

Past Times

No. 22 THE NOSTALGIA ENTERTAINMENT NEWSLETTER \$5.00

George Burns: A Smash for 100 Years



In anticipation of George Burns' 100th birthday, a new biography chronicles the comedian's life—or many lives: dirt-poor child of the tenements, small-time vaudevillian, radio favorite, television executive, Oscar-winning movie star, author and recording artist. Since Burns himself has participated in the writing of eight books, most of them memoirs, one might wonder why another volume about his life would be necessary. But **George Burns and the Hundred Year Dash** (Simon & Schuster; 329 pages, hardcover; \$23.00) offers a different perspective; author Martin Gottfried (author of many books about the theater, most recently the Danny Kaye biography *Nobody's Fool*) is able to exalt Burns' great gifts as performer and man more forcefully than George cared to, and he also analyzes a few flaws that Burns recast as anecdotes which "put a vaudeville shine" on reality.

This is not, we hasten to add, an exposé or a gritty "unauthorized" biography. Burns himself granted several interviews to Mr. Gottfried over a seven-year period; the comedian's children, Ronnie and Sandra, also participated, as did many friends and associates. George's talents are assessed by fellow comics Jan Murray, Buddy Hackett and Milton Berle (whose association with George goes back to small-time vaudeville); we also hear from writers George Balzer and Paul Henning, and directors Fred DeCordova, Rod Amateau and Carl Reiner. Joan Benny adds some wonderful anecdotes about George and Gracie's close relationship with her father and their tolerance of Mary Livingstone Benny, who comes across as cold, tough, snobbish, insecure, self-centered and extravagant with money—everything that Jack wasn't.

The author's portrait of Burns is warm and affectionate, but balanced. We learn that he wasn't always a saint to his younger brother (and writer) Willie; that despite his enduring deep love for Gracie, he wasn't entirely faithful; and that he could be impatient with people. (Says one colleague, "He was so bright, he couldn't stand people around him who were slower.") Despite George's tremendous intelligence, he always found reading "a slow and painful process" according to the author, the sad legacy of having quit school at the fourth grade. However, he surely had a facility with words: he wrote most of the early Burns and Allen material and always functioned as the editor of their radio and television scripts. He also had a great command of comedy structure—"exits, entrances, how to construct a joke, how to switch a joke, where the laughs were going to drop, how to build an act to a strong finish." More than that, he had a supreme gift for seeing the "illogical logic" behind comedy. This was evident not only in the characterization and material he devised for Gracie—it was also the basis of his own private, droll humor, which didn't become integrated into his onstage personality until the 1960s.

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Lux Radio's *Phantom* Unmasked on CD

There isn't any glorious Technicolor in the Lux Radio Theatre adaptation of Universal's 1943 film **The Phantom of the Opera**, available on compact disc (Facet F/CD 8115; \$8.98). In fact, there isn't even any Claude Rains, who played the acid-scarred composer Erique Claudin. But Basil Rathbone is a superb substitute—and in your imagination, you can conjure pictures in any color you wish.

Nelson Eddy and Susannah Foster, who appeared in the film version, are here as opera star Anatole Carron and young understudy Christine Dubois—along with Edgar Barrier as the Chief of Police, Raoul de Chagny. Eddy speaks the narration in a charmingly wooden manner, but his acting is much livelier and his singing, of course, is splendid. Miss Foster also gets several opportunities to display her voice, hitting a breathtaking sustained high note at one point.

Rathbone is a very sympathetic Phantom; in fact, there's very little horror in this interpretation, which concentrates on the music and on the poignance of the story. The sound patterns are up to the usual high Lux standard, and the leading players are supported by radio veterans such as Frank Nelson. Cecil B. DeMille presides over the whole affair with a sternly paternal manner.

The excellent transfers are by Chris Lembesis; slight wear is apparent for the first few minutes but the CD is clear throughout. The disc runs 54:03, reflecting the omission of commercials, but otherwise the show is complete, from the first strains of the theme to C.B.'s closing, "Good night to you, from — Holly-woood." (Available from Delos International, 1645 N. Vine Street, Suite 340, Hollywood CA 90028.)

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Nostalgia Newswire

New to the List: Librarian of Congress James Billington has added 25 more titles to the National Film Registry, which was created in 1988 to help preserve significant films. Among the new entries are *The Adventures of Robin Hood*; *The Band Wagon*; two films from the 1890s, *Blacksmith Scene* and *Rip Van Winkle*; *Fatty's Tintype Tangle*, a 1915 Arbuckle comedy; Valentino's breakthrough film *The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse*; Fritz Lang's *Fury*; a 1944 Vitaphone short, *Jammin' the Blues*; the silent classic *Seventh Heaven*; John Ford's intimate epic *Stagecoach*; and *The Philadelphia Story*.

Director Bios: In his new book *Orson Welles: The Road to Xanadu* (Viking; \$29.95), actor-director-writer Simon Callow details his subject's journey from coddled child prodigy to respected director of *Citizen Kane*. Callow concentrates on Welles' revolutionary work in the theatre; the balance of his career will be covered in a second volume (the present one is already 640 pages). If you still have space on your Welles bookshelf, *Rosebud* by David Thomson will be published later this year.

Another sometimes difficult director—whose Hollywood career, unlike Welles', was filled with critical and popular success—is profiled by Jan Herman in *A Talent For Trouble: The Life of Hollywood's Most Acclaimed Director, William Wyler* (Putnam; \$30.00). Wyler's films are as diverse as the cynical *The Little Foxes*, the inspiring *Mrs. Miniver* and the poignant *The Best Years of Our Lives*.

Selected Shorts: Once again, you can watch the sun "sink slowly in the west" in glorious 35mm Technicolor. James FitzPatrick, Jr., whose father produced those classic MGM TravelTalks shorts, has assembled a program of nine 1934-38 films with such exotic titles as *Cairo*, *City of Contrast* and *Czechoslovakia on Parade*. For playdates and booking information, contact Fitzpatrick Travel Pictures, 15111 N. Hayden Rd., Suite 160-166, Scottsdale AZ 85260; (602) 451-5947.

The heirs of comedians Larry Fine and Curly Joe DeRita have won their lawsuit over merchandising profits with the heirs of Moe Howard. Look for a Stooze merchandising bonanza in 1996 and beyond; Columbia Pictures may produce a biopic about the comics.

Radio News: The American Movie Classics cable network now augments its programming of vintage films with a newly-produced series, *Remember WENN*. It's set in a Pittsburgh radio station in 1939. Actors, writers, producers and technicians struggle to get their dramatic shows on the air, and dream of getting into the big-time in New York. AMC runs the show on Saturday nights.

The Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound are planning their Radio Showcase IV, to be held primarily in Bellevue. Among the many guests set to descend on Washington are actors John Archer, Parley Baer, Harry Bartell, Sam Edwards, Herb Ellis, Peter Leeds and Tyler McVey; sound men Ray Erlenborn and Stewart Conway, and (tentatively) announcer Art Gilmore and historian-author Leonard Maltin. For more information, see the Calendar at right.

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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Past Times

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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 memorabilia auction, Columbus, OH, May 1996. Info: (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.

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, bassist Bob Haggart. Info: (314) 469-0255.

A Tribute to Bix, Libertyville IL, March 8-10. Jazz bands, record and sheet music sales, rare jazz films, seminars, mystery record contests. Patron badges \$58. Info: Box 7791, Libertyville, IL 60048; (708) 362-4016.

Bessie Smith Traditional Jazz Festival, Chattanooga TN, May 3-5. Blues singer Carrie Smith will be accompanied by The Buck Creek Jazz Band, Grand Dominion Jazz Band and The High Sierra Jazz Band. Info: 1425 Heritage Landing Drive, Chattanooga TN 37405; (423) 266-0944.

OLD-TIME RADIO EVENTS

Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound Showcase IV, Bellevue WA, June 27-29. Recreations of vintage radio shows and panel discussions. Guests include many actors and technicians from the golden age. \$63.00 registration fee per person for three-day program and banquet. Info: REPS Radio Showcase, 9936 NE 197th Street, Bothell, WA 98011; (206) 488-9518.

COLLECTIBLE SHOWS

Hollywood Collectors Show and Auction, North Hollywood CA, March 30-31 and June 29-30; New York NY, July 19-20. Huge gathering of memorabilia dealers; California conclaves also have dozens of movie and TV stars in attendance. Info on all events: (352) 683-5110.

Hollywood Memories Movie Memorabilia Show, Pasadena Center, Pasadena CA, February 17. Same site will also host the Back to the Past Sci-Fi, Fantasy and Horror Show, June 29-30. Info on both events: (909) 880-8558.

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

Great Legs, Big Heart

One can only imagine the difficulties author Tom McGee must have faced in trying to publish his new book, **Betty Grable: The Girl With the Million Dollar Legs** (Vestal Press; 430 pages, paperback; \$19.95). According to the many co-workers and associates interviewed for this book, Miss Grable was at all times a class act—unfailingly cooperative, always professional and well-rehearsed, modest to an extreme about her own abilities, and invariably gracious to her fans. Not a hint of sleaze here. How refreshing.

The inherent kindness of Miss Grable doesn't make her life story a dull one, by any means. Despite the consuming ambition of her mother, the two had a generally warm relationship. It's surprising to realize that Betty appeared in 32 feature films in ten years—many of them collegiate musical-comedies—before she finally made her breakthrough with *Down Argentine Way* in 1940. She gradually supplanted Alice Faye as queen of the Fox musicals (a supposed rivalry was a publicity concoction, as Miss Faye relates in her warm foreword), and reigned until 1953.

Grable's first marriage, to ex-child star Jackie Coogan, was derailed by his expensive legal battles against his mother and stepfather; a later romance with George Raft was climaxed by a public brawl between Raft and her new beau, Harry James. James and Grable were married in 1943, but Harry's gambling, drinking and womanizing escalated until she reluctantly divorced him in 1965. Her sorrow over the divorce was eased somewhat by a successful stage career, which ended only with her death from lung cancer at 56 in 1973.

The author, a Scottish journalist, is a lifelong Grable fan who became a friend during her 1969 British tour. His prose is enthusiastic and at times a little breathless, but it's generally a balanced, objective account, and certainly well researched. Appendices include a filmography, lists of recordings and television appearances, and detailed notes on sources. (Available from Vestal Press, P.O. Box 97, Vestal, NY 13851-0097.)

Stooges at Their Best—and Otherwise

Back in the halcyon days before their heirs began suing each other over merchandising royalties, the Three Stooges made some of the funniest two-reelers ever. Their films of the late '40s and beyond often substituted violence for humor (and suffered from increasingly smaller budgets), which ultimately gave the team a reputation as the lowest of lowbrow comics. However, from 1934 to 1943 practically every short the team made was well-paced, with inventive gags and a healthy dose of wit along with the silliness.

One can rediscover the Stooges in their prime—and, unfortunately, also witness their decline—in a laserdisc box set recently released by Columbia Tri-Star Home Video. **The Three Stooges Comedy Classics** (#10896; \$99.95) has 18 shorts on three discs. Most of them are well-chosen; a few, though, are mystifying. Evidently the producers wanted to represent the Stooges' entire 25-year tenure at Columbia, rather than collect the team's very best work. There's no other explanation for the inclusion of *Rumpus in the Harem*, a 1956 bottom-of-the-barrel entry made largely of footage from earlier shorts, and featuring a vastly unconvincing double for Shemp (who had died before the new scenes were shot). But if the producers really wanted to give us the whole picture, they should have included a couple of the shorts with Joe Besser as the third Stoooge (several of which are very funny, despite their reputation in some circles).

Fifteen of the shorts are vintage Curlys; several are wonderful (*Punch Drunks*, *A Plumbing We Will Go*, *Violent is the Word for Curly*), others just a notch below that (*What's the Matador*, *All the World's a Stoooge*), and three of them, sadly, showing Curly's health and ability in decline (*Monkey Businessmen*, *If a Body Meets a Body* and *Micro-Phonies*—which, for some baffling reason, is often cited as the team's best short). The three Shemp shorts include one dud (see above!), one gem (*Squareheads of the Round Table*), and a run-of-the-mill entry from 1952, *Gents in a Jam*.

All of the films are digitally mastered, and have excellent print and sound quality. Eleven shorts have Spanish audio tracks on the analog channel, in less than perfect audio; owners of analog-only laserdisc players should take note, as they'll only be able to access the Spanish audio tracks.

New Vintage-Film Video Releases for 1996

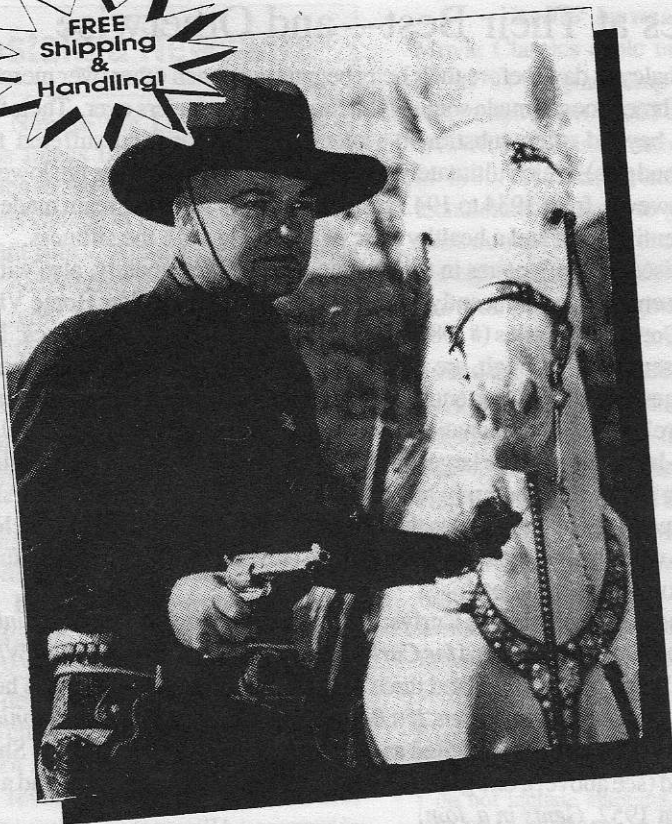
The new year should be a choice one for devotees of vintage films, as video companies continue to scour the vaults. Columbia Tri-Star will continue its "Columbia Classics" series with six titles, including a 1936 Irene Dunne-Melvyn Douglas screwball comedy, *Theodora Goes Wild*, the 1950 Joan Crawford drama *Harriet Craig*, and the Cornel Wilde fantasy costumer *Thousand and One Nights* (1945).

Fox Video will release twelve more entries in its series of "Studio Classics" (a new one on the first Tuesday of each month), starting with *The Dolly Sisters*, a 1945 musical with Betty Grable and June Haver. Others include 1942's *Tales of Manhattan* (we don't know if they'll restore the excised W.C. Fields sequence, recently screened on American Movie Classics), a Jane Wyman and Dana Andrews drama entitled *Boomerang* (1947), the Clifton Webb-Myrna Loy comedy *Cheaper By the Dozen* (1950), a Jimmy Stewart comedy entitled *The Jackpot* (1950) and a rerelease of *The Grapes of Wrath* (1940). All titles will retail for \$19.95. Also look for a 50th-anniversary edition of the original *Miracle on 34th Street*.

MCA/Universal will be celebrating the studio's 80th anniversary with a new documentary, *The Universal Story*. Other vintage films to be released include four new Deanna Durbin titles: *Mad About Music* (1938), *First Love* (1939), *His Butler's Sister* (1943) and the mystery comedy *Lady on a Train* (1945). A series of vintage Buck Jones Westerns will debut later in the year.

Kino on Video, noted for its many collections of outstanding silent films, will be branching out a bit as it releases the James Mason-Ava Gardner fantasy *Pandora and the Flying Dutchman* (1951) and a 1952 Joan Crawford thriller, *Sudden Fear*. However, silents will hardly be neglected: Douglas Fairbanks fans will enjoy the May release of a 12-film, 10-cassette collection which will include the two-strip Technicolor version of *The Black Pirate* (1926). Foreign silents to be released are *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* and F.W. Murnau's *Faust*. And, although it's a 1965 film, we think some of you might be interested in Buster Keaton's *The Railrodder*.

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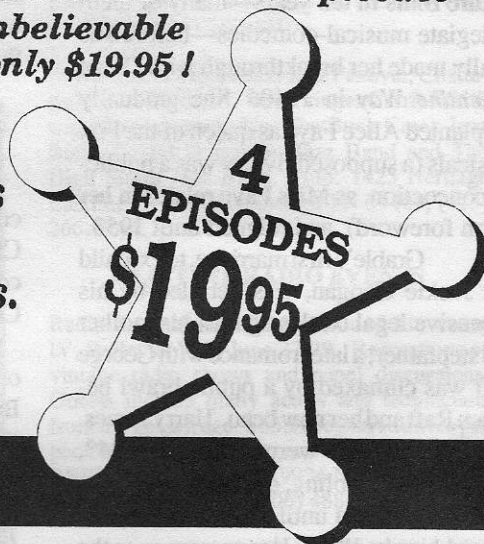


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Roy Rogers and Other Singing Buckaroos



Fans of Western film stars are an intensely devoted bunch, and that's proven anew by Robert W. Phillips' book **Roy Rogers** (McFarland & Co., 448 pages, hardcover; \$58.00 postpaid). The book's subtitle should give an idea of its thoroughness: "A Biography, Radio History, Television Career Chronicle, Discography, Filmography, Comicography, Merchandising and Advertising History, Collectibles Description, Bibliography and Index." Whew!

What's more, that ain't all. There's a chapter devoted to Roy Rogers and Dale Evans in commercial art (even giving full biographies of the artists who have rendered likenesses of Roy or Dale for products, packaging, comic books or article illustrations); another section is a study of Roy's on-screen attire and its significance; yet another tries to sort out the complex history of Roy's horse Trigger (and at least two other horses which carried the name), although many of the previously-published accounts about the equine star are contradictory.

To those of us who aren't Rogers buffs, sometimes it appears that the author might not always separate wheat from chaff, but one has to admire the impressive research into every aspect of Rogers' career. We doubt that we've ever seen another book on any entertainment personality that documents a career in such detail. Those who write about other film stars might do well to emulate some of Phillips' innovations—such as listing the production number for each film, which helps in identifying photographs.

The book is filled with great illustrations—candid, news clippings, product endorsements, magazine covers and so on. And if you're wondering about the current market value of any Rogers collectibles, you'll find it in the 78 pages devoted to memorabilia produced between 1938 and the present.

Roy and Dale themselves evidently didn't work on this project; their "official" co-autobiography, written with Jane and Michael Stern, was recently published. Surely no other book will document every aspect of the Rogers' professional lives as thoroughly as Phillips' does. (McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; (919) 246-4460.)

The very same Robert W. Phillips has also written a short, witty and thoroughly enjoyable little book about **Singing Cowboy Stars** (Gibbs Smith; 95 pages, hardcover; \$19.95). This one doesn't pretend to be an all-encompassing, definitive encyclopedia on the topic—it's a pleasant introduction for neophytes and a memory-jogger for those who grew up watching Gene, Roy and other musical cowpokes.

In a brief but informative introduction, Phillips credits erstwhile silent Western star Ken Maynard as the first singing cowboy in 1930 (in either *The Fighting Legion* or *Sons of the Saddle*; the text seems to be contradictory here). In any event, Maynard's musical skills weren't quite enough to ignite a fire at the box office. A young singer named Gene Autry (who had made his screen debut in Maynard's 1934 picture *In Old Santa Fe*) crystallized the character of the singing cowboy—if not the usual environment—in the bizarre 1935 serial *Phantom Empire*, probably the only Science Fiction Western ever made.

As Autry grew more popular, a herd of singing buckaroos followed in his wake. As a movie genre, the Singing Cowboy film remained popular through the mid-'50s (to a degree, Garth Brooks, George Strait and the other Stetson-wearing singers of today follow in the steps of their celluloid forebears). Phillips provides brief biographies of 25 gun-and-tuneslingers from the golden era, some of them well-remembered (Tex Ritter, Ray Whitley, Monte Hale, Rex Allen), some not (James Newill, George Houston, Jack Randall). A couple of the entries are debatable (Bob Wills was certainly a great bandleader who provided fine musical interludes in western films, but a singing cowboy?), and Phillips certainly would have found more information about Smith Ballew if he'd talked to dance-band record collectors (Ballew was a very prolific vocalist before his transition to movies).

The illustrations are plentiful and colorful, with lobby cards, record jackets, posters, comic books and sheet music beautifully reproduced. A ten-track CD is a bonus, with a few tracks unavailable elsewhere. (Available from Gibbs Smith, Publisher; P.O. Box 667, Layton, UT 84041.)

Tom Mix: Heroic On-Screen and Off

A few issues back, we reviewed Robert S. Birchard's fine book *King Cowboy: Tom Mix and the Movies*. A new volume examines the many other aspects of Mix's life and career. **Tom Mix** (McFarland & Co., 328 pages, hardcover, \$32.95 postpaid) is by Paul E. Mix, a distant relative. Some obvious family pride shows through in the narrative of this "Heavily Illustrated Biography with a Filmography," but Tom's off-camera behavior was generally just as exemplary as it was onscreen.

The filmography isn't nearly as detailed as Birchard's (most of the Selig one-reelers and, surprisingly, many of the '20s Fox features have no plot information). However, the body of the text contains much interesting information about Mix's early films, shot on location in Prescott, Arizona and Las Vegas, New Mexico.

Mix's peak period of the early-to-mid '20s is dealt with briskly but thoroughly, and the author places Tom's achievements in context by comparing him to the other top western film stars of the period. Mix's film swan song—the 1934 Mascot serial *The Miracle Rider*—is discussed in much greater detail than any of the other films; for some strange reason, the chapter about it comes before a discussion of Tom's 1932-33 talkie features for Universal. Mix's bittersweet later career with traveling circuses is thoroughly—one might say ruthlessly—documented.

The book is generally very well researched. Radio buffs will especially enjoy the chapter devoted to the 1933-1950 radio series *Tom Mix and His Ralston Straight Shooters*, which includes correspondence from a Ralston executive to Mix, full information on the show's cast and crew, text of Ralston commercials and jingles, and colorful descriptions of the "Secret Manuals" and other premiums offered on the show. As voiced by Curley Bradley, Tom Mix was a vivid hero to kids all over America long after his own death in 1940; judging from the intense interest he still engenders (as shown by a listing of current festivals, museums, clubs and dealers of Mixabilia), he'll be alive in the American imagination for decades to come. (Available from McFarland & Co., Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; (919) 246-4460.)

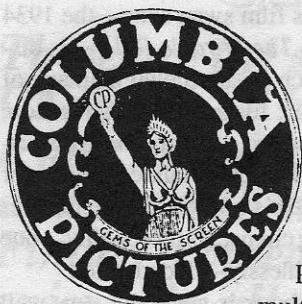
Still Life: A Glossy Look at 8x10s

Those of us who are long-time collectors of original movie stills fondly remember the halcyon days of the early '70s and before, when we could routinely snap up original 8 x 10s from the '20s and '30s for three or four bucks apiece. Those prices have exploded in recent years, and while it's nice to see our photos appreciating, the spiraling costs make it difficult to add many stills to our collections.

We can have hundreds of fascinating new images to peruse at a modest cost, however, by purchasing Joel W. Finler's book **Hollywood Movie Stills: The Golden Age** (Batsford; 192 pages, paperback; \$24.95). Naturally, there are hundreds of great shots here—scene stills, glamour portraits, wardrobe tests, rehearsal shots, reference stills of interior sets, photomontages, and dozens of wonderful “behind the scenes” shots, showing the stars between takes on the set and in obviously posed “candid” at home. There are also a number of stills which reveal future stars as background extras (Betty Grable effortlessly upstaging Jean Parker in a 1933 programmer; Marilyn Monroe instantly catching our eye in a shot from 1947's *Dangerous Years*).

Most of the stills are sharply reproduced in adequate sizes, although some are far too small; the layout is not always attractive or economical (a portrait of Gibson Gowland from Stroheim's *Greed* is reproduced at postage-stamp size, surrounded by several inches of white space). Some of the stills are classics, but most are unusual and previously unpublished. The “golden age” covered by the book goes up to the mid-'60s, but most of the shots are from the '40s and before.

The text is hardly limited to brief captions; Finler thoroughly chronicles every aspect of the still man's job, not to mention retouchers, lab technicians and other people involved in studio publicity. The origins of movie-still photography are recounted by Karl Brown and Madison Lacy, both of whom began shooting stills on Griffith films. Bob Coburn, Jr., the son of a top photographer who followed his dad into the trade, describes his father's intense concentration while at work in Columbia's photo gallery, and many of the stars offer comments on some of the outlandish poses they were asked to make. (Available from Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, VT 05053; (802) 457-1911.)



Torch Song: Columbia's History

The story of Columbia Pictures is as topsy-turvy and unpredictable as, say, Frank Capra's *You Can't Take it With You* (Columbia's Best Picture-winner in 1938). MGM was the studio that started at the top and, for thirty years, stayed there; RKO made classy films but never enough profit. But Columbia has been many things: a symbol of the cheapest

Poverty Row quickies and the respected home of prestigious multiple-Oscar winners; the private kingdom of Harry Cohn and a poor-sister subsidiary of international conglomerates.

A history of the studio should be an absorbing read, and it is, in **Columbia Pictures: Portrait of a Studio**, edited by Bernard F. Dick (University Press of Kentucky; 293 pages, hardcover; \$30.00). Those of us whose tastes run toward films of the '20s through the '40s might feel a trifle shortchanged, though. The editor's 59-page introductory history of the studio dispenses with the Harry Cohn era (1920-1958) after the fifteenth page, with the balance covering the regimes of a multitude of other executives who lacked the power, instincts and personality to keep Columbia a consistent winner over the past 30-odd years. Harry Cohn may have been the all-time Hollywood SOB, but throughout the '30s and '40s he had a winning formula that kept his studio profitable: every year, make a tiny handful of well-written A-pictures with top stars and directors, and hedge your bets with a whole slew of cheap but sure-fire crowd pleasers like B-Westerns, detective yarns and low-budget musicals. (A full listing of all Columbia features through 1991 is included.)

The studio history is followed by thirteen essays by various film scholars; four of them discuss Frank Capra's films, Columbia's '30s screwball comedies, the 1940s film noir releases, and the “manufacturing” of Rita Hayworth. The other essays discuss more recent releases such as (eww!) *Taxi Driver*, but vintage-film fans might well enjoy the fine pieces about Judy Holliday and the restoration of *Lawrence of Arabia*. (University Press of Kentucky, 606 S. Limestone St., Lexington, KY 40508-4008; (800) 666-2211.)



The Stately Studios of England

If your favorite old films include titles

such as *The Lady Vanishes*

and *In Which We Serve*, you may well want to peruse **British Film Studios: An Illustrated History** by Patricia Warren (Batsford; 192 pages, paperback; \$27.50). American films certainly penetrated the British market, but a look through these pages affirms that a surprising number of British films became popular in the States.

It's also eye-opening to learn how much Anglo-American co-production has existed since the '20s, as well; Dorothy Gish, Betty Blythe, Will Rogers, Bebe Daniels and Buddy Rogers came to England to make films (some still at the peak of their careers, others trying to revive their popularity). Warner Brothers in 1931 leased and eventually purchased the Teddington Studios, primarily to make “Quota Quickies.” (To protect their home-grown film industry from being totally dominated by Hollywood releases, British film commissioners insisted that American studios underwrite the production of a set amount of British films each year before allowing them to exhibit their American product in England.) MGM made *A Yank at Oxford* and *Goodbye Mr. Chips* at the Denham Studios, and in 1948 began regularly producing “MGM-British” films at Elstree.

The organization of the book is a little perplexing at first. The entries are grouped alphabetically by the names of the studios—which are often separate entities from the better-known production companies (British International Pictures, British Lion, J. Arthur Rank, etc.). Thus, if you're looking for a history of Hammer films, you'll find it in the entry for Bray Studios. Fortunately, there's a well-detailed index.

Ms. Warren writes clearly, making the sometimes tangled histories of the studios easy to follow. Over 90 studios are profiled here, dating back to 1896. Many of them are silent-era enterprises which lasted only a year or two. Illustrations are plentiful for virtually all of the studios represented, whether obscure or famous. (Available from Trafalgar Square, North Pomfret, VT 05053; (802) 457-1911.)



If the near-astro-nomical cost of movie memorabilia has scared you from starting or adding to a collection, you might want to peruse two books which contain a wealth of wonderful rarities between their covers. **Hollywood Collectibles** by Dian Zillner (Schiffer Publishing,

Ltd.; 224 pages, paperback; \$29.95) is a treasure trove of vintage goodies, all of them reproduced in full color. Occasionally, the lighting on a given shot will be slightly dark, but most of the pictures are glorious.

A network of collectors have provided the hundreds of pictures collected here (no single individual could likely afford all of the objects depicted). Each of the twenty main sections is devoted to memorabilia of a particular star. It's not surprising to see a truckload of objects bearing the likeness of Shirley Temple or Charlie McCarthy, but it is surprising to see the amount of merchandising tied in to Fred Astaire, James Cagney and Al Jolson.

The items collected here include autographed stills, original movie ads from magazines, sheet music, programs, tie-in books, dolls (ceramic, cloth and paper!), comics, statues and a plethora of other imaginative ways that demonstrate how celebrity has always been used to make a buck.

Some of our favorites include the Bing Crosby "Call Me Lucky" board game which Parker Brothers issued in 1954 as a tie-in to the crooner's similarly-titled autobiography; sheet music from the 1933 Jean Harlow-Clark Gable epic *Hold Your Man*; a hardcover mystery novel entitled "Deanna Durbin and the Feather of Flame" (a title topped only by "Judy Garland and the Hoodoo Costume"!); a cornucopia of items devoted to Baby Sandy, includ-

Colorful Collectibles From Hollywood's Past

ing a 1939 biography (given that she was only one year old, it can't have been much of a page-turner); and a 1938 Talking Charlie McCarthy Card, which includes a small strip of grooved metal — run your fingernail across it and it says, "Happy Birthday."

One might raise an eyebrow at 30 pages being devoted to collectibles of the Dionne Quintuplets (who are rarely on anyone's list of great movie stars), but the unusual knick-knacks bearing the likenesses of Will Rogers, Jeanette MacDonald, Clark Gable, John Wayne and others more than justify the price of the book. Each chapter begins with a surprisingly lengthy and detailed biography of the star; the captions under each photo usually provide full information on that particular object, including the manufacturer, stock number, and date of issue.

If one volume isn't enough for you, try **Hollywood Collectibles: The Sequel**, vital statistics the same as the first book except that this one runs 184 pages. Some of the stars whose trinkets are displayed here are of a slightly later vintage (Elvis, Marilyn Monroe, TV-era Lucy). There are 33 more pages devoted to Shirley Temple (to complement the 33 pages in the first book), and seven more pages of Dionne Quintuplets goodies (evidently there's a burgeoning market for such memorabilia). Most of this volume, in fact, is devoted to collectibles of child actors. We're drooling over the 1934 Big Little Book of "David Copperfield" with Freddie Bartholomew and W.C. Fields on the cover, and we sure wouldn't mind having any of the wonderful Our Gang merchandise shown here, such as a 1933 coloring book and a leather pencil box from 1931.

As with the first volume, the text is surprisingly well detailed; you'll learn about the stars' careers and private lives in addition to seeing all the pertinent data on the collectibles. Each volume has a list of sources for such memorabilia (auction houses, periodicals, clubs), and a current value guide. These books are great fun to browse through, and indispensable for the serious memorabilia collector. (Available from Schiffer Publishing, 77 Lower Valley Road, Atglen, PA 19310; (610) 593-1777.)



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New Publications Herald Lloyd, Put Chaplin in Limelight

Laurel and Hardy fans have been joining Sons of the Desert for 30 years. Buster Keaton fans have become members of The Damfinos for about three years now. But curiously, there hasn't been any sort of appreciation society for two of the greatest film comedians, Charlie Chaplin and Harold Lloyd. That problem has now been rectified, thanks to two enterprising ladies and their publications.

Annette M. D'Agostino is the editor of *The Lloyd Herald*, which debuted in January. The first 12-page issue is packed with articles and photos, including reprints of vintage newspaper articles, excerpts from press books, reviews and advertising artwork, a profile of Lloyd's leading lady Jobyna Ralston, and a lengthy history of *Bumping Into Broadway*. There's also an article about Lloyd's 1944-45 venture into radio, and a review of a 1962 television appearance. We wish some of the photos were reproduced at a larger size, but we certainly can't complain about a lack of interesting content. Subscriptions to the quarterly publication are \$20 in the U.S., \$25 for Canada and \$30 for overseas residents. Checks should be payable to Annette M. D'Agostino. The address is 46 Stokes Avenue, Bethpage NY 11714; (516) 932-0076.

Bonnie McCourt edits *Limelight*, which has been around for a full year. Judging from Volume 1, No. 4, it's a very professional publication. (The lovely design and layout is by David Totheroh, grandson of Chaplin's cameraman Rollie Totheroh.) The articles include an in-depth history of the missing film, *Her Friend the Bandit*; a career profile of Geraldine Chaplin; a sound engineer's perspective on Chaplin as a composer; a guide to Chaplin's London, and a calendar of upcoming Chaplin events. In short, a very wide-ranging and thought-provoking issue. Subscriptions are \$20 per year for the quarterly inside the U.S., and \$25 for non-U.S. residents; send to The Charlie Chaplin Film Company, 300 South Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga CA 90290.



Hal Roach's Rascal Talkies Now Complete on Video

The saga of Hal Roach's *Our Gang* series—retitled *The Little Rascals* for theatrical and television reissues—continues with the recent home-video release of 36 more short subjects by Cabin Fever. They're available on VHS cassettes as **Little Rascals: Remastered and Unedited** volumes 13 through 21 (usually retailing for about \$9.98 each, and available in a nine-cassette box set). They've also been newly issued in two laserdisc box sets co-produced with Image Entertainment. **Little Rascals Volume Three** (ID3624CF; \$124.95) has four discs containing 20 shorts, with a total running time of 339 minutes. **Volume Four** (ID3290CF; \$99.95) has three discs and 16 shorts, the whole program running 320 minutes.

Since the 80-minute cassettes' master tapes were also used for the two-hour laserdiscs, you'll find opening credits and Leonard Maltin's introductions sometimes coming in the middle of a disc. On Volume Four, three shorts (*Shrimps For a Day*, *Lazy Days* and *A Lad an' a Lamp*) are divided between sides. Fortunately, the side breaks are sensitively done to minimize the interruption in the stories.

Videocassette Volumes 20 and 21—and the last portion of laserdisc Volume Four—contain some material which today would be censored by the Politically Incorrect Thought Police. *A Tough Winter* features (gasp!) comedian Stepin Fetchit, *Anniversary Trouble* has an extended scene in which Spanky tries to disguise himself from the Gang by donning blackface and a dialect, and in *Little Sinner* Spanky and Porky stumble upon a black congregation's mass baptism. Most of this is pretty innocent (a line or two in *A Lad an' a Lamp* excepted) and shouldn't cause offense.

With these releases, all Roach *Our Gang* talkies (and four silents) are available in gorgeous print quality, with original main titles restored. Cabin Fever saved some of the best for last with shorts such as *Forgotten Babies*, *Bargain Day*, *Fish Hooky* and (especially) *Bedtime Worries* and *Wild Poses*, both of which feature Spanky with "parents" Emerson Treacy and Gay Seabrook. Spanky is adorable and a great little actor in these films, and one can only imagine the astonishment that 1933 audiences must have felt upon first encountering this enchanting kid.

Speaking Volumes About Silent Film Actors

Dedicated film scholars will applaud the publication of **Silent Film Performers** by Roy Liebman (McFarland & Co., 388 pages, hardcover; \$78.00 postpaid). It's a guide to biographical materials which have been commercially published, or which are held in private collections of libraries and universities.

Each entry includes the performer's full name, locale and year of birth (often listing several years frequently cited), year of death, and a paragraph succinctly noting the actor's career highlights. Next comes a list of published books—general film references, biographies, pictorial histories, theses, catalogs and even collections of "factoids." Full details about these volumes are given in a lengthy bibliography.

Periodicals with relevant articles are next listed chronologically, followed by commercially available videos or recordings. The most useful data, however, is the listing of archival materials and clipping files. As Mr. Liebman notes, it has been a daunting task to determine just what materials are held by a given source. Detailed information about clippings, stills, correspondence and other files often could only be obtained by actually going to the archive, an expensive and often fruitless proposition. By using this book, one can determine that, for example, correspondence by Warner Baxter is held at the New York Public Library, that an unpublished thesis about Bobby Harron is in the Museum of Modern Art, and that a 1959 oral history given by Mae Murray is at Columbia University.

Having shown us what materials are available, Mr. Liebman helpfully tells us how to access them with a directory of 77 sources (all, except two, located in the United States), giving full addresses and phone numbers, contact names, hours of operation and restrictions on the use of materials.

Our only criticism is that the performers cited seem to have been chosen rather arbitrarily. Comedian George K. Arthur is listed but his teammate, Karl Dane, is not; actress June Marlowe and actor Warner Baxter—both best remembered for work in talkies—are listed, but Laurel & Hardy are not (not even for their extensive solo work in the silent era). Still, this is an essential book for researchers. (McFarland, Box 611, Jefferson, NC 28640; (800) 253-2187.)

Chuck Jones: Comedian By Proxy

If you've ever been tickled by a Warner Bros. Cartoon (and if you haven't, we'd suggest either an immediate trip to the video store or some serious psychoanalysis), you will be absolutely enchanted by a warm, wise and witty little book entitled **Chuck Jones: A Flurry of Drawings** (University of California Press; 128 pages, hardcover; \$16.00). The author is Hugh Kenner, billed on the dust jacket as "one of the great American literary critics." His previous obscurity to me is something about which I guess I should be embarrassed, but then I rarely read literary criticism about Ezra Pound, James Joyce, Samuel Beckett or T.S. Eliot. After reading the author's resumé, I half expected this to be another dreary volume that minutely details the obvious with inflated verbiage.

What a relief to find that Mr. Kenner is an insightful critic who thinks deeply and writes clearly. And not just clearly, but endearingly. Of course, it helps that the subject of this book is also a real charmer. Chuck Jones is a great comedian; he just displays his comic talent by the proxies of Bugs and Daffy. He is just as exacting about the nuances of body language as Chaplin—and as acutely aware of comedy timing and camera placement as Keaton. "When the Coyote fell off," Jones says, "I knew he had to go exactly eighteen frames into the distance and then disappear for fourteen frames before he hit....thirteen frames didn't work in terms of humor, and neither did fifteen frames. Fourteen frames got a laugh." As that quote shows, Jones knows exactly what he was doing as a director, and refreshingly doesn't see it as immodest to tell you so. Most comedy filmmakers (Laurel, Keaton, Avery) seemed to think it egotistical to speak in precise words about their methods; Jones, rightly, sees it simply as passing on knowledge to the next generation.

It's amazing how much Mr. Kenner packs in to this little volume; he provides a colorful account of Jones' childhood and apprenticeship, colorfully describes the ultra-practical economic forces that brought about the great artistry of the Warners cartoons, and generally does a heck of a job explaining why Jones' cartoons are so funny and precisely detailing how he made them that way. (Available from California Fulfillment Services, 1445 Lower Ferry Rd., Ewing, NJ 08618; (800) 777-4726.)



Lots of Ink About Films From Out of the Inkwell

Those who want to engage in some serious thought about the history of cartoons, their significance and their implications for the future (honest!) may be interested in Norman M. Klein's **Seven Minutes: The Life and Death of the American Animated Cartoon** (Verso; 284 pages, hardcover). It is a *very* serious book, and tough sledding at times. Klein has a habit of illustrating conventions of the cartoon with examples that aren't germane: in discussing the asymmetry of early cartoon plotlines, he lengthily cites Beardsley's illustrations of Oscar Wilde's play *Salome* and the special-effects movie *Tron*. Huh?? Such illustrations cloud the issue rather than clarifying it.

There are many, many long and exasperating passages which appear to be examples in search of a point. If you can wade through these, you'll also find many more lucid chapters which are worth reading.

Klein shows us how the animated cartoon came into its own during 1928-34: the flat staging reminiscent of newspaper comic strips that prevailed in silent cartoons was transformed into a dynamic visual form where space was elastic, and characters underwent metamorphosis into objects and back again. Gags became more precisely timed and staged (a legacy from vaudeville), and depicted a zany, upside-down world. But in the mid-'30s, animators tried harder to achieve a more realistic approach, emulating live-action films rather than exploiting the freedom possible in cartoons. The Production Code—and the desire to merchandise popular characters—resulted in tamer cartoons with cuter characters and melodramatic story lines, until the Warners gang and Tex Avery brought about a renaissance in the '40s.

Sections about the marketing of characters, the assembly line of cartoon production, and "How Money Talks in Cartoons" are clear and illuminating, and anecdotes about the Fleischer studio are vivid and hilarious. They almost balance the nearly impenetrable passages of critical evaluation and socioeconomic interpretation which read like leftovers from a doctoral thesis. As the book's title indicates, cartoons have to make their point succinctly and entertainingly; so should books. Some judicious editing would have clarified and bolstered the author's arguments. (Verso, 29 West 35th Street, New York NY 10001-2291.)

By contrast, it's hard to imagine a more straightforward and entertaining book than **The Fifty Greatest Cartoons**, edited by Jerry Beck (Turner Publishing; 192 pages, hardcover; \$29.95). Our two criticisms are: 1) It would have been nice to know a little more about some of the 1,000 animation professionals and cartoon historians who chose the films and how they were surveyed; 2) it would've been more dramatic to list the films in reverse order, rather than give away the suspense by listing the tip-top cartoon at the outset. (It's Chuck Jones' Wagnerian Bugs-and-Elmer epic, *What's Opera Doc?*, from 1957.)

As one would expect, virtually all of the cartoons were made prior to 1960—most of them in the '40s, although there's a surprisingly high number from the mid-'50s, when big-studio animation was in decline (at least from a financial standpoint). Warner Bros. is the clear winner of the studios with 18 entries; the balance is pretty evenly divided amongst Disney (nine), MGM (seven), Fleischer (five), UPA (four) and independents (seven). It's pretty hard to argue with any of the entries, although I assume it's for historical rather than entertainment reasons that the primitive *Gertie the Dinosaur* placed sixth, and while I love Chuck Jones cartoons, I've never cared much for *One Froggy Evening*.

Along with Beck's erudite descriptions and assessments of the cartoons, there are interesting sidebar articles by a number of animation buffs such as Joe Adamson, Charles Solomon and Leslie Cabarga. The 300-plus illustrations (frame blow-ups, cels, posters and some newly-created artwork) are beautifully crisp and (mostly) colorful.

If vintage artwork is *all* you want, check out **Tex Avery: Les Dessins**, a French book edited by Patrick Brion and available from *Past Times* (see page 28). It's a collection of original animation pencil drawings from 29 of Avery's MGM cartoons. Some are rough, others more polished—and the instructions to the background artist are fun, too ("Johnny: This cat lands on steps and stays there.").

Music

Annette Hanshaw: A Reluctant Artist

She always hated her own voice, maintained that she'd only become a singer to support her siblings, and retired at age 28, having happily married the man who had discovered her. But during her brief career, Annette Hanshaw recorded some truly enchanting performances.

Several of her best early records have recently been reissued on a CD available as an import from England, **Annette Hanshaw: The Twenties Sweetheart** (Jasmine JASCD 2542). The collection starts with her very first release, "Black Bottom," from September 1926. It's almost beyond belief that a vocalist with such poise and sophistication could be making her debut, a month shy of her 16th birthday. Her records have a sort of built-in time warp; the rather feeble recording quality of the Pathé releases and the sometimes corny songs she had to sing place these discs firmly in the 1920s, but Annette's sure sense of rhythm and gift for understatement make her sound utterly modern.

Not all of her records were gems—she often did Hawaiian numbers with less-than-hot accompaniments, and other discs showcased her imitation of Boop-a-dooper Helen Kane. Fortunately, these 21 sides are better than average, with Annette working her magic on some fine if forgotten songs ("Wistful and Blue," "We Love It") and a couple of standards ("Thinking of You," "The Song is Ended"). Her delicate voice hints at her family's Virginia origins (although Annette was born in and remained a lifelong resident of New York City). She is accompanied here by fine musicians including cornetist Red Nichols, and violin-guitar duo Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang. The sparkling digital transfers have bolstered the rather thin audio quality of the original Pathé 78s.

If this CD piques your interest, you should also investigate *The Girl Next Door* (Take Two TT408CD), taken from later and sonically superior Columbia 78s. Yet to be released are the for-radio-only transcriptions Annette made from 1934 to '38; we'd love to hear how she adapted to the Swing era. (Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato, CA 94948.)

Four-disc set of her prime early tracks

Ella Fitzgerald: From Band Singer to Star

GRP Records recently combined two double-CD packages chronicling Ella Fitzgerald's first recordings into one nifty box set. **Ella Fitzgerald: The Early Years Part 1 & Part 2** (GRD-4-654; \$56.98) has 84 of her finest vintage waxings, from her very first recording—"I'll Chase the Blues Away," made with Chick Webb's band on June 12, 1935—to a fine interpretation of "Can't Help Lovin' Dat Man," made on July 31, 1941. As we can hear, in just over six years Ella not only found her own style as a vocalist, she transformed the style of the Webb band and ultimately became its new leader in 1939.

Just as Harry James knew instinctively that he'd discovered something special in Frank Sinatra and began to tailor arrangements for him, drummer Chick Webb realized very soon that this 17-year old girl had a distinctive new sound, despite her lack of professional experience. (When she auditioned for Webb, she'd done two amateur contests, and had won a week-long paid engagement at the Harlem Opera House.) Ella had modeled herself after Connie Boswell, and although there were similarities in their phrasing, Ella's vocal quality was entirely different. Connie had a husky, slightly nasal contralto; Ella's voice was much lighter and sweeter, with just a little gravel to it.

If Webb didn't exactly mold Ella's raw talent, he at least provided an environment in which she could discover her own style. The diminutive percussionist (who was hunchbacked, owing to a childhood spine injury) led a swinging band that favored flashy arrangements and tightly precisioned playing, although there was room for tasty solos by trumpeters Bobby Stark and Taft Jordan, or saxman Teddy McRae.

Webb's own playing is surprisingly discreet; instead of being a powerhouse showman like Gene Krupa, Chick is a versatile percussionist whose drumming supports the band instead of dominating it. This was a wise musical choice (and augured well for a band singer), but it also meant that in live performances the Webb band didn't have a dazzling frontman. No doubt, Webb saw that Ella had the potential to add the personality that the band needed.

She's a little unsure of herself in the first few tracks, and the band's busy arrangements don't help her much; the "killer-diller" tempos are exciting, and no doubt made great accompaniment for dancing, but Ella has to work so hard at just getting the words out in time that she can't effect an individual interpretation. Before long, the band has calmed down a bit, and Ella has definitely become the star attraction; she not only does the standard one-chorus-in-the-middle, she often comes back for the wrap-up. No one seems to have been quite sure what kind of material to give her, however, and after the smash hit "A-Tisket, A-Tasket" she was saddled with a number of cutesy novelties that gave her a little-girl image. (Doing a swing version of the aforementioned nursery rhyme was, however, Ella's own idea, realized by band orchestrator Al Feldman—later known as bandleader Van Alexander.)

Fortunately, the present CD collection only includes the better Webb-Fitzgerald discs. Among the highlights are "My Last Affair," "Mr. Paganini" (which features Ella's first recorded venture into scat-singing), and "Organ Grinder's Swing." Proof that Webb encouraged Ella's becoming well known in her own right is provided by the small-group sides attributed to "Ella Fitzgerald and her Savoy Eight," with Webb and seven of his sidemen backing the soon-to-be-star vocalist.

Maybe Webb was grooming Ella because he knew his own time wasn't long. He died of tuberculosis of the spine at 32 in June 1939. Rather than go out on her own as a soloist, Ella kept the band together for another two years. The second pair of CDs shows Ella's continued growth as a vocalist; the band is still great (with new drummer Bill Beason), but its role now is solely to support the singer. There are still occasional silly novelties ("The Muffin Man," "Keep Cool, Fool"); however, Ella's mature style crystallizes on numbers like "Stairway to the Stars" and "I Got it Bad (and That Ain't Good)."

Ella made her debut as a solo artist in October 1941, the financial and personal pressures of leading a band being too great and ultimately unnecessary. But these four CDs—accompanied by two excellent booklets with liner notes by Will Friedwald and Geoffrey Mark Fidelman—collect the best of her work during Ella's big-band years. The sound quality is spectacular; these transfers (by Steve Lasker, with further restoration by Erick Labson) are among the very best we've heard on material of this vintage.

Remembering Songwriter Harry Tobias

By Galen Wilkes

Harry Tobias must have been the last of the name songwriters of Tin Pan Alley stretching back to the ragtime era when he passed away on December 15, 1994 at the age of 99. Friends and family were confident he would reach 100 as his health was sustaining, but a month prior to his death he broke his hip, was moved to a home in St. Louis to be near family, then died of natural causes. He was buried at Mt. Sinai Cemetery in Burbank, California. A modest gathering attended the services, but aside from one ASCAP rep and musician, I was unaware of any other musicians or entertainers there, something I found disappointing considering the heavyweight company he kept over the years.

There were many successes penned by Harry - "Sweet and Lovely," "No Regrets," "Miss You," "It's a Lonesome Old Town," "Sail Along Silv'ry Moon" — recorded or sung by top singers which included Rudy Vallee, Bing Crosby, Paul Whiteman, Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como, The Andrews Sisters, Phoebe Snow. Virtually every big time singer or bandleader has featured something by Harry; the list would more than fill this page. His friends included many of these singers, and other celebrities such as George Burns and Milton Berle.

Some of Harry's songs are now legendary jazz standards, especially the perennial "Sweet and Lovely." I hear it several times a week by different artists on Los Angeles' jazz station. Although Harry wrote these hits in the Twenties and later, he began his career during the ragtime era. I will focus on that period for this brief sketch, and highlight other pertinent details.

Harry, the oldest of five brothers, was born on September 11, 1895 in New York City to Russian immigrants Minnie and Max Tobias, who were tailors on New York's East Side. Around the turn of the century, Max moved to Worcester, Massachusetts to earn more money to support his growing family. The last two boys were born there. Two of the brothers, Charlie and Henry (the second and fourth-born), also became successful songwriters. When Henry expressed his interest in following Harry and Charlie in the business, his parents told him that "two bums in the family were enough!" Some of the brothers' hits included "Don't Sit Under the Apple Tree," "The Old Lamplighter" and "Miss You." Eventually, nine family members were in the music business which led to the nickname The Royal Family of Tin Pan Alley. This is surely a record.

Harry was raised in Worcester and began his songwriting career there. He loved the music of the day and, inspired by Irving Berlin's "Alexander's Ragtime Band," started composing his own popular and ragtime songs. His hobbies were baseball and poetry and his idols were Ty Cobb, Eddie Cantor (a cousin by marriage) and Irving Berlin. Harry wrote his first song at age 16 on the back of a packing box; it was called "National Sports." It was published in 1911 by Haviland in New York, and he had to buy 200 copies. He plugged them by going door to door in Worcester, selling copies for ten cents each, with Charlie singing the lyrics to prospective customers. Harry also published some songs himself, and used his grandparents' New York City address to look impressive.

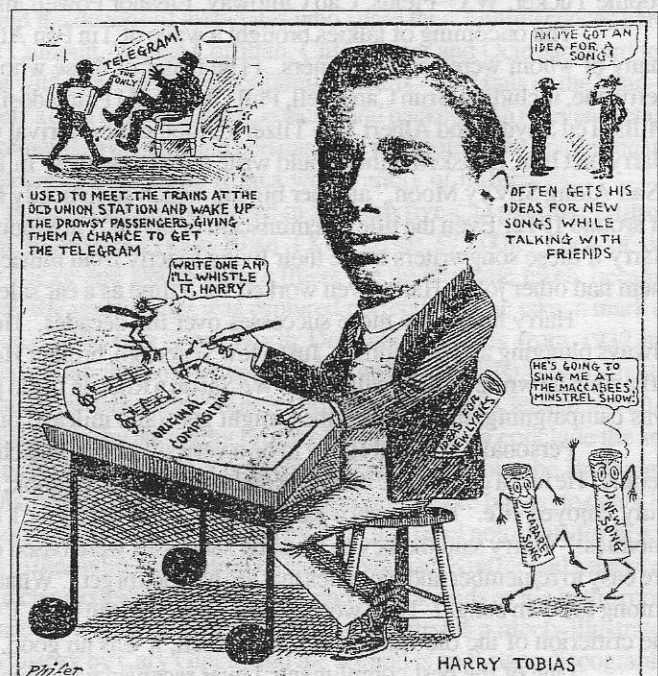
The amazing thing was that Harry didn't read music, didn't write music, didn't even play an instrument. How did he "write" songs? In the early days, he would take a train to Boston and hum or whistle his tunes to an arranger who would take them

down for him. Irving Berlin at least had the advantage of playing piano, if only in one key. But lack of knowledge didn't stop Harry. A local paper (probably the Worcester Telegram), impressed with the young composer's ability, did a cartoon feature on Harry, reproduced here. (Interestingly, it is signed by "Phifer" — perhaps the well-known sheet music illustrator Pfeiffer, who used different spellings of his name. Pfeiffer later designed some of Harry's covers, and virtually everyone else's.) Determination is what drove Harry and he kept this important quality throughout his career. He called it being tactfully aggressive.

Sometime in the Teens, Harry saw Percy Wenrich (composer of "On Moonlight Bay") and Dolly Connolly performing in vaudeville at Poli's Theater in Worcester. This may have been when they first met; they became great friends in later years and Harry always spoke highly of Percy, referring to him as his dearest friend. "He was a nice, beautiful, quiet guy." More on Percy later.

In 1916, Harry got his first break: recordings of two of his songs. He had moved to New York to be near Tin Pan Alley and collaborated with Will Dillon on some songs. (Dillon—with Harry Von Tilzer, the king of the "Alley"—had penned "I Want a Girl (Just Like the Girl That Married Dear Old Dad).") Harry always made it a point to seek out other writers who were already successful. He clearly remembered his first songs being recorded for Victor; he was proud of the accomplishment and the prestigious label. "They were done on Victor Records and done *nicely* on Victor Records," he would say, always making sure to repeat "Victor Records," which I found comical. The recordings were "That Girl of Mine" by the Sterling Trio and "Take Me to My Alabam'" by the Peerless Quartet. The latter was also recorded for Columbia by Harry's cousin, the prolific recording vocalist Irving

Continued on Page 12



The boy who composes words & music without the knowledge of a musical instrument.

Songwriter Harry Tobias

Continued From Page 11

Kaufman. Both tunes are infectious pieces; "Alabam'" rivals any of the other rousing syncopated one-steps of the period such as "Alabama Jubilee" or "Waiting For the Robert E. Lee," and of course is excellent for dancing.

With the coming of the Great War in 1917, Harry enlisted in the army. He was assigned to special services at Camp Johnston in Jacksonville, Florida, and entertained 40,000 troops with Abe Olman (writer of "Red Onion Rag," "Oh, Johnny," and "Down Among the Sheltering Palms"). Abe played piano and Harry shouted the lyrics through a megaphone. He was a hoarse sergeant when he was discharged in 1920. He returned to Tin Pan Alley to continue writing.

Harry finally got his first big hit in 1929 with "Miss You," which he wrote with brothers Charlie and Henry. Rudy Vallee crooned it, launching the first of many recorded successes. That same year, Harry also wrote "Sweet and Lovely" with Charles N. Daniels, who used the pseudonym of Jules Lemare. (Daniels had much stature in the music world; he arranged Scott Joplin's "Original Rags," later composed hits such as "Hiawatha" and "Chloe," and ran several publishing companies.) When "Sweet and Lovely" was submitted to publisher Jack Robbins, he wanted the composers to change the second half; he thought no one would remember it with all of the chord changes. Daniels refused to change one note and stormed out of Robbins' office. Robbins finally gave in. The chord sequence is elusive, but this is probably what made it so popular with jazz artists over the years.

A Great Dance Tune

"Gotta Big Date With a Little Girl"

By Harry, Charles and Henry Tobias

CHORUS

The musical score is for the chorus of the song "Gotta Big Date With a Little Girl". It is written in 2/4 time and features a melody on a treble clef staff with a piano accompaniment on a bass clef staff. The lyrics are: "Got-ta big date with a lit-tle girl, Gon-na feel great when I meet that girl,". The melody is catchy and danceable, typical of the era.

Flushed with the success of "Miss You," in 1929 Harry decided to move to Hollywood to try his luck writing songs for the new talkie musicals. When he arrived, he found that most of the songwriters were returning to New York, thanks to the market crash and the onset of the Depression. Harry stuck it out; he stayed in California and wrote over fifty songs for movies. (He wrote ten numbers for RKO's *Sensations of 1945*, which starred Sophie Tucker, W.C. Fields, Cab Calloway, Eleanor Powell and other greats.)

The oncoming of talkies brought a wave of Tin Pan Alley writers to Hollywood, many of whom were early ragtimers. (The roster of those who lived in Los Angeles is a hefty one, including Brun Campbell, Phil Ohman, Al Piantadosi, Jelly Roll Morton, Kerry Mills, Ted Snyder and Albert Von Tilzer.) Another new arrival was Percy Wenrich; when Harry met him, he asked if they could write a song together. In 1937, they collaborated on "Sail Along Silv'ry Moon," another big hit, which stylistically is similar to Percy's songs of around 1912. Even the title is reminiscent of his hit "On Moonlight Bay." When I asked Harry if these songwriters made their living strictly from music sales, he said no, most of them had other jobs. Harry even worked for a time as a car salesman, selling Chevrolets.

Harry had many more successes over the decades. He was a persistant person, always plugging and promoting. Just a few years ago, brother Henry was helping him dust off a song he wrote in 1916 called "As We Sat on a Rock in Little Rock." When Bill Clinton was campaigning, they figured they might get some mileage out of it.

Personally, I found Harry to be a very sweet guy and charming around a group of people. He had a good sense of humor and an optimistic outlook; he rarely complained, and truly enjoyed life. Henry once said, "Harry's the only guy I know who even likes his enemies!" Harry said the key to his song successes were based on his motto: "Words that are easy to remember and melodies that are hard to forget." What a great line. His favorites among his own songs? They were the ones that sold the best. I've always found this to be the critierion of the old-timers. If it didn't sell, it was no good.

One of the best compliments I ever received was from Harry. I was playing for him on his "hundred dollar upright" and he was tapping his foot to the beat, engrossed in the music. When I finished, he said, "You play real good, you've got good rhythm. You ought to plug songs down at the five and ten!"

But the Melodies Linger On

They don't write 'em like that any more, but the story of how they wrote 'em is engagingly told by William G. Hyland in **The Song is Ended** (Oxford University Press; 336 pages, hardcover; \$25.00). Hyland recounts the key achievements of the five most prominent composers of American popular music: Irving Berlin, Jerome Kern, George Gershwin, Richard Rodgers and Cole Porter. The author traces the development and growth of the musical theatre artistically rather than chronologically (it's for that reason that 1946's *Annie Get Your Gun*, a great but not groundbreaking show, is discussed before 1943's *Oklahoma!*, which profoundly influenced musicals of the '50s and beyond).

Hyland begins with brief accounts of how Victor Herbert and George M. Cohan laid the groundwork at the turn of the century for the musicals of the '20s and beyond. Jerome Kern (with lyricist P.G. Wodehouse and librettist Guy Bolton) created the classic structure for musical comedies in a series of five shows written from 1915 to 1918. The shows were designed for a small theater, the Princess; as a result, they were more intimate, and shook off the grandiose trappings of European operetta that had clung to American theater.

In between the landmark productions—Kern's *Show Boat*, Gershwin's *Porgy and Bess*, Berlin's score for the film *Top Hat*—Hyland offers perceptive evaluations of each composer's gifts. The critique of Gershwin is particularly illuminating, describing his natural facility for intermingling jazz, blues and classical elements into popular-song melodies (and also detailing how his training in "stepwise" harmony resulted in songs popular with jazz musicians "who are also obsessed with unusual changes in harmony that demand interesting improvisations"). Cole Porter's melodies are noted for their unusual shifting between major and minor keys—a trait which might also explain Porter's two distinct styles of song: the witty, sprightly uptempo numbers, and the "almost maudlin songs that contained the rankest of sentiment."

This book succeeds as biography, history and criticism. Hyland packs a vast amount of material into a brisk and entertaining narrative which amuses as it instructs. (Oxford, 2001 Evans Road, Cary NC 27513; (800) 451-7556.)

Not All Aces: Spade Cooley

Spade Cooley is one of those entertainers whose stormy life has overshadowed his art. When he's mentioned in print these days, it's always with a reference (like this one) to his 1961 conviction and subsequent imprisonment for murdering his second wife, Ella Mae. While his misdeeds should not be excused, the fact remains that Cooley led a terrific western swing band from the early '40s through the end of the decade. Los Angeles natives will remember his hugely popular television show on KTLA, *The Hoffman Hayride*, and a few brave souls saw his best-forgotten cowboy movies, but millions around the country bought his records.

The best sides were made for Okeh and Columbia from 1944 through '46, and 20 of them have been collected on **Spadella!: The Essential Spade Cooley** (Columbia/Legacy CK 57392). As Al Quaglieri notes in his colorful essay, Spade's initial huge success in movies, records and television was always being superseded by that of better-established personalities; he "spent a lifetime playing catch-up with the likes of Roy Rogers, Bob Wills and Lawrence Welk." Although for a time he billed himself as "The King of Western Swing," Cooley is still very much in Bob Wills' shadow. If Wills' music was a combination of country and Basie-style big-band swing, Cooley's band combined country elements with a pop orchestral sound similar to that of Freddy Martin's or Lawrence Welk's. Like Wills, Cooley led a hot fiddle section, but he differed in using no brass or reed instruments. He had hot steel guitarists in Earl Murphey and Noel Boggs and boasted a fine vocalist in Tex Williams, but the fire of the music was cooled somewhat by the addition of two accordions and a harp.

The music still has much to recommend it. "Oklahoma Stomp" and the title track showcase the band's power on hot, swinging instrumentals, while "Shame on You" and its sequels "You'll Rue the Day" and "Hide Your Face" present the more easygoing swing that was the band's mainstay. The sound is excellent, a vast improvement on the muddy-sounding 1982 LP which has until now been the only available source of these tracks. Cooley deserves to be remembered for the music that brought him fame, not just for the tragedy that brought him notoriety.

Milton Brown: Western Swing's True Father

Bob Wills may be remembered as the King of Western Swing, but the man who really crystallized the style was Milton Brown, a genial, ever-smiling young man whose warm, slightly husky singing voice adapted equally well to uptempo numbers and ballads. Based in Fort Worth, Texas, Brown put together a band, the Musical Brownies, whose influence is still widespread in country music; ironically, while the Brownies had the instrumentation of a "hillbilly band" (fiddles, banjo, guitars, bass and piano) and were often described as such, they actually played jazz with a southwestern flavor.

Brown was gifted with a voice that was distinctive and versatile; he had a style that copied no one (unusual in a time when Jimmie Rodgers' influence was universal) but which reflected an admiration for Ted Lewis, Cab Calloway, Fred Astaire and Bing Crosby. The whole band shared Brown's catholic tastes in music, with a special fondness for jazz. Violinist Cecil Brower was a Joe Venuti disciple; pianist Fred Calhoun was particularly fond of Earl Hines, and steel guitarist Bob Dunn idolized Jack Teagarden. This gave a jazz flavor even to traditional tunes such as "The Eyes of Texas," "In El Rancho Grande" and "Under the Double Eagle."



Brown assembled his band in September 1932, after having spent two years as part of the original Light Crust Doughboys along with Bob Wills. The group became a sensation in Fort Worth through daily broadcasts on KTAT and WBAP, drawing large and devoted crowds to Saturday night dances at the Crystal Springs Dancing Pavilion (a rather grandiose name given to a wooden dance hall at a recreation spot four miles west of downtown). The group made 102 recordings in seven sessions for Victor and Decca; their popularity was still burgeoning when Milton died on April 18, 1936 as the result of a car accident. He was only 32 years old.

Brown has undeservedly languished in obscurity thanks to the brevity of his career, the concentration of his popularity in Texas, and the rise of other Western Swing bandleaders, but his life and work are vividly documented by Cary Ginell in his remarkable book **Milton Brown and the Founding of Western Swing** (University of Illinois Press; 360 pages, hardcover; \$29.95). The story of Brown's reign is recounted here in all of its gritty, colorful glory, thanks in no small part to the retentive memories of Milton's youngest brother Roy Lee Brown and the dozens of associates who share their reminiscences here. Surviving Brownies Fred Calhoun, Wanna Coffman, Cliff Bruner and Ocie Stockard tell the bulk of the story, along with Roy Lee, but other family friends—and fans of the band—complete the picture. Ginell's own writing is clear, concise and packed with relevant detail. He places Brown's achievements in context and persuasively illustrates how revolutionary the band was, forging a powerful new music from a wide variety of influences.

This fascinating mixture can now be heard in a superb five-CD package, **Milton Brown and the Musical Brownies** (Texas Rose TXRCD1-5; \$75.00). Each of the Brownies' recordings for Victor and Decca is here (there are no alternate takes, because every one of the Brownies' 102 issued sides was captured perfectly in one take, a mark of the band's professionalism). The two "Fort Worth Doughboys" sides from 1932 are included (the only recorded collaborations between Brown and Bob Wills), and so are the fourteen sides made by the Brownies under younger brother Derwood's leadership after Milton's death. Two 1980s tracks by surviving brother Roy Lee Brown conclude the set.

The sound quality is outstanding—a pretty remarkable feat since the Brownies' records were not widely distributed outside of Texas, most copies were played to death by devoted fans, and the majority of them were pressed by Decca, a label notorious for hissy-sounding shellac. Thanks to the audio-restoration talents of Michael Kieffer and a network of collectors who provided clean copies of the 78s, the band truly sounds as it's in the room with you. The five CDs are accompanied by two booklets; the first is a nicely illustrated 40-page appreciation and history by Cary Ginell, and the second is an 8-page discography with full session information. (The book is available for \$32.95 postpaid from University of Illinois Press, P.O. Box 4856, Hampden Post Office, Baltimore MD 21211; (800) 545-4703. CDs available from Texas Rose/OJL, P.O. Box 85, Santa Monica, CA 90406.)

A Brief Life, A Lasting Talent: Singer Al Bowlly

By John T. Aldrich III and Randy Skretvedt

The Dance Band Era—that period of popular orchestral music which pre-dated the Swing Era—lasted much longer in Great Britain than it did in the U.S. Up until about 1943, one finds British dance bands recording, broadcasting and performing live for eager and appreciative audiences. While Big Band Swing music dominated the scene in the States from 1935 through World War II, the more gently rhythmic, witty and melodic dance music remained very popular in England, even after the arrival of soldiers from across the pond in the build-up for D-Day.

Part of the charm of the dance bands were the frequently sentimental “vocal refrains” performed by a handful of nearly interchangeable singers whose efforts were omnipresent on recordings of the time. One of these vocalists stood out, however. He became the first legitimate “pop” star in England, and remains extremely popular and fondly remembered to this day. His name was Al Bowlly.

It has been said that Bowlly was England’s version of Bing Crosby. While it is true that his popularity in the UK certainly was, for a time, comparable to Crosby’s, stylistically he owes more to Gene Austin. But in fact, Bowlly created his own style, and was comfortable in a variety of settings and musical modes. Whether he’s singing an uptempo song or a sentimental ballad, there’s no mistaking Bowlly’s unique voice and phrasing. His voice is midway between a tenor and a baritone, with a slightly husky, grainy texture. Even on the most sentimental numbers, there always seems to be a smile in his voice (a surprise, since Bowlly was notoriously sentimental and was known to shed tears upon first reading the lyrics of sad songs). He doesn’t go in for the jackhammer vibrato, the rolled r’s or the vaudeville belting of other early ‘30s singers. His singing is surprisingly modern and accessible, and *always* absolutely sincere.

Bowlly was born in what today is called Mozambique, the fourth child of a Greek father and a Lebanese mother. He spent his childhood in Johannesburg, and by his early twenties he was well known as a local singer and guitar player. Leaving South Africa in 1923 to pursue a musical career, Bowlly eventually found early success in jazz-crazy Germany, where he made his first records.

In 1927, Bowlly was invited to join Fred Elizalde’s band at the ritzy Savoy Hotel in London. Performing with such American musicians as hot trumpeter Chelsea Quealey and innovative bass sax player Adrian Rollini, Bowlly toured Europe and played the London Palladium. Despite this early success, Elizalde’s band eventually broke up in a conflict over musical styles. Apparently, some folks in Britain didn’t like their dance music “jazzed”.

Bowlly continued to record through 1930, with Hawaiian guitarist Len Fillis and then for HMV, where he first met recording director Ray Noble. Eventually landing as a singer-guitarist with Roy Fox (“The Whispering Cornetist”), Al’s popularity took a big jump when Fox became the resident bandleader at the new Monseigneur Hotel, which quickly became *the* West End nightspot. Bowlly stayed on at the Monseigneur after Lew Stone’s band took over in 1932, and he recorded as a freelance singer with a number of dance bands, as well as making a daunting number of solo

recordings. Soon he could be heard on literally hundreds of records, issued under his own name and several pseudonyms.

Among his very best records are the 212 sides made in London for HMV with Ray Noble’s New Mayfair Orchestra (which, aside from one live appearance in Holland, was strictly a recording unit). Starting in November 1930, Al became more and more frequently used by Noble; by January 1932 he seemed to be at all of Noble’s one-a-month sessions. Al sandwiched these recordings between other dates with Roy Fox, Lew Stone, Harry Hudson, Arthur Lally and other bandleaders, but the remarkable creativity of Noble’s arrangements, and the high quality of the songs, gave Al a musical environment like no other. (Some of the best songs, such as “Goodnight Sweetheart” and “The Very Thought of You,” were written by Noble himself, a fine if infrequent composer.)

In September 1934, Noble was invited to front the band at the Rainbow Room in New York’s Rockefeller Center; many of the New Mayfair records had been issued by American Victor, and they had achieved quite a bit of popularity. Noble took Bowlly and drummer Bill Harty with him, but unions prohibited him from bringing other English musicians. The new Noble band was put together by Glenn Miller, and featured top sidemen such as trumpeter Charlie Spivak, pianist Claude Thornhill and saxophonist Bud Freeman. Unfortunately, Miller’s arrangements never had the distinctive sparkle of Noble’s. The leader’s own charts were fine, but compromised by the recording procedures in the New York studios which never duplicated the

distinctive mellow, mid-range sound of Noble’s British band. (In England, the band clustered around one carbon mike, which emphasized the mid-range.)

Bowlly returned to England in 1937, but found that his moment was over; new vocalists such as Denny Dennis were gaining favor. Al remained active, but the recording dates were fewer and the live engagements less prestigious. By 1940, he was appearing as a teammate to Jimmy Messene, the duo billing themselves as “The Anglo-Greek Ambassadors of Song.” On April 2, 1941, the pair made two recordings, one being an Irving Berlin anti-Hitler song entitled “When That Man is Dead and Gone.” Ironically, before the disc was issued, Al himself was dead, having been killed in an air raid on April 17.

Al Bowlly waxed an estimated 1100 sides in a recording career spanning almost 14 years. Fortunately for collectors, in England he is easily the most reissued artist of his era, both on LPs and CDs. More than half of his total output has been made available for a new generation of Bowlly fans, of whom there are many.

“I can’t think of a single English singer who has come along since who has the style, the voice, and the panache that Bowlly had,” writes Mel Tormé. “Bowlly was a handsome man with a soulful countenance...and a sympathetic mien that was attractive in the extreme. A great singer; an untimely loss.”

What follows is a brief survey of some of the Al Bowlly recordings that are available on CD. All are imports from England, but are generally available from better retail outlets.



AL BOWLLY: JUST A BOWL OF CHERRIES

The Complete Flexi-Discs (Flapper PAST CD 7003)

A must-have. Wonderful, well-transferred material from 1931-33. Taken from Flexi-discs, a nonbreakable inexpensive record material that was popular during the depths of the Depression. With Roy Fox, Jay Wilbur, Ray Noble and others. All 26 tracks are great, but a highlight is "You Ought to See Sally on Sunday."

A TRIBUTE TO LEW STONE, THE LEGENDARY MONSEIGNEUR BAND, LONDON 1932-34

(Claves CD 50-9507/9)

A 1995 release, this 3-CD set is another essential item for any Bowly collector. A lovingly assembled package with an impressive booklet, it includes 70 tracks, many never before reissued. Al sings on 41 of them (memorably in a funny duet on "Let's Put Out the Lights and Go to Sleep," and in Yiddish on "A Brivelle der Mama"), and plays acoustic rhythm guitar throughout.

LEW STONE AND HIS BAND FEATURING AL BOWLLY: RIGHT FROM THE HEART (Old Bean DOLD 3)

Eighteen tracks from October 1932 through August 1934, duplicating only a couple of tracks from the Claves set. The same high musical standard is maintained with "Straight From the Shoulder" and other tracks, but the sound quality is slightly muffled.

AL BOWLLY: GOODNIGHT SWEETHEART

(Saville CDSVL 150)

Twenty tracks from 1931, most of them with Roy Fox's band, and a handful with lesser groups such as Howard Godfrey's Waldorfians. All are charmers, whether standards ("Time on My Hands," "Just One More Chance") or obscure numbers ("Dance Hall Doll").

AL BOWLLY: A MILLION DREAMS (Saville CDSVL 163)

A fine collection of Bowly solo recordings from 1932 and 1933, with small groups or just a piano as accompaniment. Mostly ballads, this album includes "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You" and a powerful version of "Night and Day."

AL BOWLLY: THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU

(Empress RAJCD 837)

A lack of detailed track information and somewhat substandard audio on a few of the 22 tracks mar this release, but it's still well worth having for otherwise unavailable gems such as the novelty "Foolish Facts," and Al's own composition "In London on a Night Like This." Lots of rarities here.

AL BOWLLY: THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU

(EMI CDP 7 943412)

This 1990 entry in "The Cedar Series" may be out of print; it's well worth searching for, because all 24 tracks have spectacular sound quality. The tunes provide a fine survey of Al's 1931-40 output; the otherwise unavailable tracks include "South of the Border," "Over the Rainbow," "When You Wish Upon a Star" and two orchestral settings to Shakespeare sonnets!

AL BOWLLY: SWEET SOMEONE (Segue CDMOIR 307)

Twenty tracks, some of them 1932-34 collaborations with Roy Fox or Lew Stone, more of them from Noble's 1935 American band, and a few '38-'39 sides with Reginald Williams' Futurists and with Stone. These allow us to hear Al in more of a Swing-era setting. A particular rarity is "If I Had a Million Dollars," made with Victor

Young's orchestra in New York in 1934. Audio quality is slightly muffled.

AL BOWLLY: PROUD OF YOU

(ASV/Living Era CDAJA 5064)

Mostly from 1938, these twenty sides feature Al with a variety of accompaniments. Some sides have pipe-organ or piano backing, several include Geraldo and his sweet-style orchestra, and two highlight "Al Bowly's Crooner's Choir," a vocal group. Tunes include "Marie," "Two Sleepy People," "Bei Mir Bist Du Schoen." Fair-to-good sound quality.

AL BOWLLY WITH VARIOUS ORCHESTRAS (SMS 39)

Only twelve tracks on this budget release, but some of them are, natch, unavailable elsewhere—such as two surprisingly fun tracks with Mantovani ("Something to Sing About" and "In My Little Red Book") and readings of "You Ought to Be in Pictures" and "Lover Come Back to Me." Nice, bright sound on this, better than several more expensive CDs.

RAY NOBLE: THE VERY THOUGHT OF YOU

(ASV/Living Era CDAJA 5115)

Al provides the vocal for 20 out of 25 tracks, most of them classic HMV sides and a few from the New York period. Probably the best available example of Noble and Bowly at their peak, although the sound quality (and volume) varies considerably from track to track and the mastering never quite captures the full, rich sound of the original 78s.

AL BOWLLY WITH RAY NOBLE 1931-1936 (ABC 836-170)

Sixteen tracks, all gems. This would be our all-time favorite Bowly CD if producer Robert Parker hadn't rechanneled these recordings into artificial stereo. Otherwise, the transfers are great, fully capturing that mellow, inimitable sound; push the "mono" button on your receiver and enjoy "Brighter Than the Sun," "My Hat's on the Side of My Head," "Makin' Wickey-Wackey Down in Waikiki" and other treasures.

Artificial stereo is also the bane of the six-volume Bowly-Noble LP series released in the early '70s by US reissue label Monmouth-Evergreen, but until this material is properly mastered on CD you may want to seek these out in used-record stores. A small U.S. label, Second Chance, brought out one LP with good mono transfers, *My Canary Has Circles Under His Eyes*, focusing on the Noble-Bowly novelty songs. Sometime in the '70s, World Records-EMI in England released a 13-LP box set of Noble-Bowly waxings; if the sound quality is up to the standards of this label, it should be superb. Readers are invited to supply any further information about this release—and any spare copies.

Other LPs of note: The completist will want to check out *Berlin and London 1927-30* and *The Formative Years*, issued in 1978 on AB Records; these tracks are not otherwise reissued—but the transfers are not good. England's Halcyon label released *The Echo of a Song* featuring Bowly with Lew Stone (HAL 12; some alternate takes included, good audio quality); *Geraldo and His Orchestra Featuring Al Bowly* (HAL 14), and a collection of 1933 Noble-Bowllys, *My Song Goes Round the World* (HAL 18). EMI-Retrospect also issued a few volumes of Bowly material in early '80s LPs: *Something to Sing About* (SH 501), *Goodnight Sweetheart* (SH 502), and *On the Sentimental Side* (SH 516).

The Underappreciated Andy Razaf

Quick—name the writer of the following hit songs: “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” “Honkeysuckle Rose,” and “Keepin’ Out of Mischief Now.” Fats Waller, you say? Well, you’re half right. All of these songs boast lyrics written by Andy Razaf, who also wrote the words for “Stompin’ at the Savoy,” “Memories of You,” “S’posin’,” “Christopher Columbus” and “A Porter’s Love Song (to a Chambermaid),” among other hits. Despite the dozens of songs which Razaf wrote, he was—and remains—unknown to the general public. The melodies to most of his biggest hits were written by performers (Waller, Eubie Blake, Benny Goodman) who became publicly identified with these songs. And Razaf seems to have suffered more than the usual share of unscrupulous treatment from music publishers.

Razaf’s roller-coaster ride through the world of popular songwriting is detailed in **Black and Blue: The Life and Lyrics of Andy Razaf** by Barry Singer (Schirmer Books; 444 pages, paperback; \$16.00). He was born Andreamentania Paul Razafkeriefo in 1895, a grandnephew of the Queen of Madagascar. Razaf—he shortened his name at the suggestion of a music publisher—spent a few unsuccessful years in Harlem trying to establish himself as the first black lyricist. In 1920 he quit to pursue a career as a baseball pitcher in a Cleveland semipro league, but the tremendous “crossover” hit scored by black singer Mamie Smith’s record of “Crazy Blues” in 1921 lured him back to New York and songwriting. Razaf wrote for Harlem floor shows at Connie’s Inn, and achieved success on Broadway with *Connie’s Hot Chocolates* and *Blackbirds of 1930*.

Singer argues that despite the popularity of Razaf’s songs with the white public, the music industry saw him strictly as a black lyricist and disposed of him after the vogue for black revues had passed; he also notes that Razaf orchestrated his own demise by not updating his style, and by being an outspoken critic of many in the music business. The few years at the top were mighty colorful, however, and Singer’s book overflows with vivid anecdotes about the New York show business community of the era. Singer affectingly chronicles Razaf’s attempts to better the situation for black performers and writers, and his frustration at being effectively locked out of the business in the late ‘30s. Razaf’s breezy and at times biting lyrics are still potent; with luck, this biography will spark further recognition for him.

The True, Tragic Story of Billie Holiday

Back in 1959, Billie Holiday’s authorized autobiography was published. The title alone of *Lady Sings the Blues* (co-written with William Dufty), was in retrospect a tipoff to the way the book embellished and dramatized the facts of her life. With rare exceptions, Miss Holiday virtually never sang blues, but the title made her life story sound more sordid and therefore more marketable.

Many attempts have been made to ferret out the truth of Miss Holiday’s life. One of them was undertaken in the early ‘70s by a young woman named Linda Lipnack Kuehl, who interviewed nearly 150 of the singer’s associates, but died before she could write her planned biography. Donald Clarke, editor of *The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music*, has taken Ms. Kuehl’s transcribed interviews and supplemented them with his own research to produce **Wishing on the Moon: The Life and Times of Billie Holiday** (Penguin Books, 468 pages, paperback; \$13.95).

At times, Clarke’s prose seems limited to introducing the various quotes gleaned from Kuehl’s interviews. Clarke is also forced into guesswork and conjecture at many points, since the interviewees kept certain sensitive topics veiled, and Ms. Kuehl didn’t ask follow-up questions to clarify matters. (Evidently, only printed transcriptions survive of the interviews; none of the tapes were available to Clarke.) That said, potential readers should know that Miss Holiday’s life was full of gritty and lurid incidents (even without the embellishment of a co-author), and many of them are graphically described.

While the book may depress anyone who ever held romantic notions about the “glamorous” jazz world of the ‘30s and ‘40s, it also has many, many invaluable comments about Billie Holiday’s undeniable artistry. There’s also a great deal of eye-opening material about the politics of the music business; a section about producer John Hammond’s tight control over many artists is fascinating, as are Hammond’s own recollections of how little profit record companies were making during the Depression. A valuable, intimate portrait of a great artist and an often baffling human being.

Swing Era Satch

We feared that the folks at GRP Records had given up on completing their CD series of Louis Armstrong’s complete Decca recordings. The first entry, *Rhythm Saved the World* (GRD-602) covering 1935 and part of ‘36, came out in 1991. The second, *Heart Full of Rhythm* (GRD-620), collected all of Louis’ discs from April ‘36 through January of ‘38, and was released in 1993. In ‘94, GRP issued a two-disc set, *Highlights From His Decca Years* (GRD-2-638), covering part of the late ‘30s.

Such a “Highlights” collection is sometimes a sign that the idea of finishing a “complete” series has been abandoned—but our fears were groundless, because GRP has now released Volume Three, **Pocketful of Dreams** (GRD-649). Armstrong collectors will find it essential because it contains five never-released alternate takes. As annotator Doug Ramsey writes, these were “unsuspected treasures that simply turned up, unasked for, when reissue producer Orrin Keepnews requisitioned the early metal parts needed for this compilation.”

Keepnews decided to include only the alternate take of “The Trumpet Player’s Lament” since it was virtually identical to the released version, but the others are sequenced next to the familiar takes to stress the variations in Armstrong’s performances. He was hardly playing “canned solos” at this point, as the many differences in both takes of “I Double Dare You” and “True Confession” prove. The transfers, by Steven Lasker, are excellent, especially since late ‘30s Deccas are prone to a hissy sound.

Some of the songs in this collection seem to be beneath Armstrong, but he always sings and plays with total commitment, adorning sometimes pedestrian melodies with his adventurous improvisations. This “big-band” phase of Louis’ career has been much maligned by critics over the years. They’ve lambasted him for becoming (horrors!) an entertainer rather than remaining the “pure” jazzman of the 1925-28 period. Armstrong always saw himself as an entertainer, and his greatest innovation was that he brought a new musical language not only to other jazzmen but to the general public. Far from pandering to the lowest common denominator, he managed to please audiences and heighten their musical awareness.

VINTAGE SOUND WORKS



NEW! • RUDY VALLEE Here are 22 of the crooner's '20s and '30s classics, newly remastered for superior sound quality. Rudy wraps his velvet tonsils around *I'm Just a Vagabond Lover*; *The Whiffenpoof Song*; *The Stein Song*; *Deep Night*; *Kitty From Kansas City*; *Let's Do It* and a few rarities such as *I'll Be Reminded of You*; *Goodnight My Love* (recorded in England); and *I Love the Moon*. FL 70772.....\$16.98

NEW! • HARRY ROY Harry was a top bandleader in England during the '30s--his band did everything well, with hot jazz and comedy numbers prominent. This 22-track CD features an exciting live 1938 stage show, and studio recordings of hot numbers like *Tiger Rag*; *Canadian Capers* and *Bugle Call Rag*; novelties such as *My Dog Loves Your Dog*; *Who Walks In When I Walk Out* and *I Stole Back the Gal*; and Latin-tinged tunes such as *Campesina*. FL 97412.....\$16.98

NEW! • ISHAM JONES; SWINGING DOWN THE LANE Hot-dance music fans will be very happy with this fine 18-track compilation. Most of the performances are from 1924 and '25, with a few from '23 and '30; about half are acoustics (very nicely remastered with a full, rich sound) and the others are early electrical recordings. The tunes include *It Had to Be You*; *My Best Girl*; *I'll See You in My Dreams*; *That Certain Party* and *It's the Blues*. MA7014.....\$11.98

NEW! • PIANO WIZARDS 15 keyboard giants play 18 tunes, displaying a wide variety of piano-jazz styles. Meade Lux Lewis plays the rollicking *Honky Tonk Train*; Duke Ellington plays *Fast and Furious*; Little Brother Montgomery does the *Farish Street Jive*; Bix Beiderbecke plays his delicate *In a Mist* and Jess Stacy performs two of Bix's other compositions, *Flashes* and *In the Dark*. Art Tatum's virtuoso rendition of *Tiger Rag* will leave you awestruck. MA7015.....\$11.98

LEW STONE: THE LEGENDARY MONSEIGNEUR BAND This was one of the top British dance bands of the early '30s; the 70 selections on 3 CDs, taken from rare discs and broadcasts made in London between 1932 and '34, show why. The band 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. Over 40 Al Bowlly vocals! CLAVES 9507/9 (3-CD SET).....\$44.98

PHIL HARRIS: ECHOES FROM THE COCONUT 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*, 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



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 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 greats join in on *Copenhagen*, *Everybody Loves My Baby*, *Prince of Wails*, *Alabama Bound*, *Sugar Foot Stomp*, *TNT* and other essential jazz recordings. F-38001/2/3 (3-CD SET).....\$44.98

FRED RICH Volume One This volume has 22 tracks of great hot dance music from 1929 and '30; every track has been digitally restored and remastered, and the sound quality is superb. 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; so is the music. MB101.....\$12.98

BEN SELVIN Volume One 21 fine hot dance selections from 1931-32, originally made for Columbia and OKeh by the most prolific of all bandleaders. The toe-tappers include *My Sweet Tooth Says "I Wanna"*, *Happy Days are Here Again*, *Last Dollar*, and *Little Mary Brown*. There are also some gorgeous ballads such as *When We're Alone* and *You Call it Madness*. Among the sidemen are Benny Goodman and trumpet legend Jack Purvis. MB102.....\$12.98

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

NEW! • MILTON BROWN AND THE MUSICAL BROWNIES Here's the band that really started Western Swing! With fiddles, banjo and guitars in their line-up, these fellows played jazz with a southwestern flavor. This 5-CD set has everything the group ever made, almost six hours' worth of great tracks such as *Sweet Jennie Lee*; *Copenhagen*; *Some of These Days*; *Avalon*; and *Right or Wrong*. Also included are the 14 tracks with the band led by younger brother Derwood Brown after Milton's untimely death. The sound quality is magnificent. TXRCD1-5 (5-CD SET).....\$69.98

NEW! • LULLABY OF BROADWAY-THE MUSIC OF HARRY WARREN It's amazing that one guy could write so many great melodies. Here's 24 of 'em. You'll enjoy Al Jolson singing *About a Quarter to Nine*; Al Bowlly crooning *You're My Everything* and *Shadow Waltz*; Frances Langford touring the *Boulevard of Broken Dreams*; British trumpeter-vocalist Nat Gonella performing fun versions of *Jeepers Creepers* and *Nagasaki*; and Jack Hylton's band playing a medley of *42nd Street Selections*. FL 97952.....\$16.98

NEW! • STATESIDE SWEET MUSIC Here's 22 tracks by 13 bands; some of them are dyed-in-the-wool sweet bands (Shep Fields, Art Kassel) others are groups that played sweet music in addition to swing (Artie Shaw, Charlie Barnet, Bunny Berigan). You'll enjoy hearing rarities such as *Strange Enchantment* and *That Sentimental Sandwich* by Ozzie Nelson; *Flamingo* by Freddy Martin; *If the Moon Turns Green* by Art Kassel; Vincent Lopez taking us on *A Little Rendezvous in Honolulu*; and Paul Whiteman's *Afterglow*. Fine music, and hard to find elsewhere. FL 97872.....\$16.98

NEW! • ADRIAN ROLLINI: BOUNCIN' IN RHYTHM Rollini was proficient on the bass sax, vibraphone, piano, drums--and a novelty instrument called the goofus. This 23-track survey of his career finds him with jazzmen Bix Beiderbecke, Frank Trumbauer, Red Nichols, Miff Mole, Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang on hot numbers such as *Shake*; *Sidewalk Blues*; *Mississippi Basin*; *Somebody Loves Me*; *Toledo Shuffle* and the title track. FLT 10272.....\$16.98

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Isham Jones' 1920s Band Now on CD

Composer-saxophonist-bandleader Isham Jones was much admired by the leaders of other orchestras—for the respectability and dignity that he brought to the band business, and for the rich, smooth sounds that were his orchestra's trademarks. From 1920, when he began recording for Brunswick, through the late '30s, when he retired, Jones fronted a band that was quietly but consistently innovative. His peak period began around 1930 (when his arranger, Victor Young, turned Hoagy Carmichael's then-obscure tune "Stardust" from a moderately fast jazz piece into a tender ballad, thereby making it a hit). It continued through the mid '30s, thanks to arrangements by Gordon Jenkins and further innovations by young Woody Herman, who took over the band when Jones retired.

Jones' orchestra was still very enjoyable long before this career apex, as amply demonstrated on the new Memphis Archives compact disc **Swinging Down the Lane** (MA7014). The eighteen tracks are primarily from 1923 through '25, nine of them acoustic recordings. They still have excellent sound quality, with a surprising clarity and richness in the bass, thanks to the engineering of Rick Caughron and Richard James Hite. Four of Jones' hit compositions are included: "It Had to Be You," "I'll See You in My Dreams," "Why Couldn't It Be Poor Little Me?," and the title track.

Most of Jones' sidemen were not big names, but Louis Panico's trumpet stands out on "Farewell Blues" and "Memphis Blues." Roy Bargy—later a featured pianist and arranger with Paul Whiteman—plays on ten of the selections and likely contributed several of the charts. Vocalists Billy Jones and Ernie Hare (remembered best as "The Happiness Boys") enliven "That Certain Party" and "I Wonder Where My Baby Is Tonight." Several tracks, such as "Danger" and "Paddlin' Madeline Home," demonstrate that Jones could provide lively hot music as well as the smooth ballads for which he was better known. The last two tracks, "What's the Use?" and "Swinging Down the Lane," are from 1930 and feature an entirely different lineup. The band is more sophisticated, with a smoother, sweeter sound—but there's nothing cloying or treacly. We'd love to see a whole CD of Jones' early '30s work, but this is an excellent introduction. (Available for \$15.00 postpaid from Memphis Archives, P.O. Box 171282, Memphis TN 38187; (901) 682-2063.)

Tony Pastor's Armstrong-Inspired Swing

Tony Pastor was one of the most personable big-bandleaders, and it's a pity that he isn't better remembered. His tenor sax playing always swung even if it wasn't terribly adventurous; his prime asset was his extroverted way of singing. Like Louis Prima, Pastor's singing style was a sort of Italian-American version of Louis Armstrong, but Pastor was less ethnic than Prima and put more emphasis on the comedy elements. When you see him in old big-band shorts, Pastor's beatific smile, enthusiastic mugging and gravelly voice (like Armstrong's, but a tenor instead of a baritone) are tremendously endearing.

Pastor—born Anthony Pestritta—had been a featured attraction in the 1936-39 bands of Artie Shaw, who had been a close friend since 1927. (Both were members of Irving Aaronson's *Commanders* in '28 and '29.) Pastor's vocals on Shaw's records of "Indian Love Call" and "Prosschai" are still a kick, and they show that Pastor had too much personality to be merely a sideman. When Shaw suddenly walked away from his band on November 18, 1939, Pastor was the obvious choice to take over the leadership. Instead, he formed his own new band, which began recording for Bluebird in January 1940.

Pastor's infectious personality and his knack for finding other personable vocalists were reasons why his band thrived long after most others had broken up. Indeed, in 1947 he had a number of successful Columbia releases, many of which featured Rosemary Clooney—sometimes as a solo vocalist, other times paired with Pastor or with her sister Betty. Ten of those tracks have been newly compiled on a Sony Music Special Products release, **Rosemary Clooney & Tony Pastor: You Started Something** (A 26085; \$6.98). The tunes featured here are not exactly standards, but if titles such as "At a Sidewalk Penny Arcade" or "It's Like Taking Candy From a Baby" are unfamiliar, they're still fun.

Pastor's fondness for comedy songs comes through in "It's a Cruel, Cruel World." Miss Clooney is still finding her way toward her mature style, but she's just fine on "When You're in Love" and the title track. The band swings well on all ten cuts of this budget-line CD; the sound quality is surprisingly sharp and clear, with no over-processing problems.

The Brief Jazz Career of Britain's Spike Hughes

Even the most passionate American jazz and big-band devotees seem to have little knowledge of British jazzmen of the '30s. They may have heard of the most popular bandleaders (Jack Hylton, Bert Ambrose, Harry Roy, Lew Stone), but sidemen such as trumpeter Nat Gonella are unknown. Perhaps this is because some of the Brits seemed to be so intent on emulating American artists that they sacrificed their individual voices; in any event, the jazz fan who explores vintage English recordings will find many delights.

One of the strangest careers in jazz history was that of composer and bassist Spike Hughes (1908-1987), who made highly popular and influential records from 1929 to 1933, then abruptly gave up performing to resume composing classical music and to write many books about opera, travel and cooking (and two volumes of autobiography).

Having thoroughly studied classical composition and conducting, Hughes approached Philip Lewis, recording manager of the English Decca Record Company, with the thought of recording his Cello Sonata. Lewis, knowing of Hughes' budding interest in jazz, asked him instead to form a band, and in 1929 the first records of "Spike Hughes and his Decca-dents" were released. By 1931, he was writing and arranging most of the band's material, greatly influenced by Duke Ellington. The next year, he composed a jazz ballet, *High Yellow*. Early 1933 found him in New York; he assembled a group of fine black jazzmen for two recording sessions. Having achieved his goals in jazz, he gave it up and returned home.

A recent CD release, **Spike Hughes: High Yellow** (Largo 5129; \$15.98) collects all 20 of his jazz compositions in recordings made in London and New York between 1930 and '33. The Duke's influence is unmistakable in tunes like "A Harlem Symphony" and "Sweet Sorrow Blues"; it's like hearing an unissued batch of newly-discovered Ellington pieces. The American artists (Coleman Hawkins, Benny Carter, Chu Berry, Henry "Red" Allen, etc.) outclass the Brits, but the overall level of performance is impressive. John R.T. Davies' transfers from the original 78s are clean and spacious. (Available from Qualiton Imports, 24-02 40th Avenue, Long Island City, NY 11101.)

An Essential Guide to The Swing Era

Any fan of Swing music will be captivated by Leo Walker's **The Big Band Almanac** (Da Capo Press; 466 pages, paperback; \$17.95). While his book doesn't have the insider's viewpoint of George T. Simon's *The Big Bands* (probably the best-known volume on the subject), Walker gives us far more hard information on a much greater number of bands.

Naturally, the key bandleaders of the '30s and '40s are here, but so are a number of leaders from the era before Swing; enthusiasts of hot-dance music from the '20s will therefore find this an indispensable volume until a book devoted exclusively to those bands is finally published. It's a real pleasure to find Irving Aaronson, Earl Burtnett, the California Ramblers, et al, along with Goodman, Miller and the Dorseys. A number of bands which started after the golden era are included as well.

Even longtime Swing devotees may be surprised to see some of the bands that Mr. Walker documents in this thoroughly-researched book. Ronnie Kemper, Jimmy "Dancin' Shoes" Palmer and Charlie Fisk are just a few of the leaders who are rescued from obscurity here.

Walker's informative and entertaining entries begin with a selection of vital statistics for each band—where and when it was formed, notable sidemen and vocalists, theme songs, compositions, recording affiliations and so on. The book is wonderfully well-illustrated, with over 500 photos bringing these bands and their era to vivid life. (Da Capo Press, 233 Spring Street, New York, NY 10013-1578.)

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Lew Stone's British Band Rock-Solid

Stateside record collectors who enjoy the American dance bands of the late '20s and early '30s are missing some wonderful music if they haven't heard the British bands of that era. Ray Noble's New Mayfair Orchestra of 1931-34 had the most inventive arrangements, but right behind it was the great band of Lew Stone.

While Noble's band was a recording group only, Stone's crew had a weekly radio program and appeared nightly at London's posh Monseigneur Restaurant, just off Piccadilly Circus. The leader certainly recognized the importance of variety in his musical offerings; he used to advise his patrons, "If you don't like a number, just be patient for three minutes and the next item may be quite to your taste."

The variety of material, and the consistent high quality of Stone's arrangements, shine through in a delightful 3-CD package manufactured by the Swiss label Claves Records, **A Tribute to Lew Stone** (Claves CD 50-9507/9; \$45.00). The package contains 70 tracks (over three and one-half hours) by Stone's band in its 1932-34 prime. The beautifully-recorded original 78s (most of them from Stone's personal collection) have been transferred with great care, and the full sound of the band is a pleasure to hear. Two fascinating excerpts from rare radio broadcasts are from very scratchy discs, which the producers forthrightly note in the lavish 48-page booklet—which includes vintage interviews with Stone, remembrances from his sidemen, and some eloquent analyses of him as man and musician written by his widow, Joyce Stone.

Stone got a remarkably full sound from a fairly small band. He had a number of gifted sidemen: Tiny Winters played a swinging, propulsive bass; Bill Harty was an inventive drummer (especially skillful with woodblocks). Trumpeter Nat Gonella often sang the comedy numbers—sometimes emphasizing his inability to pronounce his "r"s, as on "Miss Otis *Wegwets*." Al Bowlly was the band's guitarist during this time, and on several tracks he proves his ability to drive the rhythm section. Fans of Bowlly's golden singing voice will find this package a bonanza, since Al sings on 41 numbers heretofore unavailable. (Available from Vintage Sound Works, P.O. Box 2830, Chandler AZ 85244.)

"Guitar Heroes" of the '20s, '30s and '40s

The cover illustration of a 1960 Gretsch electric guitar that adorns James Sallis' book **The Guitar Players** (Bison Books; 288 pages, paperback; \$10.00) makes the volume appear as if it's devoted to rock and roll performers. The happy surprise is that, although it does have chapters devoted to more contemporary performers such as Ry Cooder and Wes Montgomery, most of the book is devoted to guitarists of the '20s and '30s.

One chapter is devoted to the Mississippi Sheiks, led by guitarist Sam Chatmon and his violin-playing brother Lonnie (whose blues with ragtime and folk-music influences can be heard on a fine CD available on the Yazoo label). Another chronicles the long and prolific career of Lonnie Johnson, whose blues improvisations were so magnificently creative and out-of-the-ordinary that he's considered a jazzman as well. (Johnson was also a pioneer on the twelve-string guitar, as heard in a series of extraordinary recordings which he made for Okeh in the late '20s.)

Rather than continue on with a litany of blues guitarists, Sallis demonstrates a healthy respect for all forms of 20th-century guitar music by devoting long and loving chapters to Eddie Lang, Roy Smeck, Riley Puckett and Charlie Christian. The latter, of course, is in the pantheon of jazz immortals for having brought the electric guitar to new prominence, and for introducing the first stirrings of be-bop. Lang has been little written about (due largely to his 1933 death at age 30 after a tonsillectomy) but he was certainly the most prolific, versatile and influential guitarist before the advent of Swing. Smeck was an all-around string instrument virtuoso, popular in vaudeville, Vitaphone shorts, and on records (he was still recording at age 80); Sallis describes his "animated and self-assured" personality as vividly as his performances. He also helps us appreciate the talent of Puckett, whose elaborate, dazzling runs around the fretboard were a fixture of fiddler Gid Tanner's band, The Skillet Lickers. Little else has been written about these artists, and sometimes the patching-together of all available information shows. Mainly, though, this is a much-needed book about seminal figures in the guitar's history. (Available from University of Nebraska Press, 312 N. 14th Street, Lincoln, NE 68588-0484; (800) 755-1105.)

Sophie Tuckered Out? Not Yet!

A recent CD import from England, **Sophie Tucker: Last of the Red Hot Mammams** (Parade PAR 2031) ensures that we haven't heard the last of the divine Miss T. Her earthy sense of humor has been celebrated by Bette Midler (who did a rather bawdy tribute to her in concerts), but her glorious belt-'em-out-to-the-very-back-row voice hasn't been much available on CD, save for an excellent compilation entitled *Jazz Age Hot Mamma*, released by Take Two Records in 1992 and a British CD, *Follow a Star*, released by ASV as part of their "Living Era" series.

The new collection has 20 tracks, nine of which duplicate tracks in the ASV album (in fact, they may well be duplicated from that album). The titles that are new to CD include six of Sophie's Decca records from the late '30s and early '40s ("Louisville Lou," "Life Begins at Forty," "You Can't Sew a Button on a Heart," "The Older They Get, the Younger They Want Them," "Who Wants Them Tall, Dark and Handsome" and "Some of These Days"). All of these tracks are in crisp, clean original monaural sound, an improvement over the gooey, echo-drenched fake-stereo versions on American LPs.

Also making their digital debut are two of her 1927 collaborations with hot jazz trombonist Miff Mole and his Molers, "After You've Gone" (in a slightly scratchy copy) and "Fifty Million Frenchmen Can't Be Wrong." The titles that we haven't seen reissued before are three 1928 items: her bravura performance of "My Yiddishe Momme" from June (in English and Yiddish), a nice reading of "The Man I Love" from the preceding March and a great record called "He Hadn't Up Till Yesterday" recorded on August 28 in London. The sound quality, unfortunately, is slightly dull on these tracks.

It's high time somebody did a definitive Sophie Tucker collection. We'd love to hear some of the ten Edison sides she made in 1910-1912, and we'd especially like to have all eight of her 1929 recordings for Victor. We wish the Columbia/Legacy label would follow up their two-CD Eddie Cantor "Art Deco" collection with a similar double-disc album containing all 45 of Miss Tucker's Columbia and OKeh recordings. (Available from Empire Music Group, 170 W. 74th St., New York NY 10023; (212) 580-5959.)

The Foursome: Hot Music, Hot Potatoes

What a joy it is to be re-introduced to the Foursome, whose distinctive vocal harmonies augmented by hot ocarina playing can again be heard on a new CD, **Sweet Potato Tooters** (Music & Memories MMD1038; \$15.98). The quartet was composed of Marshall Smith (tenor), Ray Johnson (baritone), Dwight Snyder (bass), and Del Porter (second bass), natives of Spokane, Washington and Portland, Oregon who joined up in San Francisco in 1928. They delighted critics and audiences alike in 1930 when they opened George and Ira Gershwin's Broadway production *Girl Crazy* with the new tune "Bidin' My Time;" the rave response stopped the show just as it was starting.

The group made a few sides for Brunswick in 1931, and when they made another smash in Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* in 1934, they recorded for Victor. Appearances in Vitaphone shorts and the MGM Eleanor Powell feature *Born to Dance* were followed by a series of discs for Decca. The group recorded by themselves and in support of other Decca stars, among them Bing Crosby and Dick Powell. The group disbanded in 1941, with Porter becoming the distinctive vocalist on most of the early records of Spike Jones (who had often been a session drummer for the Foursome). In the late '40s, Porter, Johnson and two new teammates made several radio transcriptions as the Sweet Potato Tooters.

The generous 24-track CD provides tracks from all phases of the group's career. The arrangements by Ray Johnson are marvelously inventive, blending close harmony and hot jazz in a manner that makes the group sound like a male equivalent to the Boswell Sisters. The ocarinas or "sweet potatoes" (actually gourd-shaped clay instruments imported from Austria) add a distinctive touch and show the group to be just as inventive instrumentally as they are vocally. Their precision is very impressive—these fellows sound relaxed, but it's clear that they rehearsed. Bing Crosby has a great time with the boys on "El Rancho Grande," but they're fun all by themselves on "Walkin' My Baby Back Home" (the first recording of this tune), and terrific hot arrangements of "Lady Be Good" and "Sweet Georgia Brown." Porter's novelty-song talents come to the fore in "Siam," "Whittle Out a Whistle" and "The Girl With the Broomhandle Legs." (Available from *Past Times*; see page 28.)

Ten Fingers, 88 Keys, Infinite Variations

Boogie-woogie, Stride, "Trumpet Style" and other methods of flailing away at the 88s are demonstrated in the new Memphis Archives CD **Piano Wizards** (MA7015). The eighteen track collection is an excellent introduction to the varied styles of jazz piano—and some of the tracks will be welcome additions for the seasoned collector.

The disc is not programmed chronologically or stylistically (evidently to provide a better variety when listening in sequence), but the tracks do provide a good overview of jazz piano's progression from ragtime influences (via Jelly Roll Morton's "Fat Frances") to the stride style (Fats Waller's "Clothes Line Ballet") to more individual methods of playing (Bix Beiderbecke's impressionistic and virtually unclassifiable masterpiece "In a Mist").

Boogie-woogie—the omnipresent piano fad of the late '30s—is well represented here, thanks to Albert Ammons' "Shout For Joy," Meade Lux Lewis' "Honky Tonk Train" and Pete Johnson's "Buss Robinson." All three play together, encouraged by blues shouter Big Joe Turner, on "Cafe Society Rag," a 1939 piece celebrating the landmark integrated nightclub run by New York entrepreneur Barney Josephson.

In two tracks, we hear Earl Hines' distinctive "trumpet style" piano (playing solos one note at a time—no chords—in high octaves). Fats Waller is also heard from a second time, playing the pipe organ on "Hog Maw Stomp." It might have been well to dispense with a couple of the above tracks to allow for some other pianists whose distinctive styles deserve to be represented—i.e., James P. Johnson (the creator of "stride" piano), Willie the Lion Smith, Herman Chittison, Cleo Brown, or Mary Lou Williams.

Even so, the collection offers several gems in excellent transfers: Art Tatum's breathtaking "Tiger Rag," Clarence Williams' easygoing "Wild Flower Rag," Jess Stacy's interpretations of Bix's "Flashes" and "In the Dark," and tracks by the lesser-remembered Reginald Forsythe, Jabbo Williams and Cow Cow Davenport. This is a good overview of many different approaches to the same instrument. (Available for \$15.00 post-paid from Memphis Archives, P.O. Box 171282, Memphis TN 38187.)

Radio

New Book Provides the Full Picture of Radio History

Radio is now—at least—75 years old, the “official” first broadcast having been KDKA’s election returns of the Harding-Cox presidential race on November 2, 1920, although broadcasts have been documented as far back as 1912. In commemoration of that anniversary, a fine new book preserves much of radio’s history. **Blast From the Past: A Pictorial History of Radio’s First 75 Years** (Streamline Press; 464 pages, hardcover; \$39.99) is an oversized volume filled to bursting with more than 900 photos of radio personalities. Author B. Eric Rhoads, a 27-year radio veteran at age 41, has compiled a very impressive collection of rare images that cover all aspects of American radio from its beginnings to the present.

Each chapter covers a decade (with the exception of “Pre-1920s,” which goes back to the 1800s), and begins with an overview of the advances (or retreats) in radio programming and technology during that period. Thankfully, all of the photos used are crisp, clean originals; previous pictorial histories of the medium have relied heavily on murky reprints from period radio magazines, or have used dupes of the same handful of photos. Very few of the shots used here are familiar, and most of them are outstanding. The captions are brief but usually informative.

Most of the photos from the 1920s through the ‘40s are of network radio personalities—sometimes in formal portraits, other times in “costumed” publicity shots. Local radio gets its due, and regional DJs really become the focus of the book from the ‘50s onward, with the demise of network programming.

You’ll also see vintage shots of the interiors and exteriors of radio studios (most of them in appealing “streamlined” designs) and even a transmitter tower or two. Remote broadcasts are pictured, too.

This is an absolute must-have for any radio enthusiast, whether you prefer classic shows of the past or what’s currently on the airwaves. (Available from Streamline Publishing, Inc., 224 Datura Street, Suite 718, West Palm Beach FL 33401; (800) 226-7857.)

Audio Flaws Lurk in *Shadow* CDs

A few years ago, the old-time radio collecting community was in an uproar because Condé Nast Publications, owners of *The Shadow* (which had originally appeared in pulp novels published by Street & Smith) decided to prosecute a number of companies which were selling tapes of the old shows. This was despite the fact that almost all of these firms were one-man companies, run by collectors more for the love of radio than for profit. As a result, the old *Shadow* shows disappeared from these small firms’ catalogs. One of the largest old-time radio mass-marketers, Radiola, initially had an agreement with Condé Nast to distribute the shows, but the two parties soon had their own legal squabbles.

Eight of the shows are currently available on a four-CD box set from Great American Audio, **The Shadow: Original Radio Broadcasts** (#49408; \$19.95). After all that effort to ensure exclusive distribution of the programs, you’d think that Condé Nast would do a little better by this property.

The episodes included are “The Phantom Voice,” “The Silent Avenger,” “The Bride of Death,” “Temple Bells,” “The League of Terror,” “Sabotage,” “Society of the Living Dead” and “Poison Death.” All feature Orson Welles and Agnes Moorehead, although seven of the episodes have had a generic opening attached—with the voice of Welles’ successor, Bill Johnstone. There’s no booklet included in the package, and scant liner notes (which state incorrectly that the program debuted on September 26, 1937; this date marked Welles’ debut as the lead, but the series had begun January 5, 1932, and the *Shadow* character had appeared in *Detective Story Hour* which started on July 31, 1930).

Judging from the episodes and the sound quality, this 4-CD set appears to be a dub from a box set of LPs released by Murray Hill in 1979. There’s a constant low-level “LP rumble” noise, and occasional vinyl surface noise, pops and ticks. The audio quality is listenable, but is compromised by a lack of high frequencies and occasional distortion. *The Shadow* is such a landmark series—and still so enjoyable—that its owners ought to find better condition source material and properly release all of the extant episodes featuring Welles. (Available from GAA Corp., 33 Portman Road, New Rochelle, NY 10801.)

A Star-Studded Line-Up at the Club Durante

A couple of years ago, we wondered if Eddie Cantor had been forgotten forever—only to be met by a flood of new video and CD releases. Now, we’re in the midst of a Durante deluge, and we couldn’t be happier about it. Warner Brothers has released a disc of Jimmy’s mid-‘60s ballads, and the Natasha Imports/Viper’s Nest labels have brought out three CDs culled from Jimmy’s radio shows of the ‘40s.

Well, everyone wants to get into the act, and now MCA Special Products has issued **Club Durante** (MCAD-20889), a budget-priced collection of Jimmy’s most memorable collaborations with guest stars on his radio and TV shows. The disc itself bears the title *Club Durant*—the name of this album when first issued on Decca LPs back in the ‘50s, and the name of Jimmy’s nightclub in the ‘20s. Reportedly, the sign painter charged by the letter, as Durante recalled: “We just didn’t have enough for the final ‘E,’ so it became Club Durant. It could only have happened to me!”

For a small piece of change (usually about \$7.98), you get 38 minutes of prime entertainment. Al Jolson joins Jimmy in a song about how tough it is to find “A Real Piano Player.” Bing Crosby takes a lesson in crooning as Durante instructs him to “Sing Soft, Sing Sweet, Sing Gentle,” and Bob Hope noses in for an olfactory celebration of “The Boys With the Proboscis.”

Naturally, Jimmy is right at home with fellow veterans Eddie Cantor and Sophie Tucker, who amorously pursues the Schnozzola with “I’m As Ready As I’ll Ever Be.” Eddie Jackson joins Sophie and Jimmy, and the original Clayton, Jackson and Durante trio reunites in the most memorable track of the album. (“You know, Jim, I heard you sing that song 25 years ago, and your voice is still the same,” says Lou Clayton. When Jimmy thanks him, Clayton quips, “How do you like that? He thinks it’s a compliment!”) Even guest stars out of their element—Peter Lawford, opera star Helen Traubel and actress Ethel Barrymore—get into the spirit. Durante’s songs sound alike, but it’s a great sound. The CD sounds as if it’s been dubbed from the ‘50s LP (there’s some mild surface noise), and the audio quality varies, but the sheer entertainment value overcomes any minor flaws.

George Burns: Held Over for 100 Years

Continued from Page 1

Just as Gracie Allen onstage epitomized daffiness, George Burns in private, it seems, has always been the embodiment of common sense. Gottfried describes him as “a uniquely sane man whose benevolence and wisdom were rare and genuine.” Burns’ careful attention to comedy structure reflects the passion for order which has governed his life.

He sensibly submerged his ego as a performer, most decisively after Burns and Allen’s very first stage performance (he was the comic, Gracie the straight man, but after the audience laughed at her questions and ignored his punchlines, he reversed the roles). His credo has been, “The audience finds everything, and you cannot be a star unless the audience makes you a star.” He accumulated—and kept—great wealth (he was already worth \$14 million in 1941, at age 45) not because he was very interested in money, but because he invested prudently and just didn’t need to buy flashy, expensive things. As a producer, his philosophy was, “If something’s wrong, I want to know it now, not Monday. Things are easy to fix the day they break.”

Mr. Gottfried packs Burns’ 100 years of adventures into a brisk and well-paced book. Occasionally, there are annoying errors: he writes that George “needed his right hand to adjust the microphone” in vaudeville in 1925, but vaudeville theaters of that day didn’t use microphones. (In his 1988 memoir, *Gracie: A Love Story*, George wrote that Gracie’s voice “had no lows, so it projected beautifully in a theater. Grace never had to yell to be heard, her voice just cut through everything else.”) Writing about Burns’ performance in the 1932 film *International House*, he cites a scene from 1934’s *Six of a Kind*. He reviews an album George made for Buddha Records called *Ain’t Misbehavin’*, and places its release in 1974; it was actually *George Burns Sings*, released in 1970 by Buddah Records.

These errors, however, are minor. Gottfried is absolutely on-target in analyzing Burns’ humor and when he lovingly describes his “easygoing, indomitable spirit.” As the author states in his acknowledgements, “His love of Gracie, of Jack, and of himself bespoke his greatest love, his love of life. This was indeed a man.”

Jack Benny: Serious About Comedy

One of radio’s greatest and most inventive comedians gets a chance to intelligently explain his craft in a wonderful new CD, **Jack Benny: Voices From the Hollywood Past, Vol. 2** (Facet 8107; \$8.98). About 30 minutes of the 50-minute disc is a 1970 interview conducted with Benny in Las Vegas by Tony Thomas, a producer for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. (Most of this was released by Thomas on a Citadel Records LP back in the 1970s.) It has been augmented with comedy sketches that Benny and his radio cast recorded for the Top Ten label in 1947, and an edited version of the infamous “King For a Day” guest spot that Benny did on Fred Allen’s show in May 1946.

Benny touches upon such topics as comedy pacing (noting that he still learns from contemporary TV shows such as “Laugh-In”), the importance of developing a comedy character, and knowing how to adapt material for different kinds of audiences. His comments about radio might well be contested by old-time radio buffs. He acknowledges that there are many gags he did in radio that couldn’t transfer to TV, and appreciates people telling him how much they loved his old radio show—however, Benny remarks, “Supposing I did the greatest radio show in the world today—all these people that talk about how they loved it wouldn’t be listening.” He firmly refuses to deal in rosy nostalgia: “It’s present and future for me—the hell with the past, as long as I’m working.”

If those comments make Jack sound curmudgeonly, it should be noted that his warmth and absolute lack of big-star ego shine through in this interview. Interviewer Thomas is a master of his own craft, asking intelligent and probing questions and then letting Jack do the talking. As a result, Benny offers his views on many diverse topics. He admits that, unlike his established character, he has no gift for the wise use of money—nor much interest in acquiring it; reminisces about his parents, regretting that his mother died before he became a success; examines the reasons why so many top comedians are Jewish; and talks about his hobbies. The sound quality is superb, lending a “you-are-there” presence to the proceedings: the interview was conducted in Jack’s hotel bedroom, Jack lying on the bed in his underwear! (Available from Delos International, 1645 N. Vine Street, Suite 340, Hollywood CA 90028; (213) 962-2626.)

A Class Act On and Offstage

George Burns is a man who goes the extra distance to be nice, a fact to which a couple of your *Past Times* correspondents can personally attest. In 1969, when our assistant editor Jordan R. Young was a fledgling writer working for a local paper, he wrote a tribute to Burns on his 73rd birthday and sent the published result to the comedian. Burns replied with a warm letter complimenting him on the article, and gave him encouragement: “You may have found your future.” Along with the letter, Burns enclosed an autographed photo, which Jordan had requested; George also sent, unbidden, several other 8x10 stills—some of them originals dating back to the radio days.

Young had a couple of other enjoyable encounters with Burns in the early ‘70s, before the comedian’s rediscovery. At one point, Jordan was writing an article on the vaudeville career of comedian Stan Laurel. Naturally, there was no better source for first-hand information than Burns, who played the Pantages circuit with Laurel and retained a strong affection for vaudeville. A phone call to Burns’ office resulted in two letters from his assistant, Jack Langdon, filled with George’s funny and detailed descriptions of Laurel’s vaudeville act of fifty years earlier.

In 1975, Burns’ remarkable comeback began with his Oscar-winning performance in *The Sunshine Boys*. He was still maintaining a hectic schedule in 1990, but found time for a phone interview with Jordan and myself. The scheduled 20 minutes stretched to a half-hour, as Burns casually chatted with us after answering our questions. I mentioned that I had a copy of Burns and Allen’s first record, made in England in 1930. Burns grew excited and said, “I don’t have a copy of that—could you put it on tape for me?” Of course, I was delighted to do so, and sent him a cassette which also included other Burns and Allen rarities. He responded with a warm letter: “I can’t thank you enough for that beautiful tape, it brought back a lot of memories...especially when I sang that song with Bing Crosby. I never realized that Crosby was such a good singer. I was pretty good, too. I think I’ll ask for a raise....If you’re near my office, drop in and we’ll have a smoke together. Best, George.” George Burns is truly a class act.

--Randy Skretvedt

When Radio Was Program Guide

February - April 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.

FEBRUARY 1996

Broadcast Week One

the Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet 9-9-45 "The Fight" starring Ozzie Nelson and Harriet Hilliard (part 2) / **The Green Hornet** 1944 "There Was a Crooked Man" starring Al Hodge

Burns & Allen 1-27-49 w/guest, Gene Kelly / **The Bickersons** 1940s starring Don Ameche and Frances Langford

Broadcast Week Two

The Amazing Nero Wolfe 12-15-46 "Shakespeare" starring Francis X. Bushman and Elliott Lewis / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 5-30-44 "Fishing with Doc Gamble" (part 1)

Fibber McGee & Molly 5-30-44 "Fishing with Doc Gamble" (part 2) / **The Shadow** 11-7-37 "Aboard the Steamship Amazon" starring Orson Welles and Agnes Moorehead

The Jack Benny Program 12-12-48 w/ guest, Eddie Cantor / **Abbott & Costello** 2-14-46 "Mrs. Niles Gives the Boys a Job" (part 1)

Abbott & Costello 2-14-46 "Mrs. Niles Gives the Boys a Job" (part 2) / **Lights Out** 12-8-42 "Scoop" Hosted by Arch Oboler

Dragnet 1-25-53 "The Big Layout" starring Jack Webb / **Bob & Ray** 1950s starring Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding

Broadcast Week Three

The Lone Ranger 3-18-40 "Willing to Fight" starring Earle Graser and John Todd / **Johnny Dollar** 1-23-56 "The Duke Red Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part one)

Gangbusters 1940s "The Case of Ray Earnest" / **Johnny Dollar** 1-24-56 "The Duke Red Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part two)

The Life of Riley 10-22-46 "Election Flashback" starring William Bendix / **Johnny Dollar** 1-25-56 "The Duke Red Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part three)

The Stan Freberg Show 8-25-57 Program 7 of 15 starring Stan Freberg / **Johnny Dollar** 1-26-56 "The Duke Red Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part four)

Sergeant Preston of the Yukon 1940s "Strike at Pelican Creek" starring Paul Sutton / **Johnny Dollar** 1-27-56 "The Duke Red Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part five)

Broadcast Week Four

Suspense 12-6-45 "I Won't Take a Minute" starring Lee Bowman / **The Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis Show** 5-26-49 w/guest, John Garfield (part one)

The Dean Martin & Jerry Lewis Show 5-26-49 w/guest, John Garfield (part two) / **The Hermit's Cave** 1941 "Blackness of Terror" starring Mel Johnson

The Six Shooter 1953 "The Coward" starring James Stewart / **The Great Gildersleeve** 10-7-45 "Uninvited Status" starring Hal Peary (part one)

The Great Gildersleeve 10-7-45 "Uninvited Status" starring Hal Peary (part two) / **Box Thirteen** 1949 starring Alan Ladd

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Bud Titus Resigns" starring Brace Beemer and John Todd / **Gunsmoke** 5-7-55 "Potato Road" starring William Conrad

Broadcast Week Five

X Minus One 5-15-56 "Hallucination Orbit" starring William Redfield / **The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show** 10-19-47 w/guest, Jane Wyman (part one)

The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show 10-19-47 w/guest, Jane Wyman (part two) / **The Shadow** 11-21-37 "Message From the Hills" starring Orson Welles

Boston Blackie 1945 "Jackpot at Club 77" starring Dick Kollmar / **Duffy's Tavern** 3-2-49 starring Ed Gardner w/ guest, Mickey Rooney (part one)

Duffy's Tavern 3-2-49 starring Ed Gardner w/ guest, Mickey Rooney (part two) / **The Screen Director's Playhouse** 3-20-49 "The Perfect Marriage" starring Loretta Young

MARCH 1996

Broadcast Week One

The Saint 3-25-51 "Formula for Death" starring Vincent Price / **Lum & Abner** 1945 starring Chester Lauck and Norris Goff in episode 360 in the series

Broadcast Week Two

Suspense 1-11-45 "The Drive In" starring Nancy Kelly / **Burns & Allen** 3-3-49 w/guest, Richard Widmark (part one)

Burns & Allen 3-3-49 w/guest, Richard Widmark (part two) / **The Green Hornet** 1940s "Not One Cent for Tribute" starring Al Hodge

This Is Your FBI 3-9-51 "Captain Larceny" starring Stacy Harris / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 6-13-44 "Fibber's Porch Swing" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part one)

Fibber McGee & Molly 6-13-44 "Fibber's Porch Swing" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part two) / **The Lone Ranger** 1-13-41 "Heir to a Ranch" starring Earle Graser

Dragnet 2-1-53 "The Big Strip" starring Jack Webb / **Bob & Ray** 1950s starring Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding

Broadcast Week Three

The Jack Benny Program 1-30-49 starring Jack Benny and his gang / **Johnny Dollar** 10-24-55 "The Alvin Summers Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part 1 of 5)

Abbott & Costello 3-7-46 "Trying to Raise the Rent Money" / **Johnny Dollar** 10-25-55 "The Alvin Summers Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part 2 of 5)

The Shadow 2-29-48 "The Man Who Was Death" starring Bret Morrison / **Johnny Dollar** 10-26-55 "The Alvin Summers Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part 3 of 5)

The Life of Riley 11-24-50 "School Riot" starring William Bendix / **Johnny Dollar** 10-27-55 "The Alvin Summers Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part 4 of 5)

When Radio Was Program Guide

February-April 1996 Continued

The Great Gildersleeve 11-11-45 "Homemaking Class" starring Hal Peary / **Johnny Dollar** 10-28-55 "The Alvin Summers Matter" starring Bob Bailey (part 5 of 5)

Broadcast Week Four

Gangbusters 1940s "The Case of the Broadway Bandits" / **The Stan Freberg Show** 9-1-57 Program 8 of 15 in the series (part one)

The Stan Freberg Show 9-1-57 Program 8 of 15 in the series (part two) / **The Lone Ranger** 10-19-38 "A False Story" starring Earle Graser

Suspense 3-21-46 "The Lonely Road" starring Gregory Peck / **The Martin & Lewis Show** 8-21-49 w/Victor Moore (part one)

The Martin & Lewis Show 8-21-49 w/Victor Moore (part two) / **The Mysterious Traveler** 5-18-48 "Death Writes a Letter" starring Maurice Tarplin

The Six Shooter 1950s "Stampede" starring James Stewart / **Lum & Abner** 1945 Episode #361 in the series

Broadcast Week Five

Box Thirteen 1950 starring Alan Ladd / **Duffy's Tavern** 1949 "Archie the Lion Tamer" starring Ed Gardner (part one)

Duffy's Tavern 1949 "Archie the Lion Tamer" starring Ed Gardner (part two) / **Dimension X** 7-12-51 "Time and Time Again" starring David Anderson

The Shadow 10-24-37 "Power of the Mind" starring Orson Welles / **The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show** 11-16-47 w/guest, Lana Turner (part one)

The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show 11-16-47 w/guest, Lana Turner (part two) / **Rogue's Gallery** 11-15-45 "The House of Fear" starring Dick Powell

Gunsmoke 8-27-55 "Doc Quits" starring William Conrad / **Dick Tracy** 1930s Audition for the series

APRIL 1996

Broadcast Week One

The Green Hornet 1940s "The Ghost That Talked Too Much" starring Al Hodge / **My Friend Irma** 1940s "Mr. Clyde's Racehorse" starring Marie Wilson (part one)

My Friend Irma 1940s "Mr. Clyde's Racehorse" starring Marie Wilson (part two) / **Drag-net** 2-8-53 "The Big Press" starring Jack Webb

Suspense 5-3-45 "Fear Paints a Picture" starring Lana Turner / **Burns & Allen** 3-10-49 "Gracie the Girl Scout Leader" starring George Burns & Gracie Allen (part one)

Burns & Allen 3-10-49 "Gracie the Girl Scout Leader" starring George Burns & Gracie Allen (part two) / **The Adventures of Philip Marlowe** 10-10-49 "The Panama Hat" starring Gerald Mohr

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Fortune in a Hat" starring Brace Beemer / **The Strange Dr. Weird** 1940s "The Secret Room" starring Maurice Tarplin

Broadcast Week Two

Gangbusters 1940s "The Case of the Chicago Counterfeiters" / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 6-20-44 "The Cattle Ranchers" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part one)

Fibber McGee & Molly 6-20-44 "The Cattle Ranchers" starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part two) / **The Shadow** 1-12-47 "The Cat and the Killer" starring Bret Morrison

The Six Shooter 1951 "Silver Annie" starring James Stewart / **The Stan Freberg Show** 9-8-57 Program 9 of 15 in the series (part one)

The Stan Freberg Show 9-8-57 Program 9 of 15 in the series (part two) / **Sergeant Preston of the Yukon** 1950s "Trader Muldoon" starring Paul Sutton

Box Thirteen 1950 starring Alan Ladd / **Vic & Sade** 1-25-44 "Missouri Home" starring Bernadine Flynn and Art Van Harvey

Broadcast Week Three

The Saint 4-8-51 "The Ghost Who Came to Dinner" starring Vincent Price / **Abbott & Costello** 12-27-45 "Costello Buys a Beauty Shop" (part one)

Abbott & Costello 12-27-45 "Costello Buys a Beauty Shop" (part two) / **Frontier Gentleman** 2-9-58 "The Shelton Brothers" starring John Dehner in the premier episode in the series

Suspense 4-20-44 "The Palmer Method" starring Ed Gardner / **Duffy's Tavern** 1940s "The Tavern is Flat Broke" starring Ed Gardner (part one)

Duffy's Tavern 1940s "The Tavern is Flat Broke" starring Ed Gardner (part two) / **Family Theater** 6-10-48 "Once on a Golden Afternoon" starring Maureen O'Sullivan

The Lone Ranger 1940s "Framed" starring Brace Beemer / **Gunsmoke** 6-18-55 "The Reel Survives" starring William Conrad

Broadcast Week Four

X Minus One 4-10-56 "Starbright" starring Lawson Zerbe / **The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show** 11-23-47 with guest, Carmen Miranda (part one)

The Edgar Bergen & Charlie McCarthy Show 11-23-47 with guest, Carmen Miranda (part two) / **Nightbeat** 5-25-51 "Big John McMasters" starring Frank Lovejoy

Hopalong Cassidy 1950s "The Golden Lure" starring William Boyd / **The Great Gildersleeve** 11-18-45 "Jolly Boys Break-up" starring Hal Peary (part one)

The Great Gildersleeve 11-18-45 "Jolly Boys Break-up" starring Hal Peary (part two) / **The Screen Directors' Playhouse** 4-3-49 "The Ghost Breakers" starring Bob Hope

The Jack Benny Program 2-6-49 w/guests Claudette Colbert and Vincent Price / **Lum & Abner** 1945 starring Chester Lauck and Norman Goff in episode #362 in the series

Broadcast Week Five

Suspense 1-26-50 "Mr. Diogenes" starring Ozzie and Harriet Nelson / **The Martin & Lewis Show** 6-21-49 w/guest, Tony Martin (part one)

The Martin & Lewis Show 6-21-49 w/guest, Tony Martin (part two) / **The Hermit's Cave** 1930s "The Search For Life" starring M. Johnson

Where the Elite Meet to Eat

By Carl Amari

Duffy's Tavern, one of the longest running comedy shows on radio, was the creation of Ed Gardner: actor, writer, director and producer. Gardner dropped out of school at age 16 in 1921 to play piano in a saloon. In 1929, now selling pianos, he met a young actress named Shirley Booth. On November 23, 1929 they married and the two began working steadily in show business. Booth became a Broadway stage star, and Gardner was successful as a writer-director for *The Rudy Vallee Show*, *Burns & Allen*, and *The Texaco Star Theatre*.

In 1939 he conceived the idea for *Duffy's Tavern*, a fly-infested dive on Third Avenue in New York, where the food was awful and the service lousy. He convinced CBS Radio to audition his show on a series called *Forecast*. Gardner searched to no avail for an actor to play "Archie," the manager of the Tavern. He wanted Archie to sound like a "typical New York mug" with a thick Brooklyn accent. Twenty-eight minutes before airtime, Gardner was still auditioning actors for the part. In frustration, he took the microphone to demonstrate and out of his mouth popped "Archie."

Duffy's Tavern was quickly pegged as the most original new comedy of the year and became part of the regular CBS lineup on March 1st, 1941. Gardner as "Archie" surrounded himself with a small group of talented regulars including his wife, Shirley Booth, as "Miss Duffy," the man-hungry daughter of the proprietor; Eddie Green as "Eddie Green," the singing waiter; and Charlie Cantor as "Clifton Finnegan," a super stupid customer, whose every remark began with, "Duh..." Film stars dropped in regularly at the Tavern to add to the festivities. Duffy himself never appeared but phoned in each show to give Archie a hard time.

Duffy's Tavern was written by Ed Gardner after head writer Abe Burrows and a stable of others submitted a rough draft. Burrows' son James would later help create the TV series *Cheers* (which also used a tavern as a setting). A few years ago, James Burrows contacted me for some of the *Duffy's Tavern* shows. I was happy to oblige. Later, he reciprocated by inviting me to a taping of *Cheers*. When it was over, he gathered the cast around me while I sat at the world's most famous bar. A photographer snapped a picture which later arrived, autographed by the entire cast!

To keep himself in character, Gardner wore a white apron while performing on the shows. After the broadcast, that show's guest star would sign it. Signatures of Orson Welles, Mickey Rooney, Clark Gable and many others would then be sewn over by Gardner's mother for permanence. One day, while I was chatting with Gardner's son, Ed Jr., he said, "Would you like to have the apron?" I wanted to shout at the top of my lungs "Yes, yes!" but refrained and said that I'd really feel better if I could buy it, explaining that it could be quite valuable. His response was... "what do you think it's worth?" I told him to be safe and have it appraised. The next thing I knew, it was on auction at Christie's in New York and I found myself quickly outbid. I believe it went for \$15,000.00. When Ed later asked me if I was the highest bidder, I told him, "If I had 15 grand to spend on an apron, I too could dine where 'the elite meet to eat.'"



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Lux Presents Hollywood Hardcover Book

This brand-new 1995 reference work is a show-by-show chronicle of the "Lux Radio Theatre" and "Lux Video Theatre" series. Show listings include title, broadcast date, cast plot synopsis and film versions of the story and is filled with rare behind the scenes photographs. Authors Connie Billips and Arthur Pierce deserve the heartfelt thanks of all "Lux Radio Theatre" fans for the results of their research. The 729-page hardcover book deserves a place on the bookshelf of everyone who enjoys this great series.

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**Old-Time Radio
Fan Clubs and Publications**

If listening to old-time radio or "When Radio Was" and purchasing tape through Radio Spirits still doesn't satisfy your desire for vintage radio, you can join a number of clubs which are devoted to old-time radio personalities. Enclosed is a self-addressed, stamped envelope with your queries.

Abbott & Costello Fan Club, Box 208, Toluca Lake, CA 91610. Publishes a quarterly newsletter.

Al Jolson Society, c/o Jim Brockson, 93 Fifth Avenue, Prospect Park, PA 19070. Publishes the Jolson Journal. Regional chapters also exist.

Cinnamon Bear Fan Club, c/o Carolyn Breen Kolibaban, 19419 NE Knot, Portland OR 97220. Dues, \$2.00 per year. Devoted to the Christmastime children's series.

Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, c/o Sheila Riddle, Box 312, Mount Gay, WV 25637.

Jack Benny Fan Club, c/o Laura Le, 3910 Oak Road #3, Walnut, CA 94596.

Kate Smith Foundation, c/o Richard Hayes, Box 3575, Cranston, RI 02910.

Lum and Abner Fan Club, c/o Tim Hollis, 81 Sharon Road, Dora, AL 35062.

Straight Arrow Pow Wow, c/o Bill Harper, 301 East Buena Vista Ave., Norcross, GA 29841.

Vic and Sade Society, c/o Barbara Schwarz, 7232 Keystone Ave, Lincolnwood, IL 60466.

You might also want to check out the following publications:

Daily Sentinel, c/o Robert Brunet, 21 W 74 St., New York, NY 10023 (Bi-monthly, \$9.00 per year).

Hello Again, c/o Jay Hickerson, Box 432, Hamden, CT 06513 (Bi-monthly, \$12.00 per year).

Old-Time Radio Digest, c/o Bob Burch and George Wagner, 4114 Montgomery Road, Cincinnati, OH 45212 (Bi-monthly, \$12.50 per year).

Thrilling Days of Yesteryear, c/o John Rayburn, Box 36106, Denver, CO 80236 (Bi-monthly, \$15.00 per year).

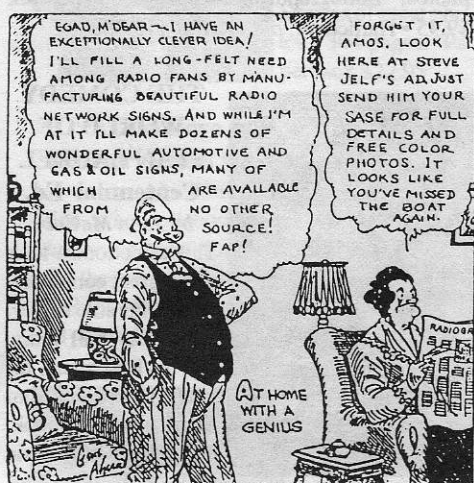
The Barbours' New Family

Do you harbor fond memories of the Barbour family of Seaciff? If you're a fan of the longest-running serial drama in American radio history, you may well want to become a member of *The "One Man's Family" Family*, a newly-formed club for devotees of Carlton E. Morse's epic saga.

The group's founders are Mike Sprague and Gary Polich, two radio buffs from Washington state; Sprague is also a founding member and past president of Radio Enthusiasts of Puget Sound. Sprague notes, "The purpose is to link together the large number of people who loved/love *One Man's Family*, and to preserve the marvelous history associated with this long-running program."

The group's goals include recording interviews with actors and other professionals associated with the series; creating a "Family Ties" newsletter; hosting a reunion of actors and technicians; creating a lending library of shows and scripts; and producing a definitive log of all episodes from 1932 to 1959.

Sprague and Polich are offering charter memberships for \$12.00, for which you'll receive a membership card, ongoing updates, and the first newsletter (by April 1, 1996). For information, contact Mike Sprague at 9936 NE 197th Street, Bothell, WA 98011 or Gary Polich at 4611 NE 110th, Seattle, WA 98125.



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Radio Spotlight: Phil Cohan

Phil Cohan may not be a household name to radio buffs, but he was responsible for some great shows. He teamed Jimmy Durante and Garry Moore and later produced Durante's solo radio and television programs. Earlier, he'd helped create CBS's Columbia Workshop, and tells here of his work on another creation, The Saturday Night Swing Club.

My first job of any kind was at Paramount Pictures. They offered me a job for a year as a trainee for \$30 a week—in 1928. That was a fantastic beginning, the basis of my radio career; the beginning of sound in pictures. I was in charge of music and sound effects. I would look at the scripts and see what we needed both for scoring and for live music. I got to know Red Nichols, Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey. Paramount made these shorts with Burns and Allen, Bob Hope—anybody who was anybody, they'd bring them over and they'd shoot two reels. It usually involved music and sound effects and that's how I got to see all the greats in show business: Smith and Dale, Eddie Cantor, the Marx Brothers.

Suddenly I found myself in charge of a lot of people who went on to become famous. My boss called me one day and said "You're always complaining about the rehearsal pianist. A fellow was sent to me—listen to him and see what you think." And it was Johnny Green, who later became famous for writing "Body and Soul," "Out of Nowhere," and "I Cover the Waterfront," among others. We hit it off and he was hired at \$60 a week.

Paramount's New York studio folded in 1932, thanks to the Depression, and I'm out of a job. Johnny Green went with Buddy Rogers' orchestra and then wound up at CBS. I used to go visit with him and I finally got a job at CBS for \$60 a week as sort of an idea man, and I ended up a producer and director. You did a lot of your own writing in those days of live radio. I worked mostly in musical and variety shows.

When I joined it, the network was only six years old. There wasn't any such a thing as a news department. When Ed Murrow came on he did an academic sort of show. Then a fellow named Paul White started the so-called news and sports. He'd send Ted Husing out to do a football game and then Mel Allen joined. And Andre Baruch and Ralph Edwards. When Mel Allen came to CBS from Alabama, he was not doing sports, he was just a guy with a nice voice. It was like a bullpen there for us producers; you had Andre Baruch, Ralph Edwards, Mel Allen, Danny Seymour who wound up becoming head of the J. Walter Thompson advertising agency.

The Saturday Night Swing Club started in 1936; I created it, wrote it and decided what bands would be on—I produced it. I had connections with musicians and we could get them for scale—\$18 for the show—it was great publicity for these guys. Remember, at this time they had just started their bands. It was on Saturday night from seven to seven-thirty. When we were coming up to the first year of the *Swing Club*, I got the idea it would be nice to have an anniversary show and maybe stretch it to an hour and Paley gave us the okay to keep the network open after twelve o'clock at night! We picked up Benny Goodman and Bunny Berigan and Duke Ellington came on live with a group from the Cotton Club. So we had remotes from different parts of the country. They made a big deal of it—it was a good publicity thing for CBS. And from Paris, I picked up the Hot Club of France, with Django Reinhardt. Unfortunately it came via short wave, because there was no cable then; it was wobbly-sounding but it's on the record. And the fellow who introduced him from our London office was Ed Murrow—he didn't know nothin' about jazz! It was just before the war and CBS had sent Ed Murrow over there. So I had to talk to him on the short wave from Paul White's office so that when he heard the cue he was to say "We now take you to Paris." And the awful thing is that at the end of the show I never gave credit to him!

The *Swing* show was one of my big loves and on the basis of that it helped me get the Paul Whiteman show. Paul's great days were in the '20s and now this was a different era, but I was oriented to swing and I kept his band going for another couple of years. We had Jack Teagarden on trombone and George Wettling playing drums. We'd go on the road—play colleges, and go down to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans and then to the rodeo in Texas for two weeks. I was producing and directing and booking the guests. Roy Barge was Paul's arranger and we'd get together and pick out the numbers. I had to go ahead of the band and talk to the local engineer and they would work it out with CBS to get the network lines in. You see, again, this is all live. You would get together with the local affiliate's crew and often you needed help because, for example, the band might be playing in a gym and the acoustics would be horrible.

Before I finished up with Whiteman, it was coming up on one year since George Gershwin had died, so I went to CBS and said give us a Sunday afternoon to do a Gershwin concert. We had Deems Taylor and the full Whiteman orchestra. You see, Bill Paley, who ran CBS, was associated with Broadway people and he liked good taste. CBS attracted people like Norman Corwin and Johnny Green and me because we felt that's the place to be. Whereas Mr. Sarnoff was a genius in his own way at NBC, but it was just one entity of the RCA Corporation. It was a pure business thing so there was a whole different attitude. Paley would come down once in a while; you had these very intimate studios there at 45 Madison. You'd see him in the doorway, interested in what you were doing. CBS was Bill Paley's baby. He was right there.

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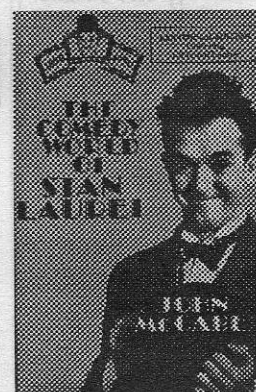
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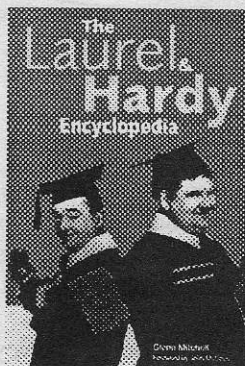
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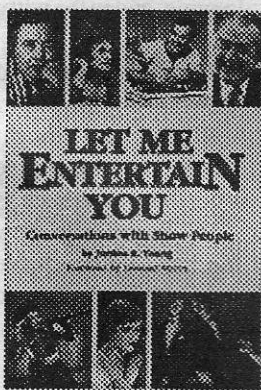


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Pop Culture

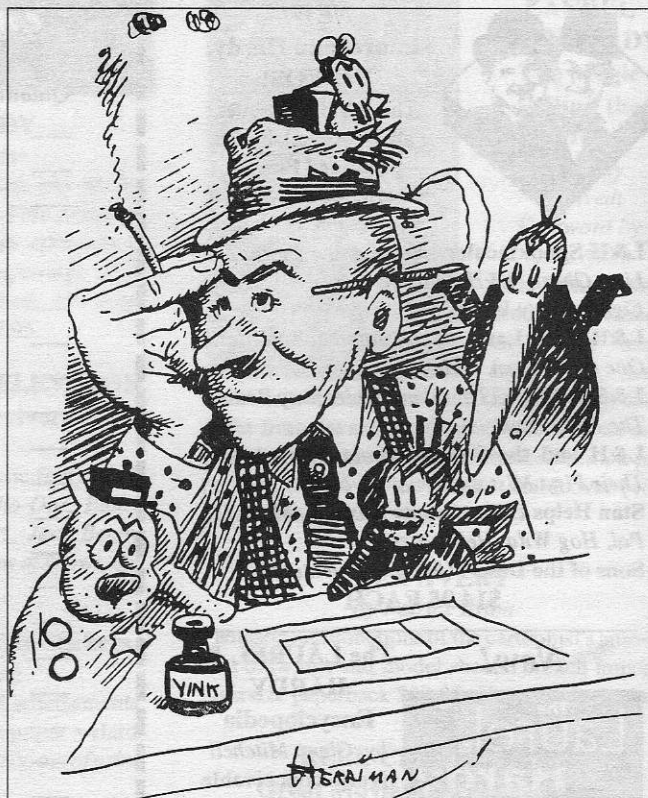
Right: George Herriman and his Krazy Ko-Konspirators; Below, Mutt and Jeff air a salary dispute with their creator, Bud Fisher.

Taking "The Funnies" Seriously

Comic strips have been an essential and lucrative part of newspapers since 1895, when Richard F. Outcalt began drawing a character named Mickey Dugan—but popularly rechristened The Yellow Kid—for the *New York World*. A century's worth of comic capers is admirably chronicled in Ron Goulart's **The Funnies: 100 Years of American Comic Strips** (Adams Publishing; 248 pages, paperback; \$15.95).

Goulart has organized his story by chronology and theme; each chapter roughly covers a decade, but occasionally the author takes two chapters to discuss different emerging trends in comic strips over the same ten-year period. For example, a chapter entitled "Flappers and Philosophers" notes that in the 1920s, female characters "began to assume more and more starring roles, especially as working girls and flappers," while a second section, "To Be Continued," details the emergence of sequential story lines, a hallmark of strips both dramatic and humorous.

It's great fun to learn about the origins of classic strips and characters such as *Blondie*, *Dick Tracy* and *Gasoline Alley*, and readers of a certain age will wax nostalgic over *Smilin' Jack*, *Buck Rogers* and *Joe Palooka*. It's surprising to see the vast number of strips which have been forgotten (does anyone out there remember *Vanilla and the Villains*, a late '20s spoof of melodramas, or *Skyroads*, an aviation-adventure strip of the early '30s?). Goulart briskly recounts the history of each strip, and gives a strong sense of why it was popular or innovative. He shows how the comics were influenced by current events (with sections devoted to strips of the Depression and World War II), and also provides colorful background about the cartoonists. Hundreds of reprints illustrate the text, representing everything from *The Yellow Kid* to *Dilbert*. (Available from Adams Media Corporation, 260 Center Street, Holbrook, MA 02343; (800) 872-5627.)



Where Goulart details the entire history of the medium, Robert C. Harvey concentrates on a handful of artists who were major influences upon **The Art of the Funnies** (University Press of Mississippi; 252 pages; 19.95, paperback; 42.50, hardcover). "The thing that comics do that no other graphic art does is to weave word and picture together to achieve a narrative purpose," Harvey notes.

A few artists, in the author's view, achieved just the perfect blend. Winsor McCay, the earliest artist profiled, was a hard act to follow; with his *Little Nemo in Slumberland* strip, he was "so far ahead of his time that many of his innovations were beyond the abilities of his contemporaries." Indeed, *Nemo* is still startling in the beauty and delicacy of McCay's drawing, and in the witty metamorphosis of time, space and dimension.

Fortunately, the advances of other artists were more readily grasped and applied. The foundations of the daily strip were laid by Bud Fisher with *Mutt and Jeff* and George McManus with *Bringing Up Father*. Roy Crane brought the adventure strip to life with *Wash Tubbs* and *Captain Easy*. The illustrative style of Alex Raymond and Milton Caniff brought new depth to strips such as *Flash Gordon*, *Rip Kirby* and *Terry and the Pirates*. E.C. Segar, who drew *Thimble Theatre* starring Popeye, "created one of the most unforgettable characters in twentieth-century fiction." George Herriman with *Krazy Kat* and Walt Kelly with *Pogo* created not just great characters but whole new worlds, while crafting situations that appealed to the intellect and the heart.

The text is copiously illustrated with strips (and, sometimes, fragments of strips). Mr. Harvey's writing is heartfelt, illuminating and entertaining. This book may be "an aesthetic history," but it has none of the musty academic tone which that subtitle implies; it's as much fun to read as the funnies themselves. (Available from University Press of Mississippi, 3825 Ridgewood Road, Jackson, MS 39211-6492; (800) 737-7788.)



Three-Ring Reading

P.T. Barnum: America's Greatest Showman by Philip B. Kunhardt, Jr., Philip B. Kunhardt III and Peter W. Kunhardt (Knopf, 358 pages, hardcover; \$45.00) is a lavishly illustrated and compellingly told account of the impresario who managed circuses and a gaudy parade of audacious entertainments.

His American Museum, which opened in 1842 and burned to the ground (twice!) in the 1860s, was a magnificent gallery of exotic animals and human "curiosities" such as Siamese twins Chang and Eng Bunker, and the personable dwarf Charlie Stratton, better known as General Tom Thumb. Barnum seems to have always paid and treated his "curiosities" well; they certainly made him a fabulously wealthy man. The colorful text is beautifully adorned with posters and hundreds of pictures, many of them taken by Matthew Brady.

Barnum's story is one of amazing perseverance; of fortune, financial ruin, and even greater fortune; of temptations and weaknesses conquered. Today's producers would do well to read a letter which Barnum wrote at the end of his life to his friend and partner, James Bailey: "You must always have a great and progressive show and also one which is clean, pure, moral and instructive. Never cater to the baser instincts of humanity...and always remember that the children have ever been our best patrons."

Another, later circus proprietor with a similar lust for life is profiled in David C. Weeks' **Ringling: The Florida Years, 1911-1936** (University Press of Florida; 350 pages; \$24.95, paper; \$49.95, hardcover). John Nicholas Ringling and his five brothers began as a performing troupe in 1882; two years hence, they organized a circus. As it grew into "The Greatest Show on Earth," Ringling collected priceless artworks, developed Florida resort areas, and became known as a financier. He used his success in marketing popular culture to perpetuate high culture (through his Museum of Art in Sarasota). Ringling's last years were sadly marked by domestic strife, infighting with business partners and financial collapse, but his story is absorbingly recounted in this product of ten years' research. One wishes there were more than 48 illustrations, but they vividly depict Ringling's extravagant life. (University Press of Florida, 15 NW 15th St., Gainesville FL 32611; (800) 226-3822.)

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Jazz Legends Still Gigging and Swinging

Lovers of vintage jazz and swing will be able to hear and meet some of their favorites in person at The March of Jazz Festival, being held March 22 through 24 in Clearwater Beach, Florida. Among the guests scheduled to appear are bassist Bob Haggart (legendary for "Big Noise From Winnetka"); saxophonist Flip Phillips; soprano saxman Bob Wilber (a protege of the great Sidney Bechet); guitarist George Van Eps (a member of the Benny Goodman and Ray Noble bands in the mid '30s); pianist Joe Bushkin (who worked with Bunny Berigan, Eddie Condon, Muggsy Spanier, Tommy Dorsey, Louis Armstrong etc. etc.); stride pianist Ralph Sutton, and the great vibraphonist Red Norvo. Many of the best current players will be attending, too; for further information, write Arbors Records, P.O. Box 58059, St. Petersburg, FL 33715, or call (800) 299-1930.

On the other side of the continent, there's the Paradise Valley Jazz Party, which will feature Sutton, Wilber, and the great Milt Hinton on bass, still swinging in his 80s. For info: 6014 N. Nauni Valley Drive, Paradise Valley, AZ 85253; (602) 948-7993.

This new 22-track compilation is destined to be **THE MOST COLLECTABLE SPIKE JONES ALBUM IN YEARS**. It includes eight previously unissued tracks. It also sounds more authentic than previous releases. Now hear Jones classics like "Morpheus" the way they were really meant to sound. And hear many of his recordings for the first time ever.



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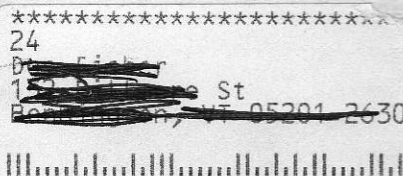
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