fine on all five films. *Cocoanuts*, represented for years on TV by a battered print pieced together from several tattered sources, looks better in this home video incarnation, thanks to the rediscovery of a few odd 35mm reels in better condition. (This means that the film looks fine for ten minutes, then reverts to its battered state, then back again—but half a restoration is better than none.) There are also a few brief snippets missing from *Horse Feathers*, which evidently vanished around the time that the American TV prints were struck in the early '50s. (To its credit, in 1989 MCA/Universal Home Video delayed the home video debut of this film, while searching for the missing footage. They weren't successful, but at least they cared enough to look.)

If you're eager to learn more about Groucho's life and career, a smattering of factual material is laced throughout his autobiography **Groucho and Me**, newly reprinted by Da Capo Press (344 pages, \$14.95, paperback). Groucho's reluctance to divulge much about his life is not only admitted but proclaimed. (He notes, "For those readers who are not happy with an autobiography unless the author throws in a fistful of vital statistics from time to time, this chapter is disrespectfully submitted. Besides, my meddling editor forced me.") Groucho, who always preferred writing to acting, voices his unique perspective on medicine, religion, children, critics, insomnia, high finance and other varied topics, with just enough biographical information to provide a framework. There are some colorful chapters about the Brothers' early struggles in small-time vaudeville, and many hard truths told about the theater and movie industries, but the facts never get in the way of the witty (and surprisingly warm) observations.

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Nostalgia on the Net • By Jordan R. Young

Remember the thrill you got the first time you connected your television to a VCR to view a silent or early talkie of your choice? Wait until you hook your computer up to the telephone. While vintage entertainment is our drug of choice at *Past Times*, we admire modern technology. And the most modern and sophisticated development of this era — the much talked-about Information Superhighway, aka the Internet — turns out to be a boon to those interested in entertainers of times past.

To be sure, there are people using the Internet for all manner of things. But whether it's silent movies, ragtime, traditional jazz or old time radio that tickles your fancy, you'll find plenty of interest on the Net, and the fastest growing segment of it, the graphic-oriented World Wide Web.

What is the Internet? For the uninitiated, it's a network of computer networks, originally developed by the government. How do you get on the Superhighway? If you have a computer, it's this simple. Buy a modem (we recommend the fastest possible) and attach it to your phone line. Find a local provider to "beam you up" into cyberspace, so to speak — wire you into the network — and you're there. (To access the goodies you'll need Netscape or another type of software, which the provider usually makes available free). Getting online is no more complicated than that, despite all the hype you've heard. And if you're a university student or faculty member, you can probably obtain free access.

Once you're caught up in the Net you'll discover a great number of "websites" and "pages" of interest. While you can gain access to these locations by typing in the Internet addresses (http...) below, you will do most of your traveling by way of interactive "links," which instantly jump at the click of a mouse to other sites.

When you discover "newsgroups" or "usenet groups" you will quickly realize there are an awful lot of people on this planet with way too much time on their hands. They chat about everything under the sun on these electronic bulletin boards, and sometimes nothing at all. But they also discuss subjects that we'll wager are of great interest.

Wanna talk silent movies, but no one of your acquaintance knows anything about them, or even cares? Got a question about Keaton or Chaney you simply can't find the answer to? You'll find plenty of aficionados on the Net. Just sign onto rec.movies.silent. As of September, those who appreciate the Little Tramp have their own chat group, alt.movies.chaplin, while fans of the movies' best-loved comedy team, unaccustomed as they are to these new-fangled things, can be reached at alt.comedy.laurel-hardy. For those who like their comedy a little more raucous, there is also a newsgroup devoted to a noisier team of funsters: alt.comedy.slapstick.3-stooges. Just say Moe.

One of the most active groups is of interest to nostalgia buffs is rec.arts.movies.past-films, where film fans gather to compare notes on favorite directors, character actors, and other aspects of golden age cinema. Animation fans can tune into alt.animation, while mouse catchers will want to check out alt.disney.collecting.

Silent Movies

<http://www.cs.monash.edu.au/~pringle/silent/>

A good place to begin your tour. Here you will find a library of links to sites featureable from all providers. Although we'd like to take

a peek behind the red-velvet curtain, alt.comedy.vaudeville is one we've heard about but haven't been able to locate yet.

Music

George and Ira Gershwin Home Page

<http://www.sju.edu/~bs065903/gershwin/homepage.htm>

Louis Armstrong Home Page

<http://www.netspace.org/~haaus/shome.html>

You can listen to "some music to whet the 'ol appetite" as you view this page, which includes recommended albums, readings and a biography of Satchmo.

Sinatra Home Page

<http://www.io.org/~buff/sinatra.html>

Old Blue Eyes is alive and well in cyberspace. And everywhere else, it seems.

Wolverine Antique Music Society

<http://turnpike.net/metro/gherzens/>

Offers original 78-rpm label art, excerpts from vintage jazz discs, biographical profiles and the opportunity to chat with others who love music of the 1920s through the '40s.

78 rpm Home Page

<http://www.teleport.com/~rfrederi/>

This site contains information on the Assn. for Recorded Sound Collections, Neophone vertical-cut records, Pathe vertical records, center-start 78s, the 78-to-CD transfer process, label pictures and links to many related topics of interest.

Carl's Vaudeville & Ragtime Show

<http://netrunner.net/~phono/master.wav>

You'll find sound bites of vintage vaudeville and ragtime songs here (!), along with information about the legendary Palacae Theatre.

Ragtime Home Page

Listings of ragtime on CD, events, books and sheet music, et cetera. <http://www.ragtimers.org/~ragtimers/>

Radio

Old Time Radio WWW Page

<http://www.crl.com/~lgenco/otr.html>

Lou Genco's OTR site provides access to museum addresses, fan club information, a collector's trading post, pictures and sound clips — including samples from "The Shadow," "The Whistler," "The Lone Ranger" and "Duffy's Tavern." Among other things.

OTR Online

http://radio.aiss.uiuc.edu/~rrb/OTR_ONLINE/

Follow the activity on an electronic bulletin board for old time radio enthusiasts.

The Airwaves Golden Age Media Page

<http://radio.aiss.uiuc.edu/~rrb/history.html>

This site provides links to other places, including a large photo gallery and an antique radio museum.

Continued on Page 32

For Whom the Bell Tolls, Goldwyn Films Restored

Thanks to the profit potential created by the home video revolution, many films which languished in studio vaults for decades are getting a much-needed restoration. With today's digital technologies, they're looking better than ever.

The UCLA Film Archive has recently spent much time, effort and money in restoring Paramount's film version of Ernest Hemingway's epic *For Whom the Bell Tolls* to almost all of its original glory. When originally road-shown in selected theaters in 1943, critics were lavish with their praise—although several pointed out that, at 170 minutes, some trimming of the film might be helpful. Before the film's general release, producer-director Sam Wood trimmed thirteen and one-half minutes from the running time and eliminated the intermission. Most agreed that these trims were beneficial.

However, 27 minutes more were cut from the camera negative by Paramount for a later re-release. Various television prints were shorter still. By the 1960s, what was left was a confusing mess, and the film's reputation suffered as a result. Until recently, *For Whom the Bell Tolls* had been somewhat forgotten.

UCLA was able to make new source materials by reprinting Paramount's separation negatives for the 130-minute version and replacing the missing footage with the Library of Congress' nitrate Technicolor print of the 156-minute version. In addition, the road-show version's overture, intermission and exit-music tracks (all featuring Victor Young's memorable score) were found in a private collection and restored. This version appears to be the most complete now in existence; essentially, it is the final "director's cut."

Modern technologies were applied to clean the image and the sound. The result is a beautiful recreation of 1940s-style Technicolor filmmaking at its finest.

Ingrid Bergman and Gary Cooper were personally selected by Hemingway to play his lovers fighting fascist forces in the Spanish Civil War of 1936. The supporting cast includes Akim Tamiroff, Arturo de Cordova, Joseph Calleia and Katina Paxinou, who in this, her film debut, won an Academy Award as Best Supporting Actress.

The restored version of *For Whom the Bell Tolls* has recently been released by MCA/Universal Home Video on VHS tape (45006; 19.95) and laserdisc (42438; 44.95). We viewed the laserdisc and found it to be excellent. The variations in pictorial quality from different sources are minor, and they are not a distraction. The disc comes in an impressively-illustrated gatefold jacket. Side 4 of the two-disc set is in CAV. The chapter stops listed inside vary slightly from those on the disc, and the intermission comes at the end of side 2, not side 3 as indicated.

The Samuel Goldwyn Company has taken much better care of its films over the years than most studios. This extends even to the original sound separation masters—in other words, the various components (dialogue, music, sound effects) which are combined for the final mix of the soundtrack. Nearly all of the Goldwyn films recently re-released on laserdisc by Pioneer contain the musical score isolated on one of the disc's analog tracks.

The newest batch of releases includes William Wyler's classic adaptations of *The Little Foxes* (Pioneer PSE 9562; 59.95) and *Wuthering Heights* (PSE9564; 49.95), and director Irving Reis's 1948 romantic drama starring David Niven, Teresa Wright and Evelyn Keyes, *Enchantment* (PSE 9565; 49.95). A new high-definition film transfer process makes its debut on laserdisc with the latter two titles and Gregg Toland's darkly lit photography in these films greatly benefits from the finely detailed mastering. Neither film has looked nearly as good on television before. However, the dialogue on *Wuthering Heights* is slightly overwhelmed by the music, especially during Flora Robson's narration.

The Little Foxes' 116-minute running time prevents any supplemental sections from being included (since the maximum available running time of a single laserdisc is 120 minutes). However, each of the other two discs contains taped reminiscences of a surviving cast member. On the *Enchantment* disc, Teresa Wright recalls making that film and *The Little Foxes*. The *Heights* disc features Geraldine Fitzgerald recounting the constant problems encountered while making that film. The interview itself has a few problems: the overlaying music virtually drowns out Miss Fitzgerald's soft Irish lilt as she explains how she attained the role of Isabella; in addition, this post-film interview has sound only on the analog tracks, not on the digital. Each disc is in the CLV format. *Wuthering Heights* gets the deluxe gate-fold jacket treatment with well-researched liner notes detailing the film's production.

—Rob Ray

A Volume of Support

Old Familiar Faces: The Great Character Actors and Actresses of Hollywood's Golden Era by Robert A. Juran (Movie Memories Publishing, \$24.95) is the latest take on a favorite topic of ours — the supporting players of the '30s and '40s who were the backbone of the movie industry in a day and an age when it still had one.

Juran selects 89 of Hollywood's finest — including such stalwarts as "that crazy Russian" Mischa Auer, perennial butler Eric Blore, Marx Bros. foil Margaret Dumont, avuncular Guy Kibbee, horse-faced Edna May Oliver and blustery Raymond Walburn.

Some of his choices are truly inspired and seldom-heralded: Una O'Connor, whose maids and spinsters loosed shrieks of terror in such films as *The Invisible Man*; and shifty-eyed Porter Hall, who so memorably weaseled his way through everything from *The Thin Man* (as the lawyer who turns out to be a murderer) to *Double Indemnity*.

Some of his subjects — Lionel Barrymore, Basil Rathbone, Jack Oakie — seem out of place, but the author makes a case for their inclusion in this tome. If the concept is far from original, the book does not duplicate any previous effort. While entries are fewer in number than most volumes on the subject, profiles are more detailed — and more scrupulous in attention to the facts.

How much of the research is second hand is difficult to determine — but when sources disagree, as they so often do, Juran makes note of the discrepancies. The filmographies appear to be compiled from other reference books, but again, when he can't verify a credit, he makes note of it.

The book is not without flaws, of course, but no book of this nature could be. The old canard about John Carradine reciting Shakespeare on the streets of Hollywood is repeated once again — the actor himself debunked this myth in interviews (he did do it at the Hollywood Bowl however, to improve his voice) — and the statement that Carradine's film career ended in 1986 is incorrect. One wishes the actor had retired from the screen years earlier, but that's another matter. (Available from Movie Memories, 6205 Crestwood Ave., Sarasota FL 34231.)

—Jordan R. Young

The Bizarre Films (and Life) of Director Tod Browning

Tod Browning, director of classic horror films such as *Dracula*, *Freaks* and a long run of features with Lon Chaney, was enamored with all things weird and mysterious. As detailed in a fine new book by David J. Skal and Elias Savada, **Dark Carnival** (Anchor Books; 359 pages, hardcover; \$23.00), it's fitting that Browning should have one of the most unusual careers in movie history.

He came to movies in 1913 after having worked as a carnival barker, contortionist and clown; one suspects that his stint as a "Hypnotic Living Corpse," buried alive in a secretly-ventilated coffin, helped form his later predilection for the macabre. Oddly, he spent his first year in movies as a comedian in one-reelers, but graduated to directing shorts early in 1915 and was making features two years later.

The 30 full-length films he made until 1925 vary from comedies (*Bonnie*, *Bonnie Lassie*; *The Wise Kid*) to Westerns (*Revenge*) to costume epics (*The Virgin of Stamboul*; *The Legion of Death*). His interests in the bizarre first attracted attention in a 1920 Universal feature, *Outside the Law*, which he produced, directed and co-wrote. This lurid "crook melodrama" set in Chinatown drew the critics' notice, although Browning's glee in overstepping the limits of good taste could be seen as early as 1915, when he directed *The Spell of the Poppy*, a two-reeler starring Eugene Pallette as an opium addict. (In 1916, Browning wrote the notorious Douglas Fairbanks short *The Mystery of the Leaping Fish*, which casts Doug as a cocaine-snorting detective named "Coke Ennyday.")

His breakthrough movie was *The Unholy Three* (1925, MGM), which starred Lon Chaney as a transvestite ventriloquist with Victor McLaglen as a strong-man and Harry Earles as a demented midget—outsiders who gain revenge by swindling the gullible. The direction

was so adroit that audiences and critics forgave the many holes in the story line. The Browning-Chaney-MGM combination continued with *The Road to Mandalay*, *The Unknown*, *London After Midnight*, *West of Zanzibar* and *Where East is East*. Audiences flocked to them, although reviewers complained about the sordidness and absurdity of the stories. During a brief tenure at Universal in 1930-31, Browning scored a success with *Dracula*—and then returned to MGM, where he made an utterly bizarre film about sideshow attractions entitled *Freaks* (1932). Critics called it "repellant" and "horrible"; having been given major publicity by MGM, it was a resounding flop and effectively killed Browning's career.

He stayed on at MGM for ten more years, making only four films (including a *Dracula* retread called *Mark of the Vampire* and the now-admired *The Devil Doll*). Perhaps Browning's earlier successes led producer Hunt Stromberg to keep him on salary; in any event, he spent most of the time in frustrated idleness. In 1942 he retired to Malibu, living as a virtual recluse until his death 20 years later.

Given Browning's adamant refusal in later years to talk about any aspect of his life or career, Skal and Savada have done remarkable work in reconstructing his past (including his recurrent alcoholism) and his wildly unpredictable personality. Mr. Savada conducted many interviews with the director's associates in 1972, and talked to family members in 1994; both authors made thorough use of libraries and archives. As in Skal's earlier book *The Monster Show*, the current book does a fine job of explaining why audiences of the '20s and '30s were so peculiarly fascinated with Browning's tales of the bizarre. A fully-detailed filmography, running 88 pages, and scrupulously documented notes on sources are also included.

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 For Whom the Bell Tolls (Gary Cooper, Ingrid Bergman)
 MCA/Universal 45006 19.95
 The Great Man's Lady (Barbara Stanwyck)
 MCA/Universal 82451 14.98
 Hands Across the Table (Lombard) MCA/Universal 82509 14.98
 The Hunchback of Notre Dame (Chaney) Kino on Video 862 24.98
 Internes Can't Take Money (Barbara Stanwyck) MCA/Universal
 82445 14.98
 John Wayne Special Anniversary Edition (Three-tape box set with
 The Quiet Man, The Sands of Iwo Jima and *Rio Grande*)
 Republic 9100 \$49.98
 The Lady Eve (Barbara Stanwyck, Henry Fonda)
 MCA/Universal 80353 14.98
 A Lady Takes a Chance (John Wayne, Jean Arthur)
 Republic 5544 19.98
 Little Rascals Volumes 13-21 Cabin Fever 14.98 each;
 boxed set 125.00
 Lon Chaney: Behind the Mask Kino on Video 869 24.99
 Martin Scorsese Presents Gift Set (4-tape box set with *Force of Evil*
 [John Garfield]; *Johnny Guitar* [Joan Crawford]; *A Double*
 Life [Ronald Colman] and *Pursued* [Robert Mitchum])
 Republic 9003 \$59.98
 Murders in the Zoo (Lionel Atwill) MCA/Universal 81806 14.98
 Night Monster (Lugosi) MCA/Universal 14.98
 No Highway in the Sky (James Stewart) Fox 8622 19.95
 No Man of Her Own (Clark Gable, Carole Lombard)
 MCA/Universal 14.98
 Nomads of the North (Lon Chaney) Kino on Video 863 24.95
 The Old Dark House Kino on Video 872 24.95
 Oliver Twist (1920, Lon Chaney) Kino on Video 864 24.95
 Origins of Film: African American Cinema I Unipix 70001 24.95
 Origins of Film: African American Cinema II Unipix 70002 24.95
 Origins of Film: America's First Women Filmmakers
 Unipix 70003 24.95
 Origins of Film: Origins of American Animation Unipix 70004 24.95
 Origins of Film: Origins of the Fantasy Feature Unipix 70005 24.95
 Origins of Film: Origins of the Gangster Film Unipix 70006 24.95
 Outside the Law (Chaney) Kino on Video 865 24.95
 Pandora and the Flying Dutchman Kino on Video \$19.95
 Phantom of the Opera (1925, Lon Chaney) Kino on Video 24.95
 The Princess Comes Across (Carole Lombard)
 MCA/Universal 82503 14.98
 Remember the Night (Barbara Stanwyck)
 MCA/Universal 80775 14.98
 Rio Grande - 45th Anniversary Edition (including documentary
 hosted by Leonard Maltin) Republic 3453 14.98
 Shadows (Chaney) Kino on Video 867 24.95
 She Kino on Video 871 24.95
 The Shock / Light of Faith (Lon Chaney) Kino on Video 868 24.95
 Sudden Fear (Joan Crawford) Kino on Video 19.95
 Supernatural (Carole Lombard) MCA/Universal 82514 14.98
 The Texans (Randolph Scott) MCA/Universal 82504 14.98
 Texas Rangers (Fred MacMurray) MCA/Universal 82505 14.98
 Texas Rangers Ride Again (John Howard, Akim Tamiroff)
 MCA/Universal 82506 14.98
 The Third Man [Uncut British Version] (Joseph Cotten, Orson Welles)
 HomeVision TH1110 24.98
 Three Cases of Murder (Orson Welles) HomeVision THR120 39.98

Music

Daddy of All Crooners

Gene Austin has become the forgotten man of America's vintage pop singers. Most histories of the subject include only a token reference to him; others ignore him entirely, and a few have offered some pretty harsh criticism of his abilities. Austin was not the jazz singer that Crosby was, and he was too plain-folks to have the romantic ardor of Russ Columbo. His main assets were a beautifully pure, high tenor voice and a quiet charm. When appropriate, he'd slip in some bluesy inflections, which reflected his Southern origins, and he was also an excellent barrelhouse-style piano player.

Virtually the only record of Austin's that has been available in recent years is his biggest hit, "My Blue Heaven," which he made in September 1927; it sold at least one million copies in an era when virtually no records accomplished that feat. That side is among the 20 included in Take Two Records' new CD collection, **Gene Austin: A Time to Relax** (TT 414 CD; \$15.98). Hardly any of the other 19 have been previously reissued; some fans may lament the exclusion of Austin's other hits "Ramona" and "Jeannine, I Dream of Lilac Time," but producer Jim Bedom has wisely chosen the tracks to illuminate many aspects of Austin's talents.

We get to hear Gene's first record for Victor—his hit composition, "When My Sugar Walks Down the Street," in an acoustically-recorded duet with Aileen Stanley. (Gene gets one solo chorus, and indulges in some scat-singing that sounds very much like Cliff "Ukulele Ike" Edwards.) Along with ballads such as "She's Funny That Way," "Guilty" and "Love Letters in the Sand," some uptempo tunes are included, among them a hot version of "Nothin'" (in which the jazzy band almost drowns out Gene's quiet vocal) and several Fats Waller compositions. Fats himself tickles the ivories in "I've Got a Feeling I'm Falling" and "My Fate Is In Your Hands." The grittier side of Gene's repertoire is here, too, in "St. James Infirmary," "St. Louis Blues," and a great track from 1933, "Jam House Blues," in which he plays a rollicking piano with the bass-and-guitar duo of Candy and Coco. The sound quality is up to the usual superb Take Two standards; we'll refrain from comment on the liner notes, because your humble editor wrote them. (Take Two, P.O. Box 36729, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (213) 939-4419.)

Mills Bros., Powell, Baker, Boswells

Four New Views of "Art Deco" Music

Columbia Records' Legacy division has released four more entries in the label's "Art Deco" series. As with earlier entries, these are generally well programmed and intelligently annotated; the only element that's uneven is the quality of the transfers from 78-rpm originals to compact disc.

The Essential Mills Brothers: Four Boys and a Guitar (CK 57713) has excellent sound, because producer Nedra Olds Neal has had the transfers done by British audio engineer John R.T. Davies. Mr. Davies has been engineering and producing reissue albums since 1949, and he consistently achieves the highest sound quality in the field, using relatively low-tech equipment. In fact, Mr. Davies did the transfers for a five-volume series of the Mills Brothers' complete 1930s output, available on the British JSP label.

The new Legacy collection has 18 highlights of the Mills' 1931-34 recordings, including teamings with Bing Crosby on "Dinah" and "Shine." Two tracks are from a 1932 album commemorating the landmark "Blackbirds of 1928" Broadway show; "Diga, Diga Doo" pairs the boys with Duke Ellington's orchestra, and on "Doin' the New Low Down" they join forces with Cab Calloway and Don Redman's band. The recordings that feature only the instrumentation of the boys' voices and the guitar are pretty wonderful, too, especially two songs about gossip: "I Heard" and "Dirt Dishin' Daisy." A bonus track, never before released, is "My Little Grass Shack in Kealahakua, Hawaii," from the only test pressing known to exist. Unfortunately, the sound quality of this track is not as good as the others, with a hiss that sounds like it's engendered by the CEDAR process (which often inserts a noise more annoying than the one it's supposed to remove). Will Friedwald contributes another superb essay in the liner notes, and the disc itself is good to look at, having been attractively adorned with a group photo of the Brothers. (All of the recent Art Deco CDs have this lovely "picture-disc" format.)

Josephine Baker: Breezin' Along (CK 75540) transports us to the Paris of 1926 and '27, which "La Ba-Kair" had just conquered by starring in the previously all-white Folies Bergère, dancing the Charleston wearing nothing but a skimpy skirt made of bananas. Here, the St. Louis native sings twenty songs by American composers, with backing by French dance bands. Some of them are now standards ("Who?", "Dinah," "Sleepy Time Gal," "Blue Skies"); others are largely forgotten ("Bam Bam Bamy Shore," "I Want to Yodel," "Skeedle Um") but all are delightful. Miss Baker's voice is thin—reminding us that it was her personality and charisma which made her a star, rather than any great talent as a vocalist. Nevertheless, her singing has a charming innocence, in direct contrast to the brazenly sexual image she presented visually. The French accompanists sometimes have an uncertain sense of rhythm, not to mention pitch, but these flaws add to the authentic "Paris cabaret" feel. (These 20 tracks are also available with 30 others on the DCC Compact Classics label's two-CD *Josephine Baker* album, DJZ(2)-614.)

The boy crooner of the Warner Bros.-Busby Berkeley epics is celebrated with **Dick Powell in Hollywood (1933-35)**, a CD with 20 tracks—nine fewer than on the similarly-titled two-LP collection released by Columbia in 1969. The sound quality is generally just as fine as the old LPs (one suspects that the 1969 tape may have been used for much of the new release). However, "I'll String Along With You," "Lullaby of Broadway," "Mr. and Mrs. Is the Name" and "Flirtation Walk" have a raspy, hissy surface noise which seems to have been accentuated in the transfer process. (These same tracks sounded rather muffled on the old LPs; on the CD, the listener can filter out the hiss to his own tastes.) One regrets the exclusion of "I'm Goin' Shoppin' With You" and "Ah! The Moon is Here" from the CD edition, but the songs that remain are gems ("The Gold Diggers' Song," "Shadow Waltz," "Honeymoon Hotel," etc.) and Powell's agreeable tenor is accompanied by some fine hot playing. (One wishes the liner notes had included a listing of the backing musicians.)

Finally, the most adventurous vocal group of early jazz is showcased in **The Boswell Sisters: That's How Rhythm Was Born** (CK 66977). The twenty tracks are lesser-known items from the Boswells' catalog ("Trav'lin' All Alone," "Song of Surrender") and are generally well-transferred, although the title track and "Dinah" are from worn originals. The Dorsey Brothers Orchestra backs up the sisters on several tunes, while "The Object of My Affection" has a brief interjection from bandleader Jimmie Grier.

ALL OR NOTHING AT ALL



and his Orchestra Featuring Frank Sinatra (Legacy/Columbia CK 66377). The handsome package contains all ten of the master recordings that Frank made during his brief tenure with James (June through December 1939), plus four alternate takes. The final seven tracks are rarities taken from live remote broadcasts made by the band in July and August, four of which pre-date Frank's first recording session. (Three other songs from broadcasts — "To You," "Let's Disappear" and "I Poured My Heart Into a Song" exist only in poor quality, and were not included here.)

It's obvious why James, having caught a broadcast from the Rustic Cabin in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, drove down to nab the boy singer appearing with Bill Henri and his Headliners. The kid had talent. In these recordings, one can detect occasional shortcomings (Frank's pitch is uncertain in the opening of "The Lamp is Low," and he strains for the high note at the end of the alternate take of "All or Nothing at All"), but already he has that way of caressing a lyric, singing in a direct, intimate and highly individual style. James did well by his new boy singer (who was actually three months older than the 23-year-old boss!); in several of these recordings the spotlight is definitely on Frank. On the first tune they recorded together, "From the Bottom of My Heart," Harry takes only a brief solo and leaves most of the record to Sinatra—a real rarity in those days of uncredited, one-chorus-only "vocal refrains."

It's hard to believe that James' band was doing lackluster business during Sinatra's stint. The arrangements provide the perfect support for both singer and trumpeter, without ever being too frilly. The songs aren't always classics, but there aren't any real duds either. James' trumpet playing is amazing—it's as extroverted as Frank's singing is quiet and low-key, yet the solos are tasteful even at their most emotional. Most of the numbers are ballads, but Frank takes tentative steps at swinging on an uptempo version of "My Buddy," "Wishing Will Make it So" and James' signature tune "Ciribiribin."

Happily, the transfers from 78 to CD (by Tom Ruff at Sony Music Studios) are among the best we've heard on the Columbia/Legacy label. The packaging, too, has been carefully executed, with rare photos, two essays by longtime big-band chronicler George T. Simon, a recollection of Frank's start in the business by musician Burt Hall, an interview with songwriter Jack Lawrence (who penned four of the tunes heard here) and another incisive essay by Will Friedwald.

The Young Man With a Horn--and The Voice

Last year, when Columbia Records issued its "complete" Frank Sinatra 1943-52 box set of CDs, we wondered why the label hadn't made the package truly complete by including Frank's first records, made with Harry James in 1939.

Well, the answer's here: **Harry James**

The seven remote broadcast tracks on the above CD were first released in 1994 as part of a terrific three CD box set, **Harry James & his Orchestra: Bandstand Memories 1938 to 1948** (Hindsight HBCD503; \$39.98). James' manager from 1940 until his death in 1983, PeeWee Monte, amassed some 1200 "aircheck" recordings of the band's live remote broadcasts and sponsored shows for Chesterfields and Pabst. The 63 tracks from that collection included here are primarily from late-night remotes at the Roseland Ballroom, the Astor Roof, the Meadowbrook and the Casino Gardens.

In many cases the tunes were never commercially recorded by the band; other songs are given radically different arrangements from their 78-rpm counterparts. The sound quality, understandably, varies from track to track (the remote broadcasts were done under siege conditions and the band was not always well-miked), but it's generally fine.

James' excellent taste in vocalists is further underscored by contributions from Dick Haymes, Helen Forrest, Helen Ward and Kitty Kallen. A 1940 interview with James is a bonus, as is the booklet which provides exhaustive details on each of the tracks by Brad McCuen, a veteran producer of big band recordings. This box set contains more than three hours of previously unreleased recordings capturing James and his band in their prime, and it's an essential purchase for devotees of swing music. (Available from Hindsight Records, P.O. Box 7114, Burbank CA 91510.)

And still more prime, unreleased live Harry James material is pouring forth from Viper's Nest, a new imprint from the Stash-Jass-VJC family of labels. **Harry James and his Orchestra: Always 1943-46** (Viper's Nest Gold VNG 202; \$12.98) features 21 tracks taken from various sustaining broadcasts and Chesterfield shows, with a final bonus being a complete 1945 ABC remote broadcast from the Casino Gardens ballroom.

The sound quality here is little short of stunning; most of the broadcasts were preserved on 78 rpm, 12-inch glass-based acetate discs. Glass was used as a base for these records during the wartime years when metal and shellac were scarce; they're even more notoriously breakable than standard commercial 78s, but these fragile discs convey some mighty powerful sound.

What a thrill it is to hear James' great horn and greatest sidemen captured in high fidelity; every nuance of every note is vividly captured. The powerful versions of "Moten Swing" and "Air Mail Special" are worth the price of the disc by themselves. Helen Forrest joins a vocal quartet called the Song Makers for a jumping arrangement of "Between the Devil and the Deep Blue Sea," then bids farewell to the band with "How Sweet You Are." Trombonist-composer Juan Tizol, best remembered for his years with Ellington and tunes such as "Caravan" and "Perdido" contributes a moody piece entitled "Zambu," never waxed commercially.

The gorgeous sound quality and the precision of the band make these tracks sound like well-recorded "studio" versions; only when the applause kicks in does one realize that these are remotes, performed in the midst of an often-punishing schedule of touring. These glistening performances were all in a night's work for the James crew; how lucky we are that the music of some of those nights has been so faithfully preserved. (Available from Stash Mail Order, 140 West 22nd St., 12th Floor, New York NY 10011.)

Rodgers and Hart and Hammerstein, Profiled

It's almost impossible to believe that the same man who co-wrote snappy hit songs of the '20s such as "Mountain Greenery," "Manhattan" and "Thou Swell" would be writing "You'll Never Walk Alone" and "Climb Ev'ry Mountain" decades later. Composer Richard Rodgers' amazing career began at 16 when he teamed with Lorenz Hart in 1918; it continued until his death in 1979. Rodgers recounts his life and career in straightforward fashion in his autobiography, **Musical Stages**, first published in 1975 and newly reprinted (Da Capo Press; 341 pages, paperback; \$14.95).

Rodgers has been described by most of his associates as a pretty cold fish, devoid of the warmth and emotion which characterized his music. Even his daughter, Mary Rodgers, admits in a newly-written introduction that "basically what I loved about him was only what you loved—his music....my father was an extremely complicated man and deeply unhappy much of the time." Although his prose has a brisk, no-nonsense tone about it (reflecting his scrupulous work habits and his ability to write a finished melody in half an hour), he comes across as being a pretty nice guy in this lively memoir, which is filled with anecdotes about practically everyone involved in the theater from the '20s through the '50s. (Da Capo Press, 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013.)

Although Rodgers expresses deep admiration for Lorenz Hart's talent, working with him was often a source of great worry. Frederick Nolan details why in **Lorenz Hart: A Poet on Broadway** (Oxford University Press; 390 pages, hardcover; \$25.00), a book as carefully crafted as the lyrics of its subject. Hart was, and is, fondly remembered by associates for his generosity, his warmth, and his unflagging wit—yet many echo the words of singer Mabel Mercer, who described him as "the saddest man I ever knew." Hart's small stature (barely five feet) and unhandsome visage prevented this writer of tender and brilliantly insightful love lyrics from ever having a romance of his own. He was smitten with actress Vivienne Segal and asked her to marry him on many occasions; yet he was sexually ambiguous. Fellow lyricist Alan Jay Lerner put it well: "Because of his size, the opposite sex was denied him, so he was forced to find relief in the only other sex left." Hart's lonely-in-a-crowd personality and the alcoholism which destroyed him are vividly described. So are his unorthodox methods of writing: he'd wait until the very last minute, then Rodgers would desperately coax him to the piano and begin playing his melodies. Hart would then instantly write brilliant lyrics, no rewrites necessary.

Those lyrics—so filled with brilliant wordplay, colloquial expressions and internal rhymes upon rhymes—were brilliantly innovative and sparked a revolution in popular songwriting. Nolan doesn't quote any lyrics, because the current owners denied him the use of them. It's a testament to the quality of his writing and research (which includes interviews with Irving Berlin, George Abbott, Gene Kelly and scores of other associates) that the book holds up just fine without directly quoting Hart's work. (Oxford University Press, 2001 Evans Road, Cary NC 27513; (800) 451-7556.)

If you do want to experience the many pleasures of Hart's lyrics—which are literate, earthy, poignant, caustic, sentimental and sardonic, often all at once—a newly-expanded treasury of them is the recently-reprinted **The Complete Lyrics of Lorenz Hart** (Da Capo Press; 367 pages, paperback; \$25.00), edited by Dorothy Hart (the lyricist's sister-in-law) and Robert Kimball. The oversize volume is illustrated with 47 pictures from Rodgers and Hart's Broadway shows (*Pal Joey*, *On Your Toes*, *The Girl Friend*) and movies (*Love Me Tonight*). The book includes early lyrics that Hart wrote as a youth, before meeting Rodgers—and includes all the existing lyrics crafted during their 24-year partnership. Although many of the songs are long-forgotten, Hart's poetry transcends the years.

Oscar Hammerstein II, who became Rodgers' second collaborator in 1943, was a total opposite from Hart in personality, temperament and work habits; he was quiet, dependable, and would agonize for weeks over a lyric (which Rodgers would then set to a melody in half an hour). His lyrics differed sharply, too; he eschewed wordplay, trying for the simplest, purest distillation of the song's sentiment. His long career pre-Rodgers, which included writing the landmark *Show Boat* score with Jerome Kern and enduring a long, frustrating string of flops before his career's triumphant final act, is well detailed in Hugh Fordin's **Getting to Know Him** (Da Capo; 383 pages, paperback; \$15.95). Fordin captures Hammerstein's sentimental-yet-reserved character, and illustrates his craftsmanship with early drafts of lyrics.

By George—and About Him

George Gershwin's centennial won't be until 1998, but books and CDs continue to proliferate as if we were already celebrating the 100th anniversary of his birth. Gershwin was only 38 when he died of a brain tumor in July 1937; his passing was so keenly felt that his friend, designer Merle Armitage, spent a year assembling a book of tributes written by friends and admirers.

That visually striking book, simply titled **George Gershwin** (Da Capo; 254 pages, paperback; \$16.95), was first published in 1938; the reprint features a new introduction by Gershwin biographer Edward Jablonski.



The brief but telling word portraits by the likes of Paul Whiteman, Jerome Kern, Harold Arlen, Rudy Vallee, Rouben Mamoulian and brother and collaborator Ira—along with a few profiles written during George's lifetime and two articles written by him—describe the many facets of this bon vivant who embraced Tin Pan Alley, Broadway and the Concert Hall with equal relish.

When Gershwin was trying to establish himself as a composer between 1916 and 1920, he augmented his income by making over 130 piano rolls. Many albums have been made from these rolls; a 1993 CD released by Elektra/Nonesuch, *Gershwin Plays Gershwin* (79287-2) faithfully captured Gershwin's style of playing through the use of the computer-driven Yamaha Disklavier. That collection featured 12 of Gershwin's own songs; a new sequel, **The Piano Rolls, Volume Two** (Nonesuch 79370-2) gives us two more Gershwin compositions, along with 14 interpretations of other composers' work. Despite the obscurity of the songs, Gershwin's enthusiastic, nimble playing and the stunning digital sound make this a must-have.

Those who have access to particularly good record stores might attempt finding a newly-released Italian import CD of the **George Gershwin Memorial Concert** (Th Radio Years RY-9). The August 9, 193 broadcast features performances by Al Jolson and Fred Astaire, with Jose Iturbi and Oscar Levant taking turns at the keyboard.

Libby Holman: The Singer Who Lit the Torch

If ever there was an authentic femme fatale in the '20s and '30s, Libby Holman was it. A Broadway star in revues such as 1929's *The Little Show* and 1930's *Three's a Crowd*, Holman was a torch singer—but definitely not the delicate, vulnerable kind exemplified by Ruth Etting, Helen Morgan, and Annette Hanshaw.

Libby was almost a vamp: as she sang about how her man done her wrong, she growled out the lyrics in a way that implied she was able to give as good (or bad) as she got. As musical theatre historian Miles Kreuger aptly puts it, "When Ruth Etting and Helen Morgan sang, they were being consumed by the flame of the torch. When Libby Holman sang, she was striking the match."

The air of mystery that surrounded Miss Holman in performance extended to her private life as well; unhappily married to young tobacco-fortune heir Zachary Smith Reynolds, Libby was suspected of murdering him in 1932. (The case never came to trial.) Over the years, a number of her lovers and friends died in tragic ways; Miss Holman was blameless, but she seemed to be living a doomed existence.

Her recordings, thankfully, are often quite lively—even the out-and-out torch songs. A new CD from Take Two Records, **Libby Holman: Moanin' Low 1927-1934** (TT415CD; \$15.98) collects 20 of her early waxings, most of them originally made for Brunswick. The classic songs which she introduced are included: "Can't We Be Friends," "Body and Soul," "Something to Remember You By" and the title track—which is included twice, in a "torchy" arrangement from a rare 1929 Brunswick Brevities radio transcription, and in a hot uptempo treatment which teams Libby with the Cotton Pickers.

Even if one isn't enamored of Holman's voice—which is dark, throaty, growly and marked by a very pronounced vibrato—the backing bands are always excellent. A hot Joe Venuti-style violin adorns "Who's That Knocking at My Door?," while the Rodgers and Hart song "My Man Is on the Make" is rendered in torrid fashion by the Colonial Club Orchestra. Holman's version of "Cooking Breakfast for the One I Love" is especially tasty, featuring Roger Wolfe Kahn's dance band. The sound quality is superb, and Miles Kreuger contributes a fine essay in the accompanying booklet. (Available from Take Two, P.O. Box 36729, Los Angeles, CA 90036; (213) 939-4419.)

Christmas Music, Nostalgia Style

If you're wishing for some vintage Christmas music to listen to while you trim the tree, we have a few suggestions. LaserLight, the Santa Monica, California label that has previously released several nostalgia-entertainment CDs well worth their budget-line price, has a new series of Christmas releases produced by Rod McKuen (who earlier this year compiled the ten-CD *Songs That Won the War* collection). Three CDs form a **Christmas Through the Years** series, with one disc each devoted to **Bing Crosby** (LaserLight 12 532), **Judy Garland** (12 534) and **Frank Sinatra** (12 533).

The Sinatra collection has twelve tracks taken from 1940s broadcasts, including songs that Frank never recorded commercially (and which are not included on Columbia/Legacy's excellent *Christmas Songs By Sinatra* CD) such as "Mistletoe & Holly," "I've Got My Love to Keep Me Warm" and a medley of "The Christmas Song" and "White Christmas" sung in duet by Sinatra and Bing Crosby. The inclusion of the non-Yuletide "Homesick, That's All" and "Boys and Girls Like You and Me" is a little puzzling, and the sound quality varies from track to track. The Crosby CD is a mixture of tracks from the '40s ("Happy Holidays," "Adeste Fideles") and the '70s ("Snowbird" and "All His Children," both done with the Count Basie band). Caveat emptor: the version of "Jingle Bells" is a blooper in which Bing's reference to Jesus Christ is not a reverent one. It's very funny, but not really appropriate for a Christmas CD.

Another LaserLight release is **1940's Christmas** (12 542), which combines a few familiar Yuletide songs ("I'll Be Home for Christmas" by Crosby, "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" by Garland, "O Little Town of Bethlehem" by Dinah Shore) with winter songs (Dick Haymes doing "Button Up Your Overcoat," Frankie Carle's band playing "Little Jack Frost, Get Lost"). As with all of these Rod McKuen-produced "'40s" epics, there are some bafflers: Perry Como sings "We'll Meet Again," a song which has no ties to Christmas, in a 1970s recording that has no ties to the '40s. Ditto for "Baby, It's Cold Outside" by Petula Clark and McKuen. Still, there are a couple of tracks not available elsewhere, and given the low price of the CD (generally in retail stores for \$5.98) it's probably worth it. (For further information, write Stanyan, Box 2783, Hollywood CA 90028.)

Capitol Records, which earlier released a fine collection of 1940s Christmas recordings, *Christmas Kisses* (Capitol 94701), now gives us **Christmas on the Range** (Capitol 35778), a 20-track CD of cowboy classics celebrating the season. The selections were originally recorded between 1945 (Tex Ritter's "Christmas Carols By the Old Corral") and 1967 (Roy Rogers' "Jingle Bells"), but most are from the late '40s-early '50s heyday of Cowboy Pop music. Along with hits such as Margaret Whiting and Jimmy Wakely's "Silver Bells," there are wonderful obscurities such as Tex Williams' "The Winter Song," Cliffie Stone's version of "Here Comes Santa Claus," Tennessee Ernie Ford's hilarious "Christmas Dinner," and a honky-tonk version of "Blue Christmas" by The Dinning Sisters and Bob Atcher. As with all Capitol reissues of vintage material, the sound is wonderfully crisp, clear and devoid of surface noise.

If you're looking for a collection of Big Band Christmas music, you might try **Christmas Serenade in the Glenn Miller Style**, originally recorded in the early '60s and now out on compact disc from Sony Music Special Products (Sony A 24076). Vocalists Tex Beneke, Ray Eberle and the Modernaires with Paula Kelly are on hand to provide some authentic Miller sounds—which are sorely needed because the arrangements by Alan Copeland too often replace Miller's trademarks with a generic "1960s Swing" sound. But any CD with Beneke's tenor sax on "Sleigh Ride" and "Snowfall" can't be a total loss. If you're looking for more faithful Miller-style Yuletide tunes, try LaserLight's *In the Christmas Mood* (15 418) and its sequel, *...Mood II* (12 200), by the '90s edition of the Miller band.

If you're near a particularly good record store, you might seek out a British-import CD, **A Very Nostalgic Christmas** (Empress RAJCD 839; \$12.98). A few of the tracks are by Yanks (Crosby, Miller, Arthur Tracy, Frances Langford), but most are by English bandleaders and personalities. While the zany Christmas Pantomime of "Aladdin" by Jack Payne's orchestra might be a bit too UK for American audiences, "Santa Claus Express" by Jay Wilbur's band, Billy Cotton's "Jolly Old Christmas" and Henry Hall's "I'm Going Home for Christmas" can be appreciated by anyone this side of the Pond.

What's Old on Audio: Vintage Music on New and Recent CDs

Note: These CDs can be special ordered through your local record store, or can be purchased by mail order from sources such as Worlds Records (P.O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94948; (800) 742-6663) or Vintage Sound Works (see opposite page).

- Adler, Larry: Maestro of the Mouth Organ 1934-38 ASV 5153
 Andrews Sisters: The Andrews Sisters ASV 5096
 Armstrong, Louis: Heavenly Music 1949-1957 Ambassador 1916
 Armstrong, Louis: Volume 3, Pocketful of Dreams Decca/GRP GRD-649
 Armstrong, Louis: Young Louis Armstrong 1930-33 (2-CDs) RCA 66469-2
 Baker, Josephine: Exotique (1930-31) Flapper 7059
 Barnet, Charlie: More Evidence 22112
 Basie, Count: And his Great Vocalists (1939-45) Columbia 66374
 Basie, Count: The Indispensable, Vols. 5 & 6 (1947-49) RCA 66497-2
 Bechet, Sidney: The Genius of Sidney Bechet Jazzology JCD-35
 Berigan, Bunny: and his Orchestra, 1938 Classics 815
 Berigan, Bunny: The Pied Piper (1935-40) Bluebird/BMG 66615
 Bradley, Will: and his Orchestra (1941) Circle 72
 Brown, Les: And his Great Vocalists (1941-50) Columbia 66373
- Calloway, Cab: On Film 1934-1950 Flyright 944
 Challis, Bill: and his Orchestra (1936) Circle 71
 Cole, Cozy: 1944 Classics 819
 Crosby, Bing: I'm an Old Cowhand ASV 5160 15.98
 Crosby, Bob: And his Dixieland Bob Cats (1942) Jazz Hour 1043
 Cugat, Xavier: 16 Most Requested Songs (1941-47) Columbia 47130
 Dandridge, Putney: 1935-36 (2 CD, 44-track set) Timeless CBC 1-023
 Durbin, Deanna: Can't Help Singing ASV 5149
 Edwards, Cliff: Singing in the Rain Audiophile 17
 Eldridge, Roy: Little Jazz 1935-1944 Jazz Archives 158362
 Ellington, Duke: 1940, Volume 2 Classics 820
 Ellington, Duke: 1940-41 Classics 837
 Ellington, Duke: And his Great Vocalists (1932-59) Columbia 66372
 Ellington, Duke: Rockin' in Rhythm 1930-1931 EPM Musique 152312
 Ellington, Duke: The Indispensable, Vols. 1 & 2: 1944-46 Bluebird
 Ellington, Duke: The Indispensable, Vols. 5 & 6: 1940 Bluebird
 Fitzgerald, Ella: Dreams Come True Drive
 Fitzgerald, Ella: The First Lady of Song (1935-1955) GRP 648 72.98
 Garland, Judy: 25th Anniversary Retrospective Capitol CDP 8 29901 2
 Garland, Judy: Always Chasing Rainbows ASV 5093
 Garner, Erroll: 1944 Volume 2 Classics 818
 Goodman, Benny: 1936 Classics 817
 Goodman, Benny: 1936 Volume 2 Classics 836
 Goodman, Benny: And his Great Vocalists (1934-36) Columbia 66198
 Goodman, Benny: Complete Madhattan Room B'casts, Vol. 1-3 Vipers Nest 171, 172, 173
 Goodman, Benny: The Indispensable, Vols. 5 & 6: 1938-39 Bluebird
 Goodman, Benny: Undercurrent Blues Capitol Jazz/Blue Note
 Goodman, Benny: Volume X: Yale Music Library MusicMasters 65129-2
 Goodman, Benny: Wrappin' it Up: The Harry James Years Part 2 Bluebird
- Halfway House Orchestra: Complete Recordings 1925-28 Jazz Oracle 8001
 Hampton, Lionel: Chicken Shack Boogie Decca/GRP
 Hanshaw, Annette: The Twenties Sweetheart (1926-28) Jasmine 2542
 Henderson, Fletcher: The Indispensable, 1927-36 Bluebird
 Herman, Woody: The Wildroot Broadcasts Volume 1 Artistry 1004
 Hildegard: Darling, Je Vous Aime Beaucoup ASV 5161
 Hill, Tiny and his Hilltoppers: The Second Album (1943-52) Circle 155
 Hodes, Art: Keepin' Out of Mischief Now CDD 79717 19.98
 Hodges, Johnny: Hodge Podge Sony Legacy
 Hodges, Johnny: Passion Flower (1940-46) Bluebird/BMG 66616
 Holiday, Billie: All Or Nothing At All, Volume 7 Verve
 Holiday, Billie: Verve Jazz Masters Verve
 Horne, Lena: Merry From Lena (Razor & Tie)
 Hughes, Spike: High Yellow (1932-33) Largo 5129
- James, Harry: And his Great Vocalists (1938-52) Columbia 66371
 Johnson, Freddy: And his Orchestra 1933-1939 Classics 829
 Johnson, James P.: 1943-44 Classics 824
 Johnson, James P.: 1944 Classics 835
 Jones, Richard M.: 1923-1927 Classics 826
 Krupa, Gene: It's Up to You (1946) Hep 46
 Krupa, Gene: The Radio Years (1940) Jazz Unlimited 2021
 Lee, Julia: Kansas City Star 1923-57 (5-CD set) Bear Family 15770
- Lewis, George: Bands, Trios & Quintets American Music AMCD-83
 Lewis, Willie 1932-36 Classics 822
 Loesser, Frank: Frank Sings Loesser Koch 7241
 Lynn, Vera: There's a Land of Begin Again (1939-44) Flapper 7064
 Lynn, Vera: We'll Meet Again - 48 Golden Greats Double Gold 53039
 Manone, Wingy: And his Orchestra 1935-36 Classics 828
 Martin, Mary: The Decca Years 1938-46 Koch 7906
 Merman, Ethel: I Get a Kick Out of You (1932-42) Flapper 7056
 Mills Brothers, the: Paper Doll 1931-44 ASV 5157
 Mills Brothers, the: The Anthology 1931-1968 (box set) MCA
 Morris, Thomas: 1923-27 Classics 823
 Morton, Jelly Roll: Birth of the Hot - The Classic Chicago Session RCA 66641
 Murphy, Turk Jazz Band: Favorites, Volume 2 (1947-52) Good Time Jazz 26
- Parenti, Tony: Strut Yo' Stuff (1925-29) Frog 4
 Pastor, Tony: and his Orchestra 1941-45 Circle CCD-31
 Pastor, Tony: and his Orchestra 1945-50 Circle CCD-121
 Piaf, Edith: Her Greatest Recordings 1935-43 ASV 5165
 Reinhardt, Django: The Indispensable (1949-50) (2 CDs) RCA 66468-2
 Reinhardt, Django: Volume 5 (1935-37) JSP 349
 Shavers, Charlie: And the Blues Singers 1938-39 Timeless CBC 1-025
 Shore, Dinah: 16 Most Requested Songs (1946-49) Columbia 66141
 Sinatra, Frank: 16 Most Requested Songs (1939-52) Columbia 48960
 Sinatra, Frank: From the Top (1940s radio broadcasts) Drive
 Sinatra, Frank: Sings Rodgers & Hammerstein Sony Legacy
 Stacy, Jess: Ec-Stacy ASV 5172
 Stone, Lew: Legendary Monseigneur Band (1932-34; 3-CD set) Claves 9507
 Sullivan, Joe: 1933-41 Classics 821
- Tatum, Art: 1944 Classics 825
 Tatum, Art: The Art of Tatum ASV 5164
 Tatum, Art: Best of Jazz Best of Jazz 4021
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 Teagarden, Jack: Big "T" Jump (1944-45) Jass 643
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 Various Artists: Swing Street (1931-39) Tax 9
 Various Artists: The 30s Girls (Jazz/Blues singers) Timeless CBC1-026
 Various Artists: Tonfilm Revue: Original Soundtrack Recordings from Great German Films, 1937-45 Koch 323333
 Various Artists: When Hemp Was Hip Vipers Nest 167
 Various Artists: World War 2: The Musical Memories ASV 5163
- Waller, Fats: 1936-37 Classics 816
 Waller, Fats: 1937 Classics 838
 Waller, Fats: Ain't Misbehavin' ASV 5174 15.98
 Waller, Fats: The Indispensable Fats Vols. 9 & 10 (2 CDs) RCA 66466-2
 Washboard Rhythm Kings: Collection, Volume 2 Collectors Classics COCD-18
 Washboard Rhythm Kings: Collection, Volume 3 Collectors Classics COCD-25
 Williams, Cootie: And his Orchestra 1941-44 Classics 827
 Wilson, Teddy: Moments Like This (1938-39) Hep 1043

VINTAGE SOUND WORKS



BENSELVIN Volume One Another "Old Masters" release of 21 fine hot dance selections from 1931-32, originally made for Columbia and OKeh by the most prolific of all bandleaders. You can't stop from tapping your feet when you hear tunes such as *My Sweet Tooth Says "I Wanna," Happy Days are Here Again, Last Dollar, and Little Mary Brown*. There are also gorgeous ballads such as *When We're Alone* and *You Call it Madness*. Sidemen include Benny Goodman and trumpet legend Jack Purvis.

MB102.....\$12.98

FRED RICH Volume One The Old Masters, a label which pioneered the reissue of '20s dance bands on LPs, has started a CD series; every track has been digitally restored and remastered, and the sound quality is superb. This volume has 22 tracks of great hot dance music from 1929 and '30. The usual New York studio wizards are here—the Dorseys, Venuti and Lang, etc.—playing *A Peach of a Pair, Cheerful Little Earful, Ukulele Moon* and two takes each of *Dixie Jamboree, He's So Unusual* and *I Got Rhythm*. The fidelity is exceptional, and so is the music.

MB101.....\$12.98

MILDRED BAILEY: Volume One, Sweet Beginnings One of the premier vocalists of jazz finally gets her due with two splendid CDs from The Old Masters. The first volume contains Mildred's first 21 recordings (including *Wrap your Troubles in Dreams, Georgia On My Mind* and two versions of *When It's Sleepy Time Down South*). She's teamed on these 1929-32 tracks with Eddie Lang, Frank Trumbauer, clarinetist Jimmie Noone, and the bands of Paul Whiteman and Glen Gray.

MB103.....\$12.98

MILDRED BAILEY: Volume Two, Band Vocalist More terrific singing from Miss Bailey in 22 selections from 1931 through '34; the fidelity and the performances are excellent on waxings such as *I'll Never Be the Same, Love Me Tonight, Lazy Bones*, her signature song *Rockin' Chair*, and jumping renditions of *Heat Wave* and *But I Can't Make a Man*. She's paired with the orchestras of Paul Whiteman, Leonard Joy, the Dorsey Brothers and the early band of Benny Goodman. Essential jazz.

MB 104.....\$12.98

UNRELEASED EDISON LATERALS 1 Don't let the odd title throw you; this is a 21-track anthology primarily of hot and happy dance-band music, electrically recorded by Edison in 1928 and '29 and unreleased until now! Your feet will start tapping when you hear Tom Timothy's Frivolity Club Orchestra doing *Tell Me You're Sorry*; the California Ramblers' *Cause I Feel Low Down*; the Piccadilly Players playing a hot version of *Sonny Boy*; Winegar's Pennsylvania Boys' *My Gal Sal* and others. Fine transfers of incredibly rare material!

DCP201D.....\$15.98

THE CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS: Edison Laterals 2 One of the best hot dance bands of the '20s romps through 20 unreleased tracks from 1928 and '29. Despite their extreme rarity, these tracks have excellent sound quality. Songs include *You're the Cream in My Coffee, Button Up Your Overcoat, Tiptoe Through the Tulips, Ain't Misbehavin', I'm a Dreamer (Aren't We All)* and wonderful lesser-known songs like *Guess Who, Lady Luck* and *Broadway Baby Dolls*. A real gem.

DCP301D.....\$15.98

HOT DANCE OF THE ROARING 20's Here's a brand new collection of unreleased Edison material from 1928 and '29, a 21-track marathon of beloved songs like *Let's Do It, Singin' in the Rain, I'll Get By and Makin' Whoopee*—along with wonderful obscurities such as *Sunny Skies, Hitting the Ceiling, Hello Sweetie* and *Wipin' the Pan*. The bands include the Piccadilly Players, the Seven Blues Babies, and the orchestras of Bernie Stevens, Al Friedman, Duke Yellman, B.A. Rolfe and Phil Spitalny. Music doesn't get any more fun than this!

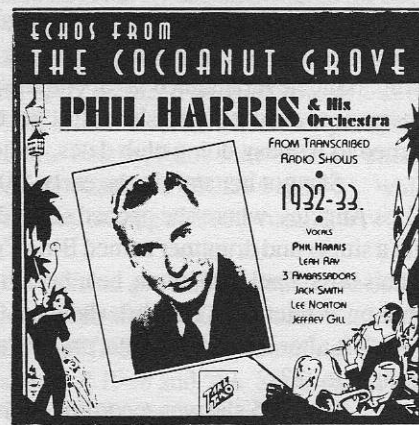
DCP202D.....\$17.98

LOUIS WITH FLETCHER HENDERSON This 3-CD set has all 65 tracks (including alternates) made by Fletcher Henderson's orchestra during the pivotal time when young trumpeter Louis Armstrong taught the band how to play it hot! The sound quality varies from track to track on these astonishingly rare 1924-25 records, most of which are acoustics, but thanks to John R.T. Davies' careful engineering the whole package is a joy to hear. Don Redman, Coleman Hawkins, Buster Bailey and other jazz greats join in on *Copenhagen, Prince of Wails, Alabamy Bound, Sugar Foot Stomp, TNT* and other essentials.

F-38001/2/3 (3-CD SET).....\$45.00

NEW! • THE ORIGINAL MEMPHIS FIVE COLLECTION, Vol.1 You won't believe the great fidelity and hot jazz in the 23 tracks from 1922 and '23. Trumpeter Phil Napoleon and pianist Frank Signorelli lead a variety of small combos (often with trombonist Miff Mole and clarinetist Jimmy Lytell) through *Runnin' Wild, Aggravatin' Papa, Chicago, Loose Feet* and the unforgettable *That Barking Dog-woof! Woof!* These recordings are rare, largely overlooked and new to CD; audio engineer John R.T. Davies has brought new life to these acoustic 78s. Great fun, hot jazz, fine sound.

COCD16.....\$14.98



NEW! • PHIL HARRIS: ECHOES FROM THE COCOANUT GROVE Phil's great early band is heard here in rare radio transcriptions from 1932-33, with many songs that have never been reissued on CD or LP. Vocals by Phil, The Three Ambassadors, Leah Ray, Jack Smith and others. The tunes include *Got a Date With an Angel, Rockin' Chair, Mimi, You're Getting to Be a Habit With Me*, and the wonderfully funny *How's About It*. Harris' band had a full, rich sound and it reflected the leader's humor, charm and personality.

TT416CD.....\$14.98

NEW! • GENE AUSTIN: A TIME TO RELAX At last, a CD devoted to the guy who created the style followed by Bing Crosby, Perry Como and other "intimate" singers. Austin casts his spell on *I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling* and *My Fate Is in Your Hands* (both with Fats Waller on piano); along with the ballads (*Love Letters in the Sand, She's Funny That Way, Guilty*) there are some good uptempo numbers like *Jam House Blues*—which provides a taste of Gene's rollicking piano style. Oh, yes — *My Blue Heaven* is included, too.

TT414CD.....\$14.98

NEW! • LIBBY HOLMAN: MOANIN' LOW Does she ever moan — the Broadway star puts a new fire into the term "torch singer" as she growls her way through *Can't We Be Friends?, A Ship Without a Sail, There Ain't No Sweet Man That's Worth the Salt of My Tears* and *Body and Soul*. Jazz fans will enjoy the Roger Wolfe Kahn band on *Cooking Breakfast For the One I Love* and The Cotton Pickers on *He's a Good Man to Have Around*. Twenty fine tracks from 1927-34.

TT415CD.....\$14.98

NEW! • LEW STONE: THE LEGENDARY MONSEIGNEUR BAND (3 CD SET) This was one of the top British dance bands of the early '30s; the 70 selections, taken from rare discs and broadcasts made in London between 1932 and '34, show why. The band effortlessly goes from hot jazz to sweet music to bouncy big-band sounds in such songs as *Miss Otis Regrets, Lazy Rhythm, Canadian Capers, Isle of Capri* and dozens of others. Great stuff.

CLAVES 9507/9 (3-CD SET).....\$44.98

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Vintage Sound Works, P.O. Box 2830, Chandler, AZ 85244

Mildred Bailey: A Jazz Singer From the Start

Mildred Bailey's voice was unlike anyone else's. It was small and fluttery (unusual coming from a woman so large), with little volume. But what was there was delectable—light, airy, perfectly pitched, and every note was sung with a dead-on sense of swing. She never attained great commercial success, which she bitterly attributed to her appearance. And perhaps she didn't get the bookings her talent deserved, but she always seemed to be busy doing club dates, radio shows and recordings.

She got her start in the early '20s, singing in Seattle cabarets. Later, she moved to Los Angeles, where she opened some doors for her brother, Al Rinker, who had teamed with a singer and drummer named Bing Crosby. In 1929, Al returned the favor by ensuring that his boss, Paul Whiteman, hear her sing. Within two days, she was making her national debut on Whiteman's network show for Old Golds. She recorded for Whiteman through 1932, left after a salary dispute, and began recording with the Dorsey Brothers and other jazzmen in '33.

By 1935 she was recording with her third husband, xylophonist Red Norvo, and they continued as "Mr. and Mrs. Swing" through the end of the decade. By 1943, the marriage was over, yet they remained friends and occasionally recorded together. Ill health plagued Mildred from the late '40s onward, and while she continued to play clubs and do radio work her hospital stays with diabetic complications and heart problems became more and more frequent. She died penniless in 1951, only 48.

Mildred was a split personality. Friends recall her great warmth and generosity (Bing said that she had a heart as big as Yankee Stadium), but they also remember her hair-trigger temper, which would send her into monumental fits of rage. Onstage or in front of the mike, she was an absolute professional, and a tireless perfectionist. (In unreleased recordings of "breakdowns," or muffed takes, one can hear her bawling out the band for making mistakes.)

As a recording artist, she was obliged to record the requisite Tin Pan Alley trifles, but she saw to it that she also waxed some superior songs. Her versatility is remarkable; she could do a gutsy "Arkansas Blues" and a sentimental "Lover, Come Back to Me" with equal sincerity.

Her complete early recordings, from her 1929 debut (with saxophonist Frank Trumbauer leading a small group taken from the Whiteman band) to a February 1934 date with the embryonic Benny Goodman orchestra, have been collected in two CDs recently issued by The Old Masters. On Volume One, **Sweet Beginnings** (TOM MB 103; \$12.98), Mildred's mature style has yet to be formed. She sings "I Like To Do Things For You" in a babyish, Helen Kane-style voice (although, admittedly, she probably never thought of adopting this type of singing beyond this one record). Other tracks, made with Whiteman and with Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra in 1931 have her singing in a more throaty, "torching" style somewhat akin to Ruth Etting's later records. But her feeling for jazz and the bouncy swing of her peak years comes to the fore in a lovely performance of Fats Waller's song "Concentratin' On You," in which she's backed by violinist Matty Malneck's small group.

The musical temperature is a lot hotter on Volume Two, **Band Vocalist** (TOM MB 104; \$12.98). Her early, torchy way with a ballad still reigns on "Strangers" and "Stop the Sun, Stop the Moon" from March 1932, but by August she's much freer on a Whiteman recording of "We Just Couldn't Say Goodbye" and her first waxing of "Rockin' Chair," which became indelibly associated with her. By April 1933, she has recast herself as a jazz singer; her first session with the Dorsey Brothers orchestra is also the first with her mature style, and she's a delight as she swings through "Is That Religion" and "Harlem Lullaby." The next couple of months bring "Shoutin' In That Amen Corner" and "Doin' the Uptown Lowdown," and if these songs contain a rather embarrassing Tin Pan Alley view of black people, they're still electrifying performances. The final session included here shows Benny Goodman finding his own form as a big-band leader in 1934; both takes of "Junk Man" are here, along with an instrumental of "Georgia Jubilee," included because this landmark session deserves to be preserved in full.

George Morrow's audio restoration is superb, all the more impressive given the scarcity of the original 78s. (Available from Vintage Sound Works, P.O. Box 2830, Chandler AZ 85244.)

Lutcher's Happy Blues

Capitol Records has just released an anthology of the finest recordings by one of the label's most popular artists of the late 1940s—Nellie Lutcher. Don't remember the name? You might well remember one of her hit compositions—revived in recent years by Bette Midler—with the refrain, "Hurry on down to my house, baby, ain't nobody home but me."

Well, even if you haven't discovered her before, you'd be well advised to pick up **The Best of Nellie Lutcher** (Capitol Jazz CDP 35039), a 21-track anthology of her 1947-51 prime cuts. Ms. Lutcher plays a mighty mean jazz piano, somewhat reminiscent of Earl Hines with its bouncy rhythm, dramatic pauses, "trumpet style" high-octave voicings and dazzling runs around the keyboard. Her singing voice, however, is totally original. On the uptempo numbers such as "He's a Real Gone Guy" and "You Better Watch Yourself, Bub," she runs the gamut from a throaty growl to a wild yelp. For the most part, she sings in a sort of highly musical bleat, with an exaggerated pronunciation that recalls Billy Eckstine. When she takes a piano solo, she usually scat sings right along with it, her "bleep bleep bloops" sometimes overshadowing the sound of the 88s. She might take a little getting used to, but once you're accustomed to her you're in for a mighty good time.

Many of the numbers here are Nellie's own uptempo yet bluesy compositions, such as "Chi-Chi-Chi Chicago" and "My New Papa's Got to Have Everything." She does very well by standards, too; her heartfelt rendition of Isham Jones' "The One I Love Belongs to Somebody Else" is a standout, as is her version of the Jimmy Van Heusen-Johnny Mercer song "I Thought About You." She puts a new spin on Billie Holiday's "Fine and Mellow," and manages to sound bubbly and energetic even on ballads such as "My Mother's Eyes" and "My Man."

Eighteen of the tracks here were recorded in 1947, Nellie's career year. She recorded sporadically for another ten years, but at 83 she's *still* putting on a great live show, as she demonstrated recently at the Hollywood Roosevelt's Cinegrill. The new collection (with great sound quality thanks to engineer Jay Ranellucci) is recommended; it's part jazz, part blues, part ballads, and 100% fun.

The Foursome's Sweet (Potato) Music

Sweet Potato Tooters, a compilation of recordings by the Foursome, a popular American vocal-and-ocarina quartet of the '30s, is in the works in England. The 24-track album, which features guest appearances by Bing Crosby, Dick Powell, Pinky Tomlin and a drummer named Spike Jones, is being produced by Music & Memories and will be available late this year from *Past Times*.

The Foursome came to prominence with the hit George and Ira Gershwin show, *Girl Crazy* (1930), in which they stopped the show with the song, "Bidin' My Time." In addition to this tune, the album's highlights include "Lady Fair"—a sea chanty Cole Porter wrote for them to sing in the Broadway production of *Anything Goes*-- and the very first recording of "Walkin' My Baby Back Home." The group backs Crosby on three songs, including "When the Bloom is On the Sage."

The quartet appeared in such films as *The Wild Party* with Clara Bow and *Born to Dance*. They sang with Roger Wolfe Kahn and the Smith Ballew-Glenn Miller band, and later appeared on Kraft Music Hall. They also recorded with Red Nichols, Ray Noble and Shirley Ross.

Del Porter, the best known member of the quartet, co-founded the City Slickers with Spike Jones about the time his group split up. With the Foursome's arranger, Ray Johnson, Porter reorganized the quartet circa 1946 as the Sweet Potato Tooters; several of their recordings, including "Siam," are also included in the compilation. (See page 29 for ordering information.)

78 RPM

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Spike's Radio Rarities on CD

The past couple of years have surely seen a bonanza for Spike Jones fans. Rhino's two-disc *Spike Jones Anthology* (R2 71574) remastered the classic 78s in pristine sound; the Good Music Record Co. did this one better with *Spike Jones: The Man Who Murdered Music* (137125, see page 32), which rescued 22 rare or previously unissued tracks from the vaults. Finally, RCA showed some interest in its former employee with the issue of *Spiked!* (Catalyst 09026-61982-2), which combined some frequently-reissued hits with ten rarities, among them the complete twenty-minute Jones version of "The Nutcracker Suite."

Now, the British-based Harlequin label, which has previously issued two collections of Spike's for-radio-only transcription discs (*Riot Squad*, HQCD 01 and *Louder and Funnier*, HQCD 02) releases **Corn's a Poppin'** (HQCD 30), a fine-sounding 17-track collection of great moments from Spike's radio shows of 1948 and '49. Some songs were never recorded by the band, such as "Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me." Others, such as "The Blue Danube," have significant differences in the arrangements. A minstrel show sketch features Doodles Weaver's rather questionable "blackvoice" dialect and a sketch with Peter Lorre is fitfully funny, but Alec Templeton's impromptu medley of two classical selections with two pop tunes is astonishing. (Available from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94948; (800) 742-6663.)

More of the aforementioned radio transcription discs, recorded for Standard between 1941 and '46, are newly available on **Spike Jones Transcribed** (Radiex RDX 1001). Although relatively few of the 24 tracks are new to CD ("His Rocking Horse Ran Away," "Down in Jungle Town"), all are in terrific sound quality, and even the familiar numbers differ from the commercial records. "Pass the Biscuits, Mirandy" really swings; "Der Fuehrer's Face" has the mild trombone "fonk" later replaced by the lusty razzberry. (Radiex, 47 Racine Rd., Unit 6, Rexdale Ontario M4W 6B2 Canada.)

BMG Label Ain't Misbehavin': More Waller

Yes, we know we did an article on new Fats Waller CDs in our last issue. At the risk of repeating ourselves, it's gratifying to see that the folks at BMG are finally motivated toward finishing a complete collection of Fats Waller's waxings for the Bluebird and RCA Victor labels. We'd grown accustomed to three-year intervals between volumes, and had anticipated that the series would see completion sometime early in 2004. Lo and behold, in 1995 alone BMG has issued three collections totaling 7 discs and 158 selections—an output prodigious enough to rival Waller's own in the mid-1930s.

Anyone unfortunate enough to have gone through life without hearing Waller's endlessly inventive and relentlessly happy stride-style piano playing ought to pick up any of these recent collections. The latest one, **I'm Gonna Sit Right Down.../The Early Years, Part 2 (1935-36)** (BMG 66640-2; \$19.98) has two discs and 45 tracks of prime Waller, starting with the title track (which, for the uninitiated, ends with "...and Write Myself a Letter.") This was one of Fats' biggest sellers, and it's an unusually low-key performance; he eliminates the ad-libbed witticisms and lets the music do the talking.

Most of the performances feature Fats and his Rhythm giving consistently wonderful performances of Tin Pan Alley songs which vary wildly in quality. The band was allowed to do some jazz standards at a couple of sessions, and their renditions of "Twelfth Street Rag," "There'll Be Some Changes Made," "Somebody Stole My Gal," "Sweet Sue" and, especially, "Dinah" are among the best records they ever made. Waller's piano is consistently brilliant (and the two takes of "Sweet Sue" vividly prove that he never played anything the same way twice). The line-up of the "Rhythm" changes a bit from session to session, but Herman Autrey's fiery trumpet is a constant pleasure, as is the reed work of Rudy Powell, and later, Gene Sedric.

Although "Blue Because of You" has some distortion, and "You Stayed Away Too Long" suddenly changes from dull-sounding to too bright after the first few seconds, the audio quality is generally excellent, comparable to RCA's earlier LP issues of these tracks. Mike Lipskin's liner notes are enjoyable—if too frequently ascribing the band's creativity to their fondness for 90-proof "liquid ham and eggs."

Hot Music Oriented Toward the Far East

A new CD from the Memphis Archives label, **Oriental Illusions** (MA7018) is a colorful collection of vintage tunes that are tied to the Far East. Actually, many of these 16 recordings made between 1922 and 1938 are connected to the Orient in name only, but that doesn't make the package any less fun. "Oriental Man" by the Chicago Footwarmers has no audible association with the region, but it's wonderful vintage jazz by any name.

Only four of the tracks here have vocals—"Singapore Sorrows" by Ben Pollack's hot 1928 band with young Benny Goodman; "Chinatown, My Chinatown" by an obscure but wonderful hot group called Roane's Pennsylvanians; a fine version of "Sing Song Girl" by Sleepy Hall and his Collegians, with a vocal by Smith Ballew, and Hoagy Carmichael's durable "Hong Kong Blues." The latter is a very different, previously unissued alternate take from the same session (October 14, 1938) that gave us the version usually reissued. This one is faster (and better!), has a more ambitious arrangement, and a lyric about "sweet opium" is sanitized as "sweet loco man."

A few tracks are well known and frequently reissued (for example, the classic 1928 "China Boy" by McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans, and Louis Armstrong's "Oriental Strut" from 1926). Most of them are surprises, though. "Shanghai Honeymoon" by the Chicago Rhythm Kings from 1936 features a delightfully zany slap-tongue clarinet and a sarcastic "laughing" trumpet throughout. "China Stomp" displays Lionel Hampton on piano instead of the vibes, and it's a dizzying, delightful excursion. "Nighttime in Old Shanghai" by Whitey Smith's Majestic Hotel Orchestra was actually recorded in Shanghai in 1928; despite that locale and the fact that the bandleader was Danish, the result is good, hot American-style dance music. The title track, by Slim Lamar's New Orleans based band, is a very ambitious and exotic arrangement, far removed from typical Crescent City jazz.

The transfers are uniformly excellent, although the 78 of "Oriental Man" used here has some "blast" in the louder passages. (Available for \$15.00 postpaid from Inside Sounds/Memphis Archives, P.O. Box 171282, Memphis TN 38187; (901) 682-2063.)

Classic Jazz from Muggsy's Ragtime Band

Among the most important recordings in the genre of Traditional Jazz are a handful of tracks made in 1939 by Francis Joseph "Muggsy" Spanier, a Chicago-born cornetist with a puckish, comical face that belied his no-nonsense personality. Spanier idolized the great New Orleans cornet man Joe "King" Oliver and, like him, used a plunger mute extensively for tricky "wah-wah" effects. While he wasn't terribly inventive as a soloist, Muggsy had a full, rich tone, and played with a power that lifted any band.

He'd spent seven years in Ted Lewis' band, adding fire to records like "Dip Your Brush in the Sunshine" (a wonderful 1931 disc in which Lewis enthusiastically credits his "red hot" soloist), then had a stint with Ben Pollack, but by early 1938 the ill effects of alcohol caused a year's retirement. Returning from the Touro Sanitarium with health and sobriety, Muggsy formed his own small band devoted to the roots of jazz, playing tunes originated by King Oliver, young Louis Armstrong and the Original Dixieland Jass Band. Muggsy Spanier and his Ragtime Band debuted on April 29, 1939 and became a hit in Chicago and New York nightspots. The group had its share of problem drinkers, though, and despite its success Muggsy rejoined Ted Lewis in December 1939, spending most of his later career in Dixieland combos.

The sixteen sides the band recorded for Bluebird won rave reviews (most of them after the group had disbanded!) and can now be heard on **The "Ragtime Band" Sessions** (Bluebird 66550-2). Despite the group's name, there's no ragtime influence at all in their sound, nor is this a tuba-and-banjo "revival" band slavishly copying the early '20s sound. The repertoire may be "moldy fig," ("Dippermouth Blues," "At the Jazz Band Ball," "Someday Sweetheart," etc.) but the small band's sound is solidly a product of the Swing Era (and Joe Bushkin's piano solo on "At Sundown" looks forward to the "modern" sound). Muggsy's driving, plunger-muted solos are supported by George Brunies' extroverted but tasteful trombone and the warm, inventive clarinet of Rod Cless on all tracks.

For the first time, all 24 tracks are collected (16 master takes 8 alternates) on one CD. The splendid sound quality of the originals is fully captured in the transfers from the original metal parts. This is enduring music from a group that existed all too briefly.

Edison's Hot Dance Music of the '20s—One More Time!

The folks at Diamond Cut Productions have issued their third CD of previously unissued Edison 78s from 1928 and '29. **Hot Dance of the Roaring '20s** (Diamond Cut DCP202D; \$17.98) is even better than the previous two collections, and that's quite an accomplishment.

Virtually every one of the 21 tracks on this 68-minute album is a joy to hear; the songs range from the familiar to the obscure, but the level of performance remains consistently fine and the sound quality, while varying a bit from track to track, is generally excellent. The slight echo that somewhat marred the first album is not evident here; all tracks sound clean and bright, with all of the "presence" common to well-recorded 78s of the period.

This is all the more impressive when one realizes that the producers are generally working from unique test pressings made 66 years ago. These sole surviving copies are often broken, warped or otherwise damaged, and it's a tribute to producers-engineers Rick Carlson and Craig Maier that these performances have been restored to such vibrant sound.

What's most surprising about this collection is the amount of genuinely hot playing by most of the bands. Thomas Edison was not exactly a jazz devotee, and truly hot dance band records on his label are rare. As Rob Bamberger notes in the excellent accompanying essay, by the time these tracks were made, Edison had relinquished some of the control over Artists & Repertoire to his son Charles, who evidently had a more tolerant attitude toward the hot music the public craved.

In any event, it's a surprise to hear the driving, propulsive playing of Bernie Stevens' Orchestra on "Wipin' the Pan," the hot jazz of The Seven Blues Babies on "That's Him Now" and "Give Your Little Baby Lots of Lovin'," and the exuberance of the Piccadilly Players on "Easy Going." Even the band of trumpeter B.A. Rolfe, whose issued recordings were rarely more than tepid, performs capably on "I'll Get By" and "Hello Sweetie," although "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" is a ponderous "concert" arrangement reminiscent of Paul Whiteman. All in all, this collection is another gem from Diamond Cut. (Available from Vintage Sound Works, P.O. Box 2830, Chandler AZ 85244.)

Radio

Londonderry Airwaves

If you've ever wondered what our English friends were listening to on the wireless back in the '30s, a few compact discs can give you an idea. **Radio Days** (Conifer CDHD 163) is a fast-moving compilation of snippets taken from vintage recordings and broadcasts of English radio personalities. The 38 tracks in the hour-long disc range in length from ten seconds to 3:30; the shorter pieces make one long to hear the complete records and shows.

Although the tone of the humor is relentlessly "English," yanks should have no problem enjoying the spoof commercials for "Gritty Granules" and "Dromedary Cigarettes." There's also a legit commercial for Mirro Cleanser by Gracie Fields from one of the "Continental" stations (the BBC didn't allow advertising).

Censorship is amusingly dealt with by pianist-humorist Norman Long, in a patter song called "We Can't Let You Broadcast That!" The conservative nature of British broadcasting is also lampooned in "We're Frightfully BBC" by the tongue-in-cheek upper-crust duo The Western Brothers. A handful of complete recordings showcase some of the favorite radio personalities of the day: Bebe Daniels and Ben Lyon (Americans who found fame in the UK) sing and joke through "There's a Small Hotel"; rowdy Tessie O'Shea tells us "I Know That Sailors Do Care," and sprightly comic Arthur Askey rings the "Ding Dong Bell."

Two other collections, **Radio Fun** (Conifer CDHD 208) and **More Radio Fun** (CDHD 240) are taken exclusively from commercial 78s, mixing tracks by American performers with those by the Brits. If these collections are not as specifically radio-oriented, they're still lots of fun. Comic Max Miller sings a salacious ditty about "Mary From the Dairy," Reginald Gardiner does his epic piece about "Trains," and George Formby strums his banjo-uke while singing about Mr. Wu's "Chinese Laundry Blues." These are fine introductions to performers that Americans ought to know better. (Available from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94948; (800) 742-6663.)

Blood Boils With Excitement

With the passage of time and the relative dearth of original radio drama, we can hear how wonderful the old shows really were—especially given the added constraints of having been done in "real time," with no possibility of retakes. One show which is particularly impressive fifty-eight years after its broadcast is the *Lux Radio Theatre* adaptation of the Warners swashbuckler **Captain Blood**, now out on CD (Facet FA 8109).

This hour-long show stars Errol Flynn as Peter Blood, an Irish physician who treats a rebel against the government, and is punished for this by being sold into slavery, later becoming a nefarious pirate. Flynn, only 28 at the time of the broadcast, proves himself a terrific radio actor, using his voice with authority, charm and subtlety. (Many leading men of the movies were not nearly as adroit when performing for the microphones.) Co-star Olivia DeHavilland is also excellent, with a poise that belies her tender age of 22. The battles of the film are quickly dispensed with here (obviously, they wouldn't be as exciting to hear as to see), but the plot and character development are handled so deftly that one doesn't mind the brevity of the swashbuckling scenes.

Herbert Marshall stands in for usual Lux host Cecil B. DeMille, who was out on location shooting *The Buccaneer* that particular Monday night (February 22, 1937). Marshall's terse, clipped British voice provides the perfect narration; however, supporting actor Basil Rathbone has a hilariously overdone French accent as Captain Levasseur. The original commercials for Lux Toilet Soap are retained here, including a rather long-winded and unintentionally funny one delivered by "The World's Greatest Safecracker," Charles Courtney. Fans of vintage films will find a special bonus in the few minutes of banter between Marshall and silent-era leading man-turned-producer Douglas MacLean.

The CD has fine audio quality, thanks to engineer Chris Lembesis. The source was a KNX-Los Angeles aircheck (when announcers pronounced it "Los Angh-uh-leez"). (Available from Delos International, 1645 N. Vine, Suite 340, Hollywood CA 90028; (213) 962-2626.)

Welles on Radio—Before the *Mercury* Rose

On seven consecutive Friday nights in the summer of 1937, Orson Welles produced, directed, narrated and acted in his first major series on radio—a full year before the debut of his landmark *Mercury Theatre on the Air*. The seven-week series was Welles' adaptation of the classic Victor Hugo novel **Les Misérables**. Recordings of this series were recently released as a co-production of Radio Spirits, Inc. and the Smithsonian Institution Press, and they offer fascinating proof of Welles' early mastery of radio drama—in addition to the classic, exciting battle of wits between felon Jean Valjean and Inspector Javert.

Welles, only 22 at the time of these broadcasts, had already participated in something like 200 radio shows, playing varied roles on *The March of Time* and *Cavalcade of America*. Only months before, he had taken over the role of Lamont Cranston on Mutual's crime-drama series *The Shadow*. He had also won acclaim for his acting in Archibald Macleish's "The Fall of the City" on CBS's *Columbia Workshop*. Impressed with the rising young actor-director, the Mutual bosses gave Welles a completely free hand in adapting Hugo's novel for radio.

Unlike his later radical reinterpretations of classic works for *The Mercury Theatre on the Air*, Welles' adaptation is utterly faithful to Hugo's work; all of the narration and dialogue is directly from the novel. Naturally, director Welles gives actor Welles the lead role of Jean Valjean in addition to narrating all seven episodes. (He also plays a minor character, Champmathieu, in episode three.) Ray Collins, Everett Sloane and Agnes Moorehead, all of whom would have key roles in Welles' later radio programs and films, appear here; so do two other actors who portrayed *The Shadow*, Frank Readick and Bill Johnstone.

The seven half-hour programs (one of which is divided between two discs or cassettes) have superb audio quality here; there's no surface noise whatsoever, and all of the sound is clear and full. The 30-page booklet has an excellent essay by Welles scholar Michael Dawson, with rare photos, a full synopsis and credit listing for each episode, and a list of Welles' radio work from 1935 to 1940. (Available as three CDs for \$24.98 or three cassettes for \$19.98 from Radio Spirits, Inc., P.O. Box 2141, Schiller Park, IL 60176.)

Radio Singers Revisited on Viper's Nest CDs

The folks at Viper's Nest and its associated labels have been releasing a slew of CDs devoted to personalities who were all over the airwaves in the '40s. Most of these CDs are taken from broadcasts which are exceedingly rare yet have superb sound quality.

First up is Viper's Nest's third disc devoted to the great Durante; we reviewed the latest one in our last issue (*Durante: Patron of the Arts*, VN 151), and we surely don't mind having yet another fine CD devoted to Schnozzola. This one, running a full 72:36, is entitled **I Say It With Music** (VN 169), and that Jimmy does, singing not only that tune but also "The Day I Read a Book," "The State of Arkansas," "A Fugitive From Esquire" and other staples of his repertoire. Charles Boyer joins for "Chidabee," while Dorothy Lamour participates in a sketch and sings "Civilization." Cast regular Peggy Lee offers "But Beautiful" and joins Durante and Lucille Ball on "Any State in the 48 is Great."

If those tracks whet your appetite for more of Miss Lee's vocalizing, try **Peggy Lee: Why Don't You Do Right?** (VN 158), which collects 20 of her featured songs from the 1947-48 Durante shows. (There's also a bonus track from a 1952 *National Guard Show*, "Wish You Were Here," which teams Peggy with the Les Brown band.) Naturally, Peggy does the title song, a reprise of her big 1942 record made when she was the "canary" for Benny Goodman. She also does her own composition "Mañana" and her hits "Golden Earrings" and (gulp!) "Laroo, Laroo, Lilli Bolero." Best of all, the CD allows us to hear songs Peggy didn't record, such as "Nature Boy" and "The Christmas Song," along with standards like "All of Me," and "I Can't Give You Anything But Love."



Our Favorite Singing Star—well, one of them, anyway, can be heard in two CDs taken from '40s broadcasts. **The Dinah Shore Memorial Album** (Natasha Imports NI 4030) starts off with 20 songs taken from various radio appearances made between 1943 and 1950. Dinah warbles wartime numbers such as "Shoo Shoo Baby" and "Chickery Chick," and reaches back to the '20s for songs like "Love Me or Leave Me," "My Heart Stood Still," "It Had to Be You" and "Ten Little Fingers" (a hit for Irving Kaufman in 1921!). Her special skills on bluesy numbers come to the fore on a terrific rendition of "Any Place I Hang My Hat Is Home," and a too-short rendition of "Beale Street Blues." The sound quality is fine on these

tracks despite the variety of sources. As if this wasn't enough entertainment, the disc then proceeds to the complete *Dinah Shore Open House* broadcast of February 7, 1946. This is the AFRS rebroadcast version, meaning the commercials are gone—but entertainment galore is here, thanks to some great songs and amusing banter with announcer Harry Von Zell (who's embarrassed to introduce "Shoo Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy"). Featured comic Jack Carson gallops through a sketch in which he wants to become a great lover of the screen, while Dinah wishes to be a comedienne; this prompts a song by Shore, Carson and Von Zell entitled "Don't Try to Be What You Aren't." The participation of radio vets Frank Nelson and Arthur Q. Bryan adds to the fun. (You might also check out a similar Vintage Jazz Classics release, *When Dinah Shore Ruled the Earth!*, VJC-1052.)

That most relaxed of crooners is showcased in **Love Letters From Perry Como** (VN 152), a 21-track CD culled mainly from the AFRS rebroadcasts of his 1945-46 *Chesterfield Supper Club* radio shows. Running a full hour, the disc presents Mr. C purring his way through some fine ballads ("All Through the Day," "It's Been a Long, Long Time"), coping admirably with uptempo tunes ("Blue Skies," "You Must Have Been a Beautiful Baby") and reprising his hit records ("Prisoner of Love," "Till the End of Time"). A complete 15-minute AFRS *Supper Club* show is included, with specialty numbers like "Personality" by Helen Carroll and the Satisfiers and "My Mama Says No No" by (no longer Baby) Rose Marie. Benny Goodman's backing on "Goodbye Sue" is a bonus.

Although four of its 12 tracks are from the '60s, radio fans will want **Kitty Kallen: I've Got a Crush On You** (Natasha Imports NI-4031) for Miss Kallen's dreamy 1940s vocals, the big-band backing of Harry James and Artie Shaw, and for a real slice of history: just before Kitty's vocal on "In Times Like These," a WOR announcer interrupts the remote broadcast to tell us that the D-Day Invasion has begun! (All CDs available from Jazz Catalogue, P.O. Box 1936, New York NY 10113-1936.)

Crooners of the Airwaves

Originally the term "crooner" was hurled as invective toward the soft, sweet (and sometimes not very masculine-sounding) male singers of the late '20s. Sure enough, what was meant as an insult became the accepted designation for the likes of Crosby, Columbo and Vallee. Recordings by those vocalists and 39 others are collected in a two CD set, **Radio Crooners** (Music & Memories 131722; \$24.95).

The collection is grouped roughly chronologically, starting with Rudy Vallee in 1929 and ending with Vaughn Monroe in the late '40s (although a 1936 recording of "Easy to Love" by Al Bowlly with Ray Noble's band is oddly sequenced next-to-last). Some of the earlier tracks have been long unavailable, such as Frank Parker's "Two Cigarettes in the Dark," Ozzie Nelson's "Beautiful Girl" and Harry Richman's bravura performance of "It Was So Beautiful."

This last track points up the fact that some of the singers here are not, strictly speaking, crooners. The connection with radio is also a little tenuous, although all of the performers certainly appeared on the airwaves at some point.

Some of the selections are a little well-worn; Gene Austin made many fine recordings besides "My Blue Heaven," reissued for the umpteenth time here. However, even the familiar tracks sound better here than in previous reissues (with the exception of Fred Astaire's "They Can't Take That Away From Me," heard here in the same awful transfer that Columbia inflicted upon it back in the '60s). Pinky Tomlin's "The Object of My Affection" is crisp, clear and in its original mono (it was last available on a dreadful "phony stereo" LP from Decca). Whispering Jack Smith's "Me and My Shadow" is wonderfully clear, belying its April 1927 recording date.

"Blue Orchids" by Dick Todd fully proves why he was referred to as the Canadian Crosby; Jack Smith (not the "Whispering" one) performs an energetic rendition of "The Most Beautiful Girl in the World," and Don Ameche—a true radio pioneer—demonstrates his rarely-heard singing voice on an excellent performance of "Amor." These happy surprises, along with the classic recordings, make this a fine anthology of the genre. (Available from *Past Times*; see page 28 for ordering information.)

When Radio Was Program Guide

November 1995 - January 1996

When Radio Was is a syndicated radio program broadcast on 300 affiliate radio stations from coast to coast. Up to five hours of *When Radio Was* can be heard in most parts of the country on these 300 affiliates. Some affiliates run the program Monday through Friday, some air the program on the weekends and some do both. Check with your local *When Radio Was* affiliate for exact times of broadcast. To find out what radio station in your area carries *When Radio Was*, call 1-708-465-8245 extension 224, Monday through Friday between 9 AM and 5 PM Central Time.

NOVEMBER 1995

Broadcast Week One

The Hallmark Playhouse 11-18-48 "My Financial Career" starring Jack Benny / **My Favorite Husband** 1950s "Singing Lessons" starring Lucille Ball (part 1)

My Favorite Husband 1950s "Singing Lessons" starring Lucille Ball (part 2) / **Richard Diamond, Private Detective** 9-3-49 "The Harry Baker Case" starring Dick Powell

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Trouble at the Rafter" starring Brace Beemer / **Sgt. Preston of the Yukon** 8-24-44 "A Rendezvous" starring Jay Michael

Broadcast Week Two

Suspense 11-22-45 "Nineteen Deacon Street" starring Lloyd Nolan / **Johnny Dollar** 2-13-56 "Cui-Bono Matter" starring Bob Bailey in part one of a five part series

Hopalong Cassidy 1950s "Mystery at the Diamond Z" starring William Boyd / **Johnny Dollar** 2-14-56 "Cui-Bono Matter" starring Bob Bailey in part two of a five part series

The Stan Freberg Show 8-4-57 Episode #4 in this 15 part series / **Johnny Dollar** 2-15-56 "Cui-Bono Matter" starring Bob Bailey in part three of a five part series

Gunsmoke 8-23-52 "Shakespeare" starring William Conrad / **Johnny Dollar** 2-16-56 "Cui-Bono Matter" starring Bob Bailey in part four of a five part series

The Shadow 3-7-48 "The Beast of Darrow House" starring Bret Morrison / **Johnny Dollar** 2-17-56 "Cui-Bono Matter" starring Bob Bailey in part five of a five part series

Broadcast Week Three

Dr. Christian 11-29-50 "The No-Good" starring Jean Hersholt / **The Fred Allen Show** 5-9-48 w/guest Don McNeill (part one)

The Fred Allen Show 5-9-48 w/guest Don McNeill (part two) / **Escape** 12-27-49 "Seeds of Greed" starring Gary Merrill

Let George Do It 5-30-49 "A Matter of Doubt" starring Bob Bailey / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 6-10-47 "Picnic at Dugan's Lake" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part one)

Fibber McGee & Molly 6-10-47 "Picnic at Dugan's Lake" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part two) / **Dimension X** 6-17-50 "There Will Come Soft Rains and Zero Hour" starring Bill Griffis

The Martin & Lewis Show 5-8-49 w/guest, Peter Lorre / **Bill Stern Sports Newsreel** 1940s w/guest, George Raft

Broadcast Week Four

The Mysterious Traveler 8-10-48 "The Visiting Corpse" starring Maurice Tarplin / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 1 of 26

Abbott & Costello 3-1-45 w/guest, Frank Sinatra / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 2 of 26

The Life of Riley 11-19-45 "Thanksgiving Program" starring William Bendix / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 3 of 26

Family Theater 11-27-47 "Home for Thanksgiving" starring Paul Henried and Joan Leslie with host, Charles Boyer / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 4 of 26

The Saint 12-3-50 "Martin Hickerson, Private Eye" starring Vincent Price / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 5 of 26

Broadcast Week Five

The Lone Ranger 1940s "The Notorious El Diablo" starring Brace Beemer / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 6 of 26

The Aldrich Family 11-6-41 "Muscle Building Course" starring Ezra Stone / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 7 of 26

Suspense 11-29-45 "A Week Ago Wednesday" starring Nancy Kelly / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 8 of 26

Duffy's Tavern 4-27-49 "Getting Hitched" starring Ed Gardner / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 9 of 26

The Shadow 1937 "The Tenor With the Broken Voice" starring Orson Welles / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 10 of 26

DECEMBER 1995

Broadcast Week One

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Boots and the Rodeo" starring Brace Beemer / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 11 of 26

Bob & Ray 12-20-49 starring Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 12 of 26

Ellery Queen 9-4-47 "Number 31" starring Hugh Marlowe / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 13 of 26

The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet 9-30-45 "Exaggerating" starring Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 14 of 26

Fibber McGee & Molly 12-25-45 "Christmas Gift from Doc Gamble" starring Jim and Marian Jordan / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 15 of 26

Broadcast Week Two

Sgt. Preston of the Yukon 1950s "The Man With the Red Coat" starring Paul Sutton / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 16 of 26

Our Miss Brooks 12-17-50 "Christmas Clothing Drive" starring Eve Arden / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 17 of 26

Lights Out! 12-22-37 "Christmas Story" hosted by Wyllis Cooper / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 18 of 26

The Red Skelton Show 12-25-45 "Christmas Trees" starring Red Skelton / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 19 of 26

When Radio Was Program Guide

November 1995 - January 1996 Continued

The Adventures of Nero Wolfe 12-22-51 "Slaughtered Santas" w/Sydney Greenstreet / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 20 of 26

Broadcast Week Three

The Damon Runyon Theatre 1949 "Palm Beach Santa Claus" starring John Brown / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 21 of 26

The Life of Riley 12-24-49 "Christmas Bonus" starring William Bendix / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 22 of 26

Suspense 12-21-57 "Out For Christmas" starring Raymond Burr / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 23 of 26

Screen Director's Playhouse 12-21-50 "Miracle on 34th Street" starring Edmund Gwenn (part one of an hour-long show) / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 24 of 26

Screen Director's Playhouse 12-21-50 "Miracle on 34th Street" starring Edmund Gwenn (part two of an hour-long show) / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 25 of 26

Broadcast Week Four

The Great Gildersleeve 12-20-50 "Why the Chimes Rang" starring Willard Waterman / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 26 (conclusion)

The Stan Freberg Show 8-11-57 Episode 5 of 15 starring Stan Freberg / **Abbott & Costello** 11-11-43 w/guest, Lucille Ball (part one)

Abbott & Costello 11-11-43 w/guest, Lucille Ball (part two) / **Gunsmoke** 11-29-52 "Kitty" starring William Conrad

The Martin & Lewis Show 5-17-49 w/guest, Arthur Treacher / **The Strange Dr. Weird** 1945 "Tiger Cat" starring Maurice Tarplin

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Waterfall Gang" starring Brace Beemer / **Sgt. Preston of the Yukon** 5-29-43 "Meeting the Terms of a Contract" starring Jay Michael

JANUARY 1996

Broadcast Week One

Suspense 11-16-50 "On a Country Road" starring Cary Grant / **Burns & Allen** 1-20-49 w/guest Cesar Romero (part 1)

Burns & Allen 1-20-49 w/guest Cesar Romero (part 2) / **Dimension X** 9-15-50 "Hello, Tomorrow" starring Nancy Olsen

The Green Hornet 1940s "Charity Takes It on the Chin" starring Al Hodge / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 5-16-44 "Banquet Tickets" starring Jim & Marian Jordan (part 1)

Fibber McGee & Molly 5-16-44 "Banquet Tickets" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part 2) / **Lights Out!** 3-23-38 "Darrell Hall's Thoughts" starring Boris Karloff

The Shadow 3-3-40 "Death on the Bridge" starring Bill Johnstone / **Bob & Ray** 1950s starring Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding

Broadcast Week Two

The Jack Benny Program 12-5-48 starring Jack and all his gang / **The Life of Riley** 10-15-48 "Problem Child" starring William Bendix (part 1)

The Life of Riley 10-15-48 "Problem Child" starring William Bendix (part 2) / **Dragnet** 1-11-53 "The Big Small" starring Jack Webb

Family Theater 5-15-47 "The Lonely Road" starring Gregory Peck / **Abbott & Costello** 1-23-48 "Costello's Big Inheritance" (part 1)

Abbott & Costello 1-23-48 "Costello's Big Inheritance" (part 2) / **Boston Blackie** 1940s "Book, The Wind Blows West" starring Dick Kollmar

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Cigars and Dust" starring Brace Beemer / **Sgt. Preston of the Yukon** 6-5-43 "Till a Man's Proved Dead" starring Jay Michael

Broadcast Week Three

Gangbusters 1940s "Case of the Kidnapped Paymaster" / **The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show** 10-26-47 w/guest, Richard Widmark (part 1)

The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show 10-26-47 w/guest, Richard Widmark (part 2) / **Suspense** 12-2-48 "The Hands of Mr. Ottermole" starring Claude Rains and Vincent Price

The Screen Director's Playhouse 5-1-49 "The Trouble With Women" starring Ray Milland / **The Stan Freberg Show** 8-18-57 program #6 of 15 (part 1)

The Stan Freberg Show 8-18-57 program #6 of 15 (part 1) / **The Six Shooter** 1953 "Rink" starring James Stewart

The Shadow 1938 "The Hypnotized Audience" starring Orson Welles / **Lum & Abner** 1945 starring Chester Lauck and Norris Goff

Broadcast Week Four

The Adventures of Nero Wolfe 3-23-51 "The Final Page" starring Sydney Greenstreet / **The Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis Show** 7-26-49 with guest, Frances Langford (part 1)

The Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis Show 7-26-49 with guest, Frances Langford (part 2) / **Gunsmoke** 8-9-52 "The Kentucky Tolmans" starring William Conrad

The Damon Runyon Theatre 1949 "Broadway Complex" starring John Brown / **The Great Gildersleeve** 9-30-45 "Talent in the Family" starring Hal Peary (part 1)

The Great Gildersleeve 9-30-45 "Talent in the Family" starring Hal Peary (part 2) / **The Saint** 2-4-51 "The Carnival Murder" starring Vincent Price

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Birthday for Billy" starring Brace Beemer / **Sgt. Preston of the Yukon** 6-12-43 "A Swindler Swindled" starring Jay Michael

Broadcast Week Five

The Mysterious Traveler 9-7-47 "Vacation from Life" starring Maurice Tarplin / **Our Miss Brooks** 12-11-49 "Connie the Chaperon" starring Eve Arden (part 1)

Our Miss Brooks 12-11-49 "Connie the Chaperon" starring Eve Arden (part 2) / **Escape** 6-48 "Beau Geste" starring William Conrad

Box 13 1950s "Diamond in the Sky" starring Alan Ladd / **Ozzie & Harriet** 9-9-45 "The Fight" starring Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Harlow



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Something But Didn't" • **DUFFY'S TAVERN** 12-23-48 "Archie Is in Poor Spirits" •
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Wiseman" • **FIBBER MCGEE & MOLLY** 12-23-52 "Surprise Party for Doc" • **FIRST
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Boston Blackie

By Carl Amari

I guess I'm sentimental about good ol' *Boston Blackie*, because it was the first old-time radio detective show I ever listened to. You see, when I first started collecting vintage radio shows 20 years ago at age 12, my limited funds allowed me to buy only a few cassettes each month. One of my favorite shows was *Lights Out* and an old-time radio cassette company was offering an hour-long cassette featuring *Lights Out* on one side and *Boston Blackie* on the other. I wanted the *Lights Out* show but...what was a *Boston Blackie*? After listening, I discovered that I really liked Blackie—the clever detective who *had* been a master thief. Blackie worked out of New York City and used his intimate knowledge of the underworld in his new career as a master detective.

Movie actor Chester Morris was filmdom's first *Boston Blackie* in a series of B-movies for Columbia. In 1944, Morris took the character to NBC radio with a *Boston Blackie* airshow, sponsored by Rinso and announced by Harlow Wilcox. Only a handful of these episodes exist (they're at the Library of Congress and I'm desperately trying to pry them loose!). This series ran for one summer season but was revived in 1945 as a syndicated series starring Richard Kollmar as Blackie. Kollmar was a successful Broadway producer and sometime radio actor who was married to Dorothy Kilgallen, famous columnist for the *New York Journal*. The two shared a cozy 16-room Park Avenue penthouse. Together they hosted an early morning breakfast talk show that was all the rage over WOR-Mutual. Kollmar had a very distinctive voice and played the part of *Boston Blackie*, smart-aleck detective, to a tee.

As in the movies, Blackie loved making the cops look stupid. Billed as "enemy to those who make him an enemy, friend to those who have no friend," Blackie was never interested in a fee for his services (maybe he had a fortune stashed away from his thievery days). He had two aides, a runt of a man named "Shorty" who was also an ex-con turned good guy, and a lovely girlfriend named Mary Westly. Rounding out the cast of characters was Inspector Faraday, head of the local police effort. Faraday wasn't the brightest cop in the world. If you committed a crime, you'd be very happy to have Faraday on the case. He was, however, smart enough to blame Blackie for just about every crime committed in New York City; that way, Blackie would have to find the *real* criminal. The Kollmar series lasted until the mid-1950s when the character made a transition to early television in a series starring Kent Taylor.

Carl Amari is the founder of *Radio Spirits, Inc.*, one of the nation's leading licensors and distributors of vintage radio programs. He is also Executive Producer of *When Radio Was*, a classic radio show hosted by Stan Freberg, heard on 300 radio stations.

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New-Time Radio Drama

Proof that radio drama is still alive is offered by **The Cape Cod Radio Mystery Theater**, a series written, produced and directed by one Steven Thomas Oney and carried on public radio stations. Selected episodes are available on cassettes from HighBridge; we sampled **Volume IV** (HPB 33908; \$16.00). The two-cassette package contains two hour-long stories: *The Case of the Shooting Star* and *The Golden Idol*, *The Magwitch* and *The Donkey's Tail*.

The shows feel like a cross between *Sherlock Holmes* and *I Love a Mystery*. Crusty old Waverly Underhill, a retired Cape Cod police captain, is an engaging main character, and the supporting characters are as colorful as their counterparts on vintage radio shows. Oney could take a few more lessons from the old masters, though: instead of briskly-paced character interaction, we sometimes hear lengthy one-sided pronouncements; music transitions and narration also tend to be over-long, and occasionally the performers read rather than act. The sound effects are excellent, and the stories certainly warrant the listener's time. This is a worthy effort at keeping a great medium alive. (Available from HighBridge Company, 1000 Westgate Drive, St. Paul MN 55114.)



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Radio Spotlight: Parley Baer



Parley Baer is still a very familiar character actor on television, in films and in commercials (he's been the voice of the chief Keebler Elf for 20 years). In over thirty years of radio work, he appeared in thousands of shows, but he's indelibly associated with the character of Chester Proudfoot on Gunsmoke. Since his work in that show has been well documented, we asked him about some other radio performances.

I've been so blessed to be in companies that were wonderful to work with. I could count on one hand the times I haven't liked to work on a show, and I'd have fingers left over.

I made my radio debut at KSL, Salt Lake City — my hometown — in 1933 with the *KSL Players*, in a drama based

on the life of Robert Burns; I played one of his brothers. A woman named Louise Howe directed the *Players*. She invited me down to audition; I played quite frequently and finally went on staff at KSL. First, I was in charge of the ushering staff, and then became the assistant program director. Then I had a strange combination job—I was head of dramatic production, and was also special events director. I had a show that I called *Over the Back Fence*. You'd get all these requests from groups wanting your public service time, so I did a show that would incorporate the canary breeders' show with the tulip growers' association. I was driving in to write the program one day and I hit a chuck hole on a country road and blew a tire. I spent a lot of that program blasting the county road commission!

I was at KSL from 1934 until going into the Air Corps right after Pearl Harbor. After the war I went back to KSL for a few months and then my wife and I were married in April of '46 and we moved out to Los Angeles in '47. The first show I did out here was *Conquest* starring Stanley Ferrer. It was a local show. My first network show was *The Whistler*. I just auditioned like anybody else, but I was lucky.

The First Nighter moved out here a little before '47. A whole influx of actors from Chicago came to Los Angeles about that time—Willard Waterman, Betty Lou Gerson, Michael Rye. Barbara Luddy and Olan Soule were the stars of *First Nighter* when I was on it. Joe Ainley directed the show out here. He was kindly, wonderful—there was one time he would have been well within his rights to kill me, and he didn't do it. There was a Republican convention that year and we knew we were going to be pre-empted. Then the word went out that we were going to do the show anyway because the studio audience had already assembled. As we were waiting in the wings to be introduced, the announcer, Larry Keating said, "Hey, this part of your script is worded wrong and Joe Ainley told me to tell you." I was writing the speech in the margin of my script when Willard Waterman said, "Hey, you're on!"

I dashed out there, and when it came to that part, I could hardly read my writing. So I thought, "Aw, to heck with it—we're not on the air, anyhow." So, I just [gives a razzberry noise] and it got a laugh. And the heads in the director's booth went up. I went and sat down by Willard Waterman and whispered, "Thank God we weren't on the air." And he said, "You fool." And I looked up into the booth in horror at Joe Ainley. We hadn't been pre-empted! And it was the last show of the season.

At the end of the show, I just wanted to die. And Barbara Luddy was so nice and Joe came out and said, "Don't worry about it." They were having a big end-of-the-season cast party at Olan Soule's house, and I really dreaded to face this crowd. But on my way there, I passed a florist shop, and I had them make me a miniature funeral spray and I pinned it across my suit. Joe Ainley was so forgiving—and I was on the first show of the next season.

I was doing a *Red Ryder* at Mutual; Bert Temple was Red Ryder and Bill Bouchee was playing the leader of a bunch of us that were chasing Red, out to do a bit of no good. We were sneaking up on Red and whispering "He's in there," and "Yeah, I see him." Bill said, "Now, watch him, boys, he's tricky. Keep your tinger on the frigger!" This was live! We scattered in all directions. Those studios were velvet-lined and everybody had a mouthful of curtain, trying to keep from laughing. Even the engineer was laughing. And Bill was having to stay there saying his dialogue and mouthing "What did I say?" But we've all been through it. I remember Ed Max one time on *Straight Arrow* said, "All right, take him off to the sail jell. I mean the *sail jell*. I mean the SAIL JELL." He couldn't say jail cell!

With radio, you had a personal contact—you were what the listener wanted you to be. If you were being audited by ten million people, you were giving ten million performances. When I did radio, I saw the character I was playing and the characters the other actors were playing. I didn't just see Bill Conrad, I saw Matt Dillon. This mantle that we each assumed—even though it was invisible, it was almost tangible.

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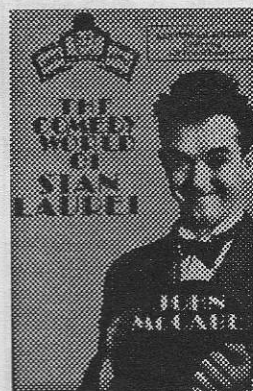
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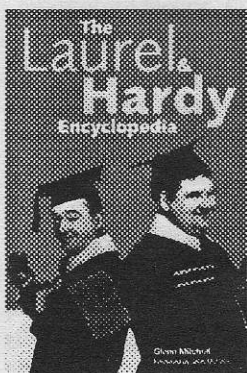
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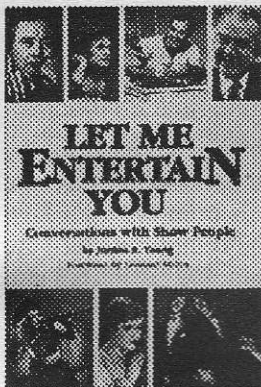


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The Start of the Upstart Medium

Last year, we reviewed Michael Ritchie's "Prehistory of Television," *Please Stand By*, which chronicled the development of TV from the '20s up to 1948. The same topic is covered in an equally entertaining yet radically different fashion in Jeff Kisseloff's new book **The Box: An Oral History of Television, 1920-1961** (Viking; 592 pages, hardcover; \$37.95).

It would have been enjoyable to have more of Kisseloff's own engaging and witty prose; he limits himself to the introductions for each of the 24 chapters. Most of the book is an interweaving of first-hand accounts from more than 300 television pioneers. Naturally, some names are well-known—among them comedians Morey Amsterdam and Imogene Coca, singer Hildegard, emcee Dennis James and writer-producer Hal Kanter. But just as fascinating are accounts from those who aren't household names.

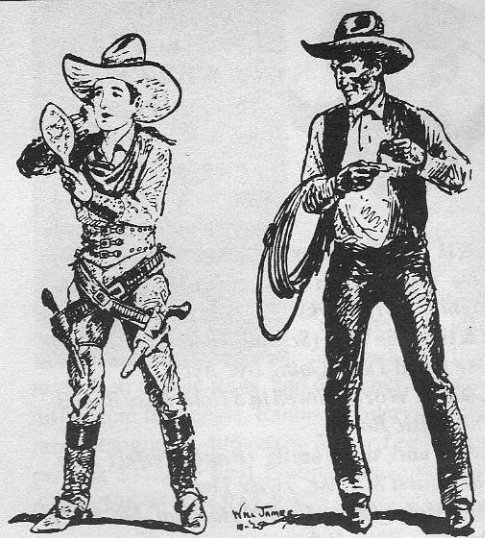
Producer Charlie Andrews talks about the inception of the intimate "Chicago-style" shows produced at WNBQ (including *Garroway at Large* and *Kukla, Fran & Ollie*), produced by hungry college graduates under the inspired tutelage of Paul Rhymer, who had written radio's *Vic & Sade*. Actress Nancy Marchand recalls doing a live teleplay in which, as Queen Elizabeth, she had to age from 17 to 70 in an hour; the latex facial appliances used to age her worked fine in dress rehearsal, but wouldn't come off when the time came for the actual show. Writer Seamon Jacobs recounts his introduction to Ed Wynn (who said, "You can't be much of a writer. You're wearing a necktie"). Director Ralph Levy tells of Burns and Allen's nervousness about the new medium.

The book is "cinematic" in its construction, as Kisseloff cuts back and forth from one interviewee to another, weaving a narrative entirely from their reminiscences. The author is remarkably thorough; he covers TV's invention (through quotes from Philo Farnsworth's widow and sister), the rise and fall of the DuMont network and TV's role in World War II. He even quotes appliance salesmen who sold the early TV sets. It would have been helpful to identify each of the "witnesses" within the chapters instead of in an index, but the book offers delicious anecdotes and fascinating insights.

Pop Culture

The Old West, 1920s Style

*Right: A real cowboy doing stunt work in silent Westerns scoffs at the vanity of a "daggoned pink leading man." Illustration taken from Will James' **The Drifting Cowboy** (Mountain Press).*



Just as we have a fascination with the culture of previous decades, audiences of the 1920s were intrigued with the vanishing customs of the past—particularly the Old West. Novels by Will James, Zane Grey and Max Brand were tremendously popular. We have a new opportunity to see why, thanks to new reprints of several volumes of Western fiction originally published in the '20s.

Author and illustrator Will James (1892-1942) is as intriguing a character as anyone in his books. Born in Quebec (as Joseph Ernest Nephtali Dufault), he yearned to become a cowboy in the western States; by age 23 he'd achieved that goal, but had also been sent to a Nevada prison for cattle rustling. Fortunately, he convinced the parole board that he could create a new career with his pen. His first book was originally published in 1924; it and his second volume are the first entries in what will ultimately be a complete reprint series of 24 titles from Mountain Press Publishing Company.

In the preface to **Cowboys North and South** (208 pages; hardcover, \$25.00; paperback, \$14.00), James writes, "I am a cowboy, and what's put down in these pages is not material that I've hunted up, it's what I've lived, seen, and went thru before I ever had any idea that my writing and sketches would ever appear before the public." One wonders if absolutely everything in his books is drawn from his life (especially since he was just 32 when the first book debuted), but the eight stories are amusingly filled with vivid and amusing detail—not to mention a whole heap of cowboy slang.

Western-film fans might well want to purchase James' second book, **The Drifting Cowboy** (240 pages; hardcover, \$25.00; paperback, \$14.00) just for the second of seven stories, "Filling in the Cracks," in which our hero gets some stunt work in silent Westerns and doubles in the dangerous scenes for "that daggoned pink leading man." James scoffs at the ego and vanity of Hollywood types in this story, and acquiring celebrity himself was the tragedy of his own life. Longing to escape the pressure of fame, James became an alcoholic and lost his ranch and family before dying at 50. His salty, colorful stories, and his spirited drawings still pack a (cow) punch. (Mountain Press Publishing Company, P.O. Box 2399, Missoula, MT 59806.)

Other Western fiction from the '20s is being handsomely reprinted by the University of Nebraska Press under its Bison Books imprint. All books in the series are large paperbacks; each retails for \$12.00. Two Zane Grey novels from 1927, **Forlorn River** (338 pages) and its sequel **Nevada** (365 pages) reveal the contrast between the author's luxurious prose and the slangy dialogue he gives his characters. Bison has also reprinted several Max Brand novels, among them **The Night Horseman** from 1920 (380 pages) and 1927's **Smiling Charlie** (312 pages). They're a little more accessible for modern audiences, since the author soft-pedals the slang and the purple prose, concentrating instead on small but telling details. Earlier, and more florid, Western fiction is presented in **Chip of the Flying U** (264 pages) by Bertha Muzzy Bower, one of the few women to become a popular-Western writer. Each Bison reprint is taken from an original edition; the period typefaces add an extra dollop of color beyond that of the writing itself. (Univ. of Nebraska Press, 312 N. 14th St., Lincoln NE 68588; (402) 472-3581.)

STREAMLINE: Style as Sales Pitch



Art Deco was a design style that was boldly modernistic; it gave the impression of action, speed, intellect, dynamism. It was a reflection of the dynamic Twenties, and a psychological stimulant during the moribund Thirties. (The vigorous, splashy, self-assured graphics in mid-'30s posters commissioned by the WPA make you think, "The economy was dead, but they must've been making progress *somewhere*.")

The "full speed ahead into tomorrow" look of Art Deco is now so closely tied to the '20s and '30s that it looks futuristic and quaint at the same time. Some of it is laughably overdone and some of it is spare and succinct, but it always catches and delights the eye. In one of the essays for their book *Streamline* (Chronicle Books; 132 pages, paperback; \$16.95), authors Steven Heller and Louise Fili make the point that it was intended to revive a flagging economy by making consumers more absorbed in style itself—and thus make them buy new products for style alone. With Streamline, style became part of the product's function. (A revealing quote from advertising executive Earnest Elmo Calkins in 1930: "We no longer wait for things to wear out. We displace them with others that are not more efficient but more attractive.")

The text, which examines the socio-economic and artistic origins and effects of Streamline graphic design, is secondary to the hundreds of wonderful color photographs of posters, magazine covers, packages, menus and advertising displays. Undoubtedly, people in the '30s would never have envisioned that an Eagle pencil package or a Necco candy box would be considered Art sixty years later. The graphics collected here have an élan that transcends their purely pragmatic function. Streamline is definitely Art, and a fun and lively art as well.

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Nostalgia in Cyberspace

Continued from Page 8

University of Memphis Radio Archive Home Page

<http://www.memst.edu/radio-archive/radio-archive-homepage.html>

You browse through an extensive catalogue of shows on this site, and can obtain copies for private home use. A history of collecting and a discussion of preservation are included here as well.

Radio Days

<http://www.otr.com/>

At this site, you can listen to clips from a variety of programs, including WorldWar II news reports.

The Shadow Home Page

<http://www.interaccess.com/spider/shadow/bultbrd.html>

Visitors can obtain information on collectibles, memorabilia, film and print appearances of the Shadow, and a newsgroup. Still under construction. Who knows what evil lurks on the Internet?

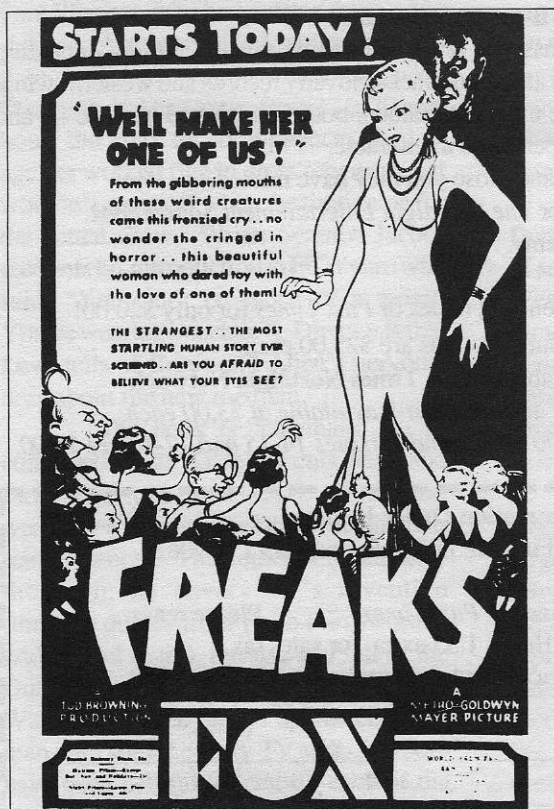
Internet recommendations of interest to *Past Times* readers are welcomed. They may be e-mailed in care of jyoung@mail.calypso.com.

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