

Past Times

No. 25 THE NOSTALGIA ENTERTAINMENT NEWSLETTER \$5.00

Short But Sweet MGM Films on Video



Time was when short subjects were an integral part of any night at the movies. Mighty MGM, realizing this, distributed comedy shorts produced by Hal Roach Studios from 1927 to 1935, and released cartoons made by Ub Iwerks in the early '30s. But in 1935, Metro began producing its own short subjects, and would continue to have a large unit devoted solely to shorts for the next 20 years. Thirty-five of them, demon-

strating the variety of the studio's offerings, are collected in **Cavalcade of MGM Shorts Volume 2** (ML 105212; \$129.99), a four-laserdisc box set from MGM/UA Home Video.

The first hour is devoted to the studio's *Crime Does Not Pay* shorts. These are very much like radio's *Gangbusters* series—the "MGM Crime Reporter" (young Van Heflin in one short) introduces a law enforcement official, who then recounts how the lawbreakers committed their crime and were ultimately nabbed. Robert Taylor makes his film debut in the series' first entry, *Buried Loot*, as a bank teller whose embezzlement scheme goes awry. *The Public Pays* is about extortion rackets, and *Torture Money* features character actor Edwin Maxwell as the ringleader of an insurance-fraud gang. All three shorts are fast-paced and rather surprisingly gritty for MGM subjects.

Six Technicolor "Fitzpatrick Traveltalks" are included, ranging from a 1935 short on Los Angeles (a bittersweet experience when one compares its long-ago glamour to its 1996 condition) through late '30s visits to Hong Kong and Paris. We go to Florida in a 1941 short (wartime conditions made globe-trotting a mighty hazardous experience and put the emphasis on Stateside adventures), and conclude with a 1950 short taking us to the Thames.

This box has less of an emphasis on comedy than did its predecessor, but the six Pete Smith Specialties are all amusing in their own way. *Flicker Memories* is an anything but respectful look back at the movies' earliest days, with footage from a Western made circa 1914 accompanied by Smith's wiseguy narration. *Groovie Movie* has some nicely-photographed swing dancing. *Hollywood Scout* is a 1945 short about animal actors; *Bargain Madness* is a hectic excursion into situation comedy, with a mob of women invading a department store sale. Finally, we get the Smith series' very last entry *Fall Guy*, a mini-retrospective of the wackiest gags perpetrated by director-comic-stuntman Dave O'Brien.

Two sides of the collection are an "MGM Potpourri," among them dramatizations of short stories (*The Tell-Tale Heart* with a young Joseph Schildkraut), another Pete Smith short devoted to dancing (*Let's Dance*), and two shorts devoted to the prophecies of Nostradamus (including one that doesn't bode well for Paris in 1999!).

The last three hours of the collection are devoted to musical shorts—most of them with fictional frameworks that feel like miniature versions of MGM's feature musicals. One

Continued on Page 11

Umbriago! Durante's Decca Discs Back in Print

Some of the finest recordings by the great Durante are finally available again, and at a bargain price. MCA Special Products, which manufactures budget-line compact discs from the vast Decca Records catalog, has lately been delving into the vaults for new CDs by Al Jolson and Bing Crosby. Now they've reissued ten vintage Jimmy Durante recordings as **Inka Dinka Doo** (MCAD-20338).

Recorded in 1944, '46 and '50, these are among the best records Durante ever made. He was enjoying a resurgence of popularity, which had begun with his successful radio show with Garry Moore, and his high spirits permeate every performance. The band is led by Roy Bargy, who conducted for Durante's radio shows (and whose résumé included many years with Paul Whiteman).

The songs, most of them written entirely or in part by Durante, do have a sameness to them. In fact, you might call this album ten variations on a theme—but what a theme! All of the tracks are joyful gems, and it's impossible to be depressed while listening to them. This points up an interesting paradox about Durante: so much of his "act" was based on being angry ("I'm surrounded by assassins!"), yet he was so sweet that you never took it seriously. Further, Durante knew that the appeal of his act depended upon your knowing that he was really a sweetheart.

Many of the tunes here are essential Durante classics, such as "Start Off Each Day With a Song" and "Jimmy, The Well-Dressed Man" (both of which feature guest appearances by old teammate Eddie Jackson). The vocal group Six Hits and a Miss

Continued on Page 16

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

The First Movie Musicals.....	5	Django Reinhardt's Gypsy Jazz.....	17
Lon Chaney in Print, on Video.....	7	Rudy Vallee's Peak Recordings.....	18
Buster Keaton's Short Comedies.....	9	Eddie Cantor Radio Shows on CD....	20
The Genesis of <i>Kane</i>	10	NBC's Jazz Chamber Music.....	21
Crooner Dick Todd.....	13	Frank Bresce's Radio History.....	22

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See Page 31

NOSTALGIA NEWSWIRE

First off, here's wishing a speedy recovery to **Mel Tormé**, who is not only a great singer (and *Past Times* subscriber), but someone who has long promoted the cause of vintage entertainment. In addition to being an authority on vintage movies and, of course, music, Mel as a boy sang regularly with the Coon-Sanders Nighthawks and then became a very busy young actor in Chicago radio. Our prayers and best wishes are with you, Mel!...Speaking of the **Coon-Sanders Nighthawks**, the first CD devoted to the band's recordings will soon be released by the ASV/Living Era label, which is based in England but widely distributed in the States. *Everything Is Hotsy-Totsy Now* will have 25 tracks made between 1925 and '32; now if someone will just do a complete Coon-Sanders collection (the band's 74 issued sides, almost all of 'em gems, would fit perfectly on three CDs)...Other forthcoming CDs include discs on the **Bert Lown** orchestra—a smooth early '30s band—and the rollicking **Fred "Sugar" Hall / Arthur Fields** group, which made some of the happiest records of the '20s. These will be issued by The Old Masters, both with liner notes by your humble editor....One of our favorite World Wide Websites is "The Roaring 1920s Concert Extravaganza," put together by the folks who run the **Vintage Cassette Recording Catalog**, a firm devoted to music recorded between 1899 and 1935. You can download pictures and sound clips of **Al Jolson**, **Billy Murray**, **Helen Kane**, **Vaughn DeLeath** and many other '20s personalities—and, of course, check out the catalog (we hope to review several releases in forthcoming issues). (The website is at <http://bestwebs.com/shop/vintage.html>)....Just before presstime, we learned about two new releases concerning personalities who are the subject of articles in this issue. Fans of **Lon Chaney** (see page 7) will want the new laserdisc restoration of *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, released by Image Entertainment and produced by David Shepard. Tinted and toned and with a new score, the laserdisc also includes a reproduction of the original theatre program (as does Image's spectacular new laserdisc of **Douglas Fairbanks'** 1925 Technicolor epic *The Black Pirate*). And **Rudy Vallee** (see page 18) is the subject of a new memoir by his widow, Eleanor Vallee; it's entitled *My Vagabond Lover*, from Taylor Publishing Company....On October 15, MCA/Universal Home Video released videocassettes of three **Burns and Allen** films—*Love in Bloom*, *Here Comes Cookie* and (praise be) the wonderful *Six of a Kind*, which also stars W.C. Fields, Alison Skipworth, Charles Ruggles and Mary Boland. The latter cassette also includes the original trailer. Each of the films retails for \$14.98 (George and Gracie's *Lambchops* is due out on laserdisc; see page 6)...MGM/UA is heavily promoting its "last time this century" video release of the restored *Wizard of Oz*; a Greyhound bus loaded with Oz memorabilia is touring the U.S. through December (you can find the tour route on the Web at <http://www.greyhound.com/yellow.html>)....**Disney** fans will want to look out for *Mouse Under Glass* by David Koenig (Bonaventure Press), which will detail preliminary ideas and deleted sequences for the classic animated features (information: P.O. Box 51961, Irvine CA 92619)...On September 11, the U.S. Postal Service issued commemorative stamps saluting bandleaders **Tommy and Jimmy Dorsey**, **Benny Goodman**, **Count Basie** and **Glenn Miller**, and songwriters **Harold Arlen**, **Hoagy Carmichael**, **Dorothy Fields** and **Johnny Mercer**. The dedication ceremony was held at New York's Shubert Alley and family members of the honorees attended....A fire damaged the famed DeMille-Lasky barn in Hollywood, home to the **Hollywood Studio Museum**; fortunately, most of the artifacts were saved....Just opened is the **Hollywood Entertainment Museum**, a 33,000 square foot building which houses memorabilia old and new, including a miniature of Tinseltown in 1930. Information: (213) 465-7900.

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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See Page 31

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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

Richard III, (newly-discovered oldest American feature film, from 1912) to be screened October 29 as part of AFI Los Angeles International Film Festival. Info: (213) 466-1767.

Tinting, Toning and Technicolor Festival, October 24 and 30; Presentation on George Eastman House archives with Paolo Cherchi Usai, December 7. Wexner Center, Ohio State University, Columbus OH. Info: (614) 688-3307.

National Festival of the West, March 13-16, 1997; Rawhide, Scottsdale AZ. Four days of western film celebrities, movies, art, collectibles, food, costume contests. Info: P.O. Box 12966, Scottsdale AZ 85267; (602) 996-4387.

MUSIC EVENTS & FESTIVALS

Great Eastern Mechanical Music Show, November 17, Ramada Plaza Hotel-JFK Int'l Airport, New York City. 78 rpm records, cylinders, antique phonographs, music boxes, and other musical machines for sale. Info: (718) 343-1554 or (718) 357-4268.

West Coast Ragtime Festival, Fresno CA, November 22-24. With fine modern-day purveyors of the form such as Terry Waldo, David Jasen, Trebor Tichenor, Galen Wilkes, Ian and Regina Whitcomb, more. Info: P.O. Box 4747, Fresno CA 93744; (209) 436-1354.

The March of Jazz '97, Doubletree Resort Surfside, Clearwater Beach FL, March 21-23, 1997. Guests include swing-era greats Joe Bushkin, Bob Haggart, Red Norvo, Milt Hinton, Flip Phillips, Bob Wilber and Jerry Jerome, along with young turks Dave Frishberg, Ralph Sutton, Clark Terry and many more. Info: (813) 726-7494 or (800) 299-1930.

OLD-TIME RADIO EVENTS

SPERDVAC Convention, Crowne Plaza Hotel, Los Angeles CA, November 8-10. Recreations of vintage shows, panels, banquets, dealers room. Guests include Peg Lynch, Parley Baer, Alan Young, Jean Gillespie. Event also includes a reunion of *One Man's Family* cast members. Info: (310) 947-9800.

COLLECTIBLE SHOWS

Hollywood Collectors Show and Auction, Clarion International at O'Hare, Chicago IL, November 2-3; Beverly Garland Holiday Inn, North Hollywood CA, January 11 -12 1997. Huge gathering of movie memorabilia dealers. Info on all events: Phone, (352) 683-5110; fax, (352) 688-8114.

All-Collectibles Super Show, Miramar Sheraton Hotel, Santa Monica CA, November 24 and December 15. Info: (818) 997-6496.

Hollywoodfest, Holiday Inn, Skokie IL, Dec. 7. Info: (847) 966-0496; (312) 665-4090.

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

Beautiful Monstrous Music

We know that the focus of this publication is the popular entertainment of the '20s through the '40s. However, there are two new CDs of music written for science-fiction films of the early '50s which are so well done we thought you should know about them.

Monstrous Movie Music (MMM 1950) includes newly-recorded reconstructions of cues from *The Mole People*, *Them!*, *It Came From Outer Space* and *It Came From Beneath the Sea*. Its sequel, **More Monstrous Movie Music** (MMM 1951) features selections from *Tarantula*, *The Beast From 20,000 Fathoms*, *Gorgo* and the main title from *The Monolith Monsters*. No sci-fi buffs we, we can't vouch for the quality of those movies, but the scores are excellent, written by the likes of Bronislau Kaper (who wrote songs and scores for MGM films from 1936 through the early '60s), Mischa Bakaleinikoff (a very busy composer for Columbia from the '30s onward) and David Buttolph (a collaborator with Alfred Newman at Fox from 1934 to the '50s).

These CDs are obviously a labor of love, involving participants from around the world. The performances were recorded in Cracow, Poland by the Radio Symphony Orchestra of that city, under the direction of Masatoshi Mitsumoto.

The quality of the recordings is excellent, capturing a full, rich sound that is still faithful to the originals. Many of these themes had to be reconstructed from the films themselves, since written scores no longer exist. Kathleen Mayne should be congratulated for this restoration work, as should producer David Schecter.

The booklets are superb, with full information on each film, track-by-track descriptions of each score, biographies of the composers, and color illustrations of rare scores, posters, lobby cards and pressbooks.

(Available for \$16.95 each plus \$2.75 shipping and 8.25% tax for CA residents from Monstrous Movie Music, P.O. Box 7088, Burbank CD 91510-7088; (818) 566-7393.)

MGM's Vintage Horror Films Collected

Even though it produced several films with Lon Chaney, MGM was never the horror-film studio that Universal was (or even RKO, for that matter). One gets the impression that after the disastrous reaction to Tod Browning's *Freaks*, Louis B. Mayer and Irving Thalberg never wanted another horror script to cross their desks. Still, moviegoers wanted to see more horror films as the '30s progressed, and after witnessing the continuing success of Universal, MGM didn't want to be left out. Four of the notable MGM horrors of the decade—which is to say almost all of them—are now available on a three-laserdisc box set, **MGM Horror Classics** (ML105725; \$99.99).

Boris Karloff is the star of *The Mask of Fu Manchu* (1932), made not long after he'd made a smash in Universal's *Frankenstein* and just before he'd return to that studio for *The Mummy*. Directed by Charles Brabin, this 72-minute romp co-stars Lewis Stone, Karen Morley (a recent guest at Cinecon 32) and Myrna Loy. (Despite a ludicrous costume, Miss Loy is still a convincing femme fatale as Fu Manchu's daughter.) Karloff plays a diabolical genius who menaces an archeological expedition to Genghis Khan's tomb. He wants the ancient ruler's mask and sword for himself, believing that Khan's artifacts will enable him to conquer the world. The writers of *Raiders of the Lost Ark* must've seen this one several times; it's corny, campy fun, yet it has the fine production values characteristic of MGM.

Ace cinematographer Karl Freund (who had photographed the great silents *The Golem*, *Metropolis* and *The Last Laugh*, and who would ultimately devise the three-camera technique for TV's *I Love Lucy*) had a fling at directing in the early '30s. He helmed eight features between 1932 and '35, of which the aforementioned *The Mummy* was first and *Mad Love* was the last. Peter Lorre plays an obsessive plastic surgeon who is in love with lovely Frances Drake. Miss Drake then naively asks the doctor to perform surgery on the injured hands of her pianist husband! Freund proves himself a fine director as well as cameraman. (Because Lorre is bald in this film and has a pet cockatoo, film critic Pauline Kael sees this film as a direct antecedent to *Citizen Kane*, an opinion about as silly as most of her other thoughts regarding the Welles film.)

MGM's one resident master of the macabre, Tod Browning, directed the two remaining films in the box set. Browning had made the notorious *Freaks*—available separately on laserdisc and VHS cassettes from MGM/UA, incidentally—and was able to resurrect his career at MGM by pitching a story which borrowed heavily from his two greatest hits, *London After Midnight* (a 1925 MGM horror with Lon Chaney) and *Dracula* (Universal's 1931 sensation with Bela Lugosi). The result was *Mark of the Vampire* (1935), starring Lugosi with Lionel Barrymore, Lionel Atwill, Carol Borland, Donald Meek and Jean Hersholt. With Lugosi and Borland as vampires who prey upon the residence of a small village and the two Lionels hot on the trail, there are thrills aplenty in this compact little film, which runs only an hour.

Mr. Barrymore and Mr. Browning collaborated again a year later for the genuinely strange little film *The Devil Doll*. Erich von Stroheim, whose tastes also ran to the bizarre, was a co-writer of the script, which casts Barrymore as a wrongly convicted banker who escapes from Devil's Island and concocts a serum which shrinks humans into living voodoo dolls. Barrymore is disguised as a kindly old woman for much of the picture, which co-stars Maureen O'Sullivan and movie pioneer Henry B. Walthall, and which was Browning's last major release.

The print quality is excellent on the four features, with the exception of about ten brief snippets from *Fu Manchu* which were evidently cut out of the 35mm materials and which now exist only on dupey 16mm. (Some of these scenes appear to have been deleted for censorship reasons.) The four films are divided over three CLV laserdiscs, meaning that three of them start in mid-disc. All four are also available separately from MGM/UA as VHS videocassettes, with a list price of 19.98 each. An advantage of buying the laserdisc set, in addition to the superior visual quality, is that the disc package also includes the trailers for *Mark of the Vampire*, *Mad Love* and *Devil Doll*. Lugosi addresses the audience directly in new footage shot for the first trailer, which is a real treat—especially when Bela has to read the names of the other cast members. Likewise, the *Mad Love* trailer has new scenes wherein Peter Lorre, newly arrived in Hollywood, tells us about the film while lounging in his posh bachelor pad.

Rediscovering Child Actress Baby Peggy

One of the biggest child stars of the 1920s was Baby Peggy, who was internationally popular between 1921 and 1927. Her feature films have not been revived in the ensuing decades—because every single one was thought to be lost. But recent months have brought something of a Baby Peggy bonanza. Three of her films have just been made available on videocassettes; Peggy herself (actually Diana Serra Cary) has just made a personal appearance at the annual Cinecon festival in Hollywood; her autobiography is about to be published; and an earlier book has just been reprinted.

Captain January (1924) was directed by comedy ace Edward F. Cline (who had just finished an association with Buster Keaton when this was made). It costars Irene Rich and Hobart Bosworth, with Bosworth cast as a lighthouse keeper who adopts a little girl who literally has been cast adrift. In *The Family Secret*, a 1924 Universal release directed by William Seiter, Peggy is the product of a forbidden marriage. Her father has been wrongfully imprisoned for burglary, and upon his release, he finds the lost child, not realizing that she is his own daughter. *April Fool*, a 1926 Chadwick release, co-stars Duane Thompson, Alexander Carr and Snitz Edwards and involves an unemployed pants-presser who gives up a fortune to ensure his daughter's happiness. These films are now available from Grapevine Video, P.O. Box 46161, Phoenix AZ 85063; phone, (602) 973-3661; fax, (602) 973-2973. *January* has an orchestral score and sells for \$16.95; *Secret* is also has an orchestral backing and sells for \$19.95; *April Fool* has a piano score, and goes for \$14.95.

As for the writings of Ms. Cary, her autobiography *What Ever Happened to Baby Peggy?* was officially published October 1st by Thomas Dunne Books, an imprint of St. Martins Press. The 334 page book includes 32 photographs and a complete filmography; we haven't seen the book as yet, but we understand that it is an unflinching story of Peggy's exploitation by the film industry and by her often battling parents, who were evidently far more star-struck and far less responsible than their sober-minded daughter. The family breadwinner from the age of two, young Peggy had to cope with the loss of her stardom at the age of ten. She managed to overcome the traumas inflicted upon her by her parents and formed a happy marriage, became a mother, wrote a highly regarded book in 1975, and has championed the causes of film preservation and helping former child stars.

A full review of Ms. Cary's latest book can be found on the Worldwide Web at the site of The Silents Majority (<http://www.mdle.com/ClassicFilms/index.htm>). Her previous book is *Hollywood Posse*, newly reprinted by Oklahoma University Press (\$16.95, paperback). It's a history of the cowboy stuntmen—the fellows who did all the really tough work in Westerns.

Since Ms. Cary's father, Jack Montgomery, was a member of this group, she became close to many of them—Art Acord, Neal Hart, Fred Burns and other denizens of Gower Gulch. Their bravery, their craftsmanship and the less than ideal working conditions they endured are vividly recounted in this reprint, which includes a new preface, more rare photographs and a new index.

Turn Your Home Into a Kinetoscope Parlor!

If you love old movies—REALLY old movies, those made around 1894 or so—you can have the experience of watching them the way that original audiences did over 100 years ago. A gent named Ray Phillips seems to be the world authority on Edison Kinetoscopes, the coin-operated motorized projection machines housed in a cabinet. (Drop in the coin, look through the viewer, and voila—the magic of moving pictures.) Mr. Phillips manufactures operating replicas of the Kinetoscope, which was the first machine to use 35mm films.

Several museums proudly display his handiwork, among them the Museum of the Moving Image (in New York and London), the Cinémathèque Française in Paris, the Museo Nazionale del Cinema in Turin, Italy and the Norwegian Film Institute in Oslo. You can also own one of these replicas; for information about them—as well as 50 available Kinetoscope films made between 1893-1898—write to Ray Phillips, 12337 Landale Street, Studio City CA 91604; fax, (818) 508-7717. Mr. Phillips is working on a book called *Edison's Kinetoscope and its Films Through 1896*, which he says is “now creeping through publication.”

Chaplin's "Goliath" Profiled in New Documentary

Chances are you've seen many of the great Chaplin Mutual comedies (*The Rink*, *The Cure*, *The Pawnshop*, etc.) and have enjoyed the deft comic performances of Eric Campbell, who injected a wonderful tongue-in-cheek quality to his roles as the hulking villain.

The actor—normally seen with overgrown false eyebrows and a variety of phony beards—has become internationally beloved in the eighty years since the Mutuals were first screened, but very little has been known about his life.

Known to be childlike and kindly despite his massive size, he had a weakness for fast cars and died in a Los Angeles auto

accident on December 20, 1917, a few months after finishing Chaplin's *The Adventurer*; he was only 37).

A new video documentary about the actor will be distributed by Kino on Video in 1997; until then, it's

available exclusively from the Charlie Chaplin Film Company, publishers of the excellent *Limelight* newsletter. *Chaplin's Goliath: In Search of Scotland's Lost Star* promises to trace Campbell's story “from his roots in Scotland to his years in the English music hall, through his short but intense film career to the bizarre last six months of his life...and beyond.”

Chaplin's Goliath is available for \$20 along with a \$20 one-year subscription to the *Limelight* quarterly, or for \$25 separately. (Please add \$5.00 per tape for shipping and handling.)

By the way, the most recent issue of *Limelight* demonstrates the depth and amount of research in the publication. There's an article about Chaplin's battles with the head of the Essanay film company, an interview with contemporary silent film-score composer Carl Davis, and a rebuttal of Joyce Milton's recent Chaplin biography. A single issue sells for \$6.50 (7.50 outside the US), or \$20 for a four-issue subscription (\$25 outside the US). Info: Charlie Chaplin Film Company, 300 S. Topanga Canyon Blvd., Topanga CA 90290; fax number: (310) 455-3515.



All Singing, All Dancing, All Inclusive

Why on earth would anyone want to spend years writing a book about early movie musicals? Not, say, the Astaire-Rogers classics, but the *earliest* musicals—the films produced between 1927 and 1932, when fluid camera movement stopped in its tracks, choreography looked more like calisthenics, acting frequently became oratory, and the plotlines were more laughable than they intended. Well, those films are worth writing about for their historical value, of course—in their often feeble way, they documented the growing pains of a new medium. And, although some folks might think us crazy to admit it, a lot of those all-talking, all-singing, all-dancing epics are still a lot of fun to watch. The available prints might be incomplete, or black and white dupes of movies originally in color, but these films still have a magnetism that makes them worth seeing today.

Many of these early musicals no longer exist, but evidently the moviegoing public of the time felt that too many were around. As Edwin M. Bradley puts it in his new book **The First Hollywood Musical** (McFarland; 400 pages, hardcover, \$68.00 postpaid), "The greedy studios almost killed the genre by glutting the market with too many films that looked and sounded like clones of each other. Some of the same marquees that trumpeted 'All Talking! All Singing! All Dancing!' attractions were, some months later, assuring customers that 'This is NOT a Musical.'"

This book is a fine complement to Richard Barrios' *A Song in the Dark* (reviewed in *Past Times* #20). Barrios' book examined trends within the genre; Mr. Bradley starts each of 12 chapters with an overview of a particular trend, and then provides very detailed accounts of the films in that sub-group, covering 171 films in all. Although many of these films would be considered creaky by even the staunchest film buffs, Bradley argues that these films created the conventions of the genre, preserved on film many great entertainers, brought Hollywood much new talent before and behind the camera, and helped filmmakers understand what worked in the new medium of sound film and what didn't. "Painful lessons were learned, but rather than join the present-day snickerers at the quirks of the early talkies, we should be impressed at the amazing speed of the

Continued on Page 32



These Boops No Dupes

In one of her classic early '30s cartoons, Betty Boop pleaded, "Don't take my Boop-boop-a-doop away!" But they pretty much did, anyway. Good prints of the femme fatale's classic black and white Fleischer cartoons have been largely unavailable on video. Of late, your best chance to see Ms. Boop as she was meant to be seen has been on the American Movie Classics cable network, which screens her adventures on Saturday mornings.

But the fine folks at Republic Pictures have just given back the Boop-boop-a-doop, with the release of **Betty Boop: The Definitive Collection**—eight videocassettes containing 115 original cartoons. (Going through the Betty Boop filmography in Leslie Cabarga's book *The Fleischer Story*—available from Da Capo Press—your editor counted only 90 cartoons; the remaining 25 entries are Bimbo cartoons and a stray musical short or two.) The eight volumes are available individually for \$9.98, or in a deluxe collector's edition with library case packaging and a bonus booklet (*The Betty Boop Boopliography*) for \$69.98. The booklet is billed as having "intriguing inside information on the history of Betty Boop," although we've never known Betty to kiss and tell.

The films have been grouped thematically by animation historian Jerry Beck, but are still in a roughly chronological order. Volume One is *The Birth of Betty*, and includes a special introduction by Richard Fleischer, the renowned film director and son of animator Max Fleischer. Volume Two, *Pre-Hays Code and Jazzy Guest Stars* has Betty's sauciest early adventures and includes the guest appearances by Louis Armstrong and Cab Calloway. Volume Three is *Surrealism and Prime Betty*; Four is *Musical Madness and Fairy Tales and Fantasy*, which includes the amazing films *Snow White* and *Betty in Blunderland*. With Volume Five, *Curtain Call and Betty & Grampy*, we'll begin to see the emphasis in the series shift to other characters; *Betty's Boys and New Friends*, the sixth volume, shows how Betty always gets her man; the seventh collection is *Betty's Travels and Betty & Pudgy*, introducing her canine companion—who stars in the eighth and last volume, *Betty & Pudgy II and Pudgy & Pals*.

The films are in their original black and white format—not colorized, thank goodness—and are from beautiful prints. A few of them are cropped rather tightly, so that gags taking place in the farthest reaches of the frame are lopped off. Almost all of them have the "U.M. & M. TV Corp." main titles which were evidently added to the negatives in the 1950s; however, *Bimbo's Initiation* has had original Paramount logos added at the beginning and end (although it retains a "U.M. & M." main title!). A few films have slightly scratchy soundtracks, but the audio quality is remarkably rich and clear for the most part. The running times of the cassettes vary from just over an hour to nearly two. It *should* go without saying that these are among the most imaginative and delightful cartoons ever made, but if you haven't seen these gems, here's your chance to see clear, un-duped Boops.

New Book Due on the Talkie Revolution

In *Past Times* #20, we reviewed Richard Barrios' excellent book *A Song in the Dark*, about musical films made between 1927 and 1932; Edwin M. Bradley's *The First Hollywood Musical*, covering the same period, is reviewed at left. Since we find this era of movie history to be particularly intriguing, we're happy to note the forthcoming publication of *The Speed of Sound: Hollywood and the Talkie Revolution, 1926-1930* by Scott Eyman (author of *Mary Pickford: America's Sweetheart* and *Ernst Lubitsch: Laughter in Paradise*).

Scheduled for publication by Simon and Schuster in March 1997, *The Speed of Sound* will retail for \$30; the 450-page volume will include dozens of previously unpublished stills "documenting the most turbulent five years ever to strike an art form." (We might make a case for the collapse of dramatic radio between 1949 and 1954, but we'll let it be.) We hope that Mr. Eyman will discuss some of the pre-1926 talkies (Edison, using cylinders, and Lee DeForest, with a sound-on-film method, each made several experimental talkie shorts), and we trust that we'll gain some new insight to the period when Vitaphone was supplanted by Vitaphone.

A Wrath-Inducing Laserdisc

FoxVideo has lately been releasing more of the classic vintage films from the 20th Century-Fox vaults, a move which we applaud. A recent laserdisc release is **The Grapes of Wrath** (FoxVideo 0896680; \$49.98), the magnificent 1940 film based on John Steinbeck's novel about the Joad family, who leave the dust bowl of Oklahoma in the late '30s for California.

Henry Fonda knew that Tom Joad was a perfect part for him, one with which he'd be identified for the rest of his career. He wanted so much to play this role that to win it he signed a multi-year contract with Fox, anticipating that much of what the studio would assign him after *Wrath* would be mediocre or worse. (Aside from some turkeys like *Wild Geese Calling*, most of his Fox films are actually pretty good.) John Ford, with his gift for illuminating the personal stories within epic events, was the perfect director. Jane Darwell is unforgettable as the strong-willed Ma Joad; in fact, the whole film is a bonanza for those of us who have a special affection for character actors. John Carradine is splendid as former preacher Casey, as are Charlie Grapewin, Zeffie Tilbury and Eddie Quillan—but the high point of the picture is an emotional soliloquy delivered by John Qualen as displaced farmer Muley Graves.

With moody photography by the great Gregg Toland (who would shoot *Citizen Kane* later in the year), the film—usually—is as visually stunning as an Ansel Adams photograph. Unfortunately, while the print used for the FoxVideo edition is sharp, the transfer to laserdisc is overly contrasty and uneven.

Dark grays and black tones have blotches that vary in size and intensity from frame to frame; the constantly dancing blotches make it hard to concentrate on the story. You can reduce a little of this by lowering the brightness control on your television, but it's really a shame that the beautiful photography has been spoiled by an inept transfer.

The CLV-mode disc also includes the trailer, taken from a slightly worn print. Oddly enough, while the print used for the trailer isn't as sharply focused, it has none of the blotchiness that mars the feature film. We're glad to see that the FoxVideo folks are making more vintage films available on video, but we hope that future releases are transferred with more care.

CD-Rom Films: New Technology, Old Favorites

With the explosion of new technologies, some things remain constant. In the past few decades, we've gone from 16mm prints for home use, to 8mm and Super 8, to videocassettes and laserdiscs, and now (ta-da!) to CD-Rom. We're not sure yet what the advantage is to watching a movie on your computer, but if you absolutely need to, now you can watch some Charlie Chaplin films, Betty Boop cartoons and Three Stooges comedies on your PC or Macintosh. A company called CD Titles has made available classic—and public domain—films with these favorites.

The vintage films offered by this firm are **Charlie Chaplin Film Festival** (stock no. 411), **The Three Stooges** (406) and **Betty Boop** (402). All three CD-Rom titles retail for \$10.99 if ordered directly from the company, and they can be found at a lower price at office-supply stores such as Staples. The Chaplin disc contains three of the great Mutual shorts (*The Cure*, *The Rink* and *The Fireman*), along with an Essanay from 1915 (*A Night at the Show*). The Stooges disc has the same four public-domain shorts available on VHS tapes from a variety of distributors: *Disorder in the Court* with Curly, and *Brideless Groom*, *Sing a Song of Six Pants* and *Malice in the Palace* with Shemp. The eight Betty Boop cartoons include a couple of early '30s gems (*A Language All My Own*, in which Betty flies to Japan, and *No! No! A Thousand Times No!*, a cute spoof of melodramas). There are also a lot of later titles which place the emphasis on everyone but Betty (*House Cleaning Blues*, *Musical Mountaineers*). All of the cartoons are in the original black and white.

To be sure, this is not the optimal way to see these films. The prints used are often a bit murky, and the digitizing is not done to pinpoint precision. The image is discernible when the window on your monitor's screen is about six inches across and five inches tall, but if you expand it, the image becomes a parade of big, fat pixels. We ran these CD-Roms on a Macintosh, where the animation was quite smooth and the sound just fine, and also on a PC with Windows 3.1. There, the motion was herky-jerky; sound quality was still fine.

Even though the quality of the digitizing and the prints used leave much to be desired, we quite enjoyed these CD-Rom discs. They reminded us of when we were first collecting films thirty years ago on Standard 8mm. Public domain Chaplin films and Betty Boop cartoons were among the most widely available items then, and it's kind of touching that the same old films are again among the first items in a new home-entertainment technology. (All discs available directly from CD Titles, 411 Waverley Oaks Road, Waltham, MA 01254-8414; fax, (617) 642-1704; website, <http://www.cdtitles.com>)

Vitaphone Treasures Due on Laserdisc

Those of us who love the dance bands, vaudeville acts and comedy shorts of the '20s and '30s are going to have more fun than we can stand when MGM/UA Home Video issues the five-laserdisc box set, **Cavalcade of Vitaphone Shorts, Vol. II** (ML105220; \$139.98). At press time, the release date was scheduled for November 7.

We haven't yet seen the actual discs, but we have seen a number of the shorts in screenings at UCLA, and the pictorial and audio quality is superb. Some of the earlier entries might not be terribly cinematic, but the performers are so mesmerizing that they don't need any help from flashy cinematography or editing. The collection starts with a real rarity—the Al Jolson *Plantation Act* short, the near-demise of which was chronicled by Brad Kay in *Past Times* #19. If you like hot dance music and jazz, you'll go nuts when you see and hear Gus Arnheim in two shorts (featuring young Russ Columbo playing hot jazz violin); banjo player par excellence Harry Reser and his Eskimos; an all-girl band called The Ingenues (and a later equivalent, Phil Spitalny and his Musical Queens); and pianist-composer Zez Confrey duetting with Babe Ruth (!) in a short called *Home Run on the Keys*.

Comedy is well represented, with Burns and Allen in *Lambchops*; a trio of Mack Sennett compilations; *Smoked Hams*, starring Daphne Pollard and Shemp Howard; Fatty Arbuckle in a talkie, *Buzzin' Around*, and shorts with up-and-coming Bob Hope and Red Skelton. Several great vaudeville acts are here, too, among them Blossom Seeley and Benny Fields, midgets George and Olive Brasno, The Duncan Sisters, dancer-comic Pat Rooney and mandolin virtuoso Dave Appolon. Our deepest gratitude goes to producer George Feltenstein—with hopes for more such treasures in the future. There's a cornucopia of great entertainment in these 45 shorts; this set will never be far from our laserdisc player!

Behind the Make-Up, Lon Chaney's Gifts Revealed

Lon Chaney wore many masks in his career, but the one mask which was perhaps unfairly applied to him was that of a "horror actor." Chaney certainly played a variety of exotic characters, but he was an actor of great depth and subtlety and one whose range extended beyond frightening the patrons with a ghoulish make-up. This argument is made persuasively by Michael F. Blake in his most recent book about Chaney, *A Thousand Faces: Lon Chaney's Unique Artistry in Motion Pictures* (Vestal Press; 398 pages, paperback; \$19.95).

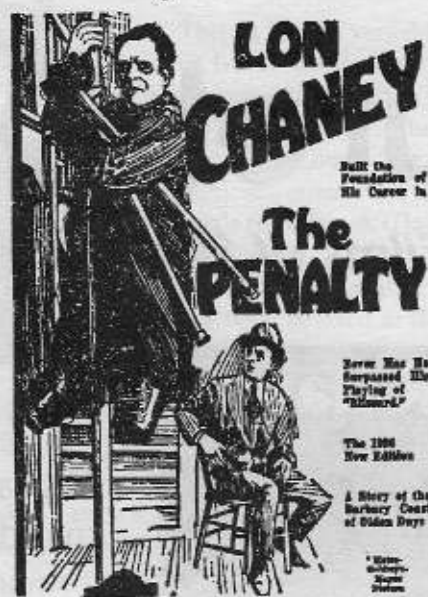
Mr. Blake, whose father was an actor, was himself a child actor for many years and grew up to become a professional make-up artist. He was first entranced by Chaney at age 13, when his local PBS station ran Chaney's 1922 film *Shadows*, and has been amassing information about the actor for 28 years. Thus, he is uniquely qualified to write about Chaney—as shown by his 1993 biography, *Lon Chaney: The Man Behind the Thousand Faces* (Vestal Press; reviewed in *Past Times* double issue #14-15). Soon after that book's publication, Blake experienced what he calls "every biographer's nightmare": he discovered a mother lode of new Chaney material, much of it preserved by relatives of Alfred Grasso, Chaney's business manager from 1920 to 1924.

The new book necessarily repeats some of the basic biographical information, but incorporates the new material—contracts, business papers, photographs, clippings. The emphasis in this book, however, is on evaluations of Chaney's extant performances. While the first book did a splendid job of recounting the many colorful dramas in the actor's private life, this one helps us appreciate the colorful characters he created on film.

Blake makes forceful arguments that, beyond his wizardry with make-up, it was Chaney's mastery of gesture and expression—and his ability to understand the psychology of the characters he portrayed—which made those portrayals so vivid. (Chaney didn't just want to show you their faces, he wanted to show you their souls.) While Blake is obviously an ardent admirer of the actor, he is objective enough to criticize sub-par performances.

All of the many illustrations appear to be previously unpublished, and most of them are gems—candid shots, advertising and poster art, stills from deleted sequences, and even telegrams are included. While Mr. Blake admits that he never intended to write a second book about Chaney, this one is just as valuable and as fascinating as the first. And now that he's written a second book about Chaney, he *does* intend to write a third—*The Films of Lon Chaney* will be published this winter by Vestal; it will recount each of the actor's movies—the majority of which, sadly, are lost—and will include 160 photographs, many previously unpublished. The 368-page volume will be available in hardcover for 29.95 and in paperback for 19.95. (Vestal Press, Ltd., P.O. Box 97, Vestal NY 13851-0097; (800) 292-4738.)

The Phantom of the Opera has certainly proved to be an enduringly popular story, and fortunately the recent stage and film versions have generated new interest in the 1925 Chaney film. Silent-film archivist, researcher and author Kevin Brownlow—along with David Gill and Patrick Stanbury—have restored the film, and their new edition will be screened at the Drambuie Edinburgh Film Festival in Scotland, and the London Film Festival in England. Originally, the film was tinted in a number of different colors, and several sequences were shot in two-color Technicolor.



An ad for a 1926 reissue of a 1920 film

Another scene, which depicted the Phantom's scarlet cloak billowing in the night sky over the Opera House, employed the "Handschiegl Process," which colored one element in an otherwise blue-tinted frame.

These effects did not survive in the one existing 35mm print of the film—a somewhat altered 1929 re-release edition (six minutes shorter, with the order of some scenes rearranged)—which has been held since 1950 by the film archive at George Eastman House.

The first portion of the Technicolor "Masked Ball" sequence was located in the '70s by archivist David Shepard, but the remaining color scenes have existed until now only in black and white. However, as Mr. Brownlow writes, "'Colourisation' has at last been put to a proper use." Working with two labs in California, Brownlow, Gill and Stanbury have been able to recreate the color for these scenes. The tinting of the rest of the film—using the original script as a guide, with additional help from *Phantom* buff Scott MacQueen—has been accomplished by a third lab in London. Carl Davis has written a new score for the film, he conducted the live orchestral accompaniment at the Edinburgh Film Festival on August 23, and will do so again in London on November 22.

Presumably, this restored version will ultimately make its way to home video. Until then, there is a fine edition available from Lumivision (LVD9008; \$39.95) which uses the Eastman House 35mm black and white print, incorporating the existing two-color Technicolor footage. The excellent score was performed by its composer, organist Korla Pandit, playing a four manual 60 rank Wurlitzer organ during a live screening. The gasps of the audience are a treat to hear in stereo; you really feel as if you're in the theatre with them. (For further information: Lumivision Corporation, 877 Federal Blvd., Denver CO 80204; (303) 446-0400; fax, (303) 446-0101; email: lumi@lumivision.com)

In the near future, MGM/UA Home Video will be releasing *The Lon Chaney Collection* on laserdisc, including *He Who Gets Slapped* (the very first MGM release), *Where East is East* and *The Unknown*. (Two other Chaney features—*West of Zanzibar* and the 1930 version of *The Unholy Three*, the actor's only sound film, are already available as a two-disc set.) The new MGM/UA release will complement the recent set of Chaney videocassette releases from Kino on Video, which includes *Outside the Law*, *Oliver Twist*, *Shadows*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, *The Shock*, Kino's version of *Phantom of the Opera* (organ score by Gaylord Carter) and a 76-minute documentary, *Lon Chaney: Behind the Mask*. These VHS releases sell for \$24.95 each. (Kino on Video, 333 W. 39th Street, New York NY 10018; (212) 629-6880.)

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Not the Last Word on Silents

By Rob Stone

In 1976 Einar Lauritzen and Gunnar Lundquist published the *American Film-Index, 1908-1915* and followed that in 1984 with a second volume covering 1916-1920. The two volumes combined were an ambitious effort that detailed over 33,000 films produced in the United States between 1908 and 1920. However, Lauritzen and Lundquist's two volumes were not a true index, but rather a filmography with access to information on a given film listed by title only.

With *American Film Personnel and Company Credits, 1908-1920* (McFarland & Co., 696 pages, hardcover; \$110) Paul C. Spehr provides what the original works lacked: a true index, making information accessible by cast, crew and production credits (although by title access still requires consulting the original books). The book is well formatted—much superior to the original volumes—yet while the information is more accessible, its usefulness remains questionable.

Spehr notes in the preface that Lauritzen and Lundquist relied mainly on the *Moving Picture World* for their information, but that the MPW information was "supplemented by other resources from Einar Lauritzen's extensive personal library." It is the supplemental sources that taint all three volumes and give them little validity, which is a shame. Filmographies of the 1960s and 1970s were notoriously error ridden and many of these errors made their way into the *American Film-Index*. An example would be the listing of the Stan Laurel comedy *The Lucky Dog* as a 1917 Metro product, while it was actually a 1920 Reelcraft release (a mistake made by tainting the MPW information with other less reliable information).

There are other problems with the book. No differentiation is made between dramatic actor William West, dramatic actress Billie West and comedian Billy West with confusing "see also" references linking the three personalities together. A number of home market, re-release and working titles are also erroneously mixed in with legitimate film credits. While the book has value—as do its predecessors—it is not as an authoritative source but as a starting point for further research. If the compilers had kept strictly to *Moving Picture World* data, it could have been a definitive index of that fine source.



A Lengthy Look at the Keaton Shorts

There's been a veritable avalanche of new books about Buster Keaton over the past year. Some have been biographies (Marion Meade's *Cut to the Chase*); others have been all-inclusive books about Keaton's movies (Jim Kline's *The Complete Films of Buster Keaton*); still others have focused on obscure entries in Keaton's filmed work (David Macleod's *The Sound of Buster Keaton*).

It's surprising to realize that until now there has not been a book devoted to the 19 silent short comedies which Keaton wrote, directed, edited and starred in between 1920 and 1923, since they are the purest examples of his comedy, and since many of them are as ambitious, impressive, meaningful—and funny—as his great feature films. (Even David Robinson's fine 1969 study, *Buster Keaton*, discussed all of the shorts in one brief chapter before devoting one chapter apiece to each of Keaton's ten self-produced features.)

Gabriella Oldham has filled this gap with her excellent book *Keaton's Silent Shorts: Beyond the Laughter* (Southern Illinois University Press; 396 pages; \$24.95, paperback). This book forms a companion piece to Daniel Moews' 1977 study *Keaton: The Silent Features Close Up* (University of California Press). Each of the 19 shorts is examined in great detail, with all of the action recounted; more importantly, Ms. Oldham is an insightful guide to these films. She does a commendable job of illuminating Keaton's unique viewpoint, and describing his singular skill as a filmmaker.

Buster himself would no doubt have been mightily uncomfortable in reading this book, as Ms. Oldham admits. In her introduction, she writes, "More than any comedian of his day, Keaton challenged our emotional and intellectual resilience. Though he may not have admitted it, his artistic deliberation in developing a routine or composing the frame served the deeper visions of his inner mind....His world is not just funny but funny/sad, absurd/real, dream/concrete, delightful/dreadful, romantic/bittersweet—at the same time." She is absolutely on target when she describes Buster's screen character as someone "who continually holds us back while beckoning us to look deeply within."

This applies to Keaton himself, who dismissed analyses of his films with, "I never realized that I was doing anything but trying to make people laugh when I threw my custard pies and took my pratfalls." This is Keaton the proud craftsman talking, the pragmatic guy who would much rather tell you how a gag was technically achieved than reflect upon what the gag meant. Surely Keaton knew that there was something deeper going on in his films, in him, that set him apart from other film comics throwing their pies and taking their pratfalls. If artistic expression of what he felt in his heart and his gut hadn't really mattered to Keaton, he wouldn't have become an alcoholic, suffered seizures induced by grief, and been committed to an asylum after the means of that expression was taken away from him.

If Buster were here today, I think he'd secretly be gratified by Ms. Oldham's book, since she understands the "multilayered and multidimensional" aspects of his work and articulates it so well. I've seen Keaton's classic short *One Week* (1920) dozens of times, but reading Ms. Oldham's essay on the film awakened me to its subtleties and helped me appreciate just how finely constructed it is.

Illustrations are rather disappointingly sparse, limited to just one still per chapter. The book is not entirely free of error, either; Ms. Oldham describes the titles in *Day Dreams* as "remarkably long-winded," evidently unaware that these are not the original intertitles, but wordy translations created by distributor Raymond Rohauer in the '70s when the only source material for this film was a print from overseas. (The wordiness has been largely eliminated in the new edition currently available on video.) All 19 of Keaton's starring silent shorts are now available on videocassette from Kino on Video, and on laserdisc from Image Entertainment; I would suggest that you view each short before reading the corresponding chapter, since there are passages which assume some familiarity with that particular movie. Overall, however, this is a very important, insightful, and readable book about Keaton's purest films. (Southern Illinois University Press, P.O. Box 3697, Carbondale, IL 62902-3697.)

Even a Genius Needs Help: The True Story of *Citizen Kane*

When *Citizen Kane* was starting to emerge from obscurity in the 1950s, it was seen as a prime example of the auteur school—a film which was a personal artistic vision of the director. Orson Welles, the director, co-writer and star of the film, hardly disagreed with this notion. Then, in 1971, film critic Pauline Kael wrote a damning essay, "Raising Kane," which charged that Welles had nothing to do with the writing of the film, that he had conspired to take credit away from the "true" author, old pro Herman J. Mankiewicz, and that proper acknowledgment had never been given to Welles' technical collaborators.

These allegations (and further charges that the "self-destructive" Welles had a legacy of unfinished film projects) received such attention that they prevented Welles from obtaining financial backing for films which he wanted to make in the '70s and '80s. But Ms. Kael's evidence was shaky at best—she consulted a few of Mankiewicz's friends and ignored Welles' collaborators. She had an agenda and set out to prove it, while avoiding any sources for evidence to the contrary.

Fortunately, a much more balanced and reliable account of the film's production was published in 1985, and it has just been reprinted in a revised and expanded edition. For **The Making of *Citizen Kane*** (University of California Press; 185 pages, paperback; \$15.95), author Robert L. Carringer spoke at length with Orson Welles, and with the film's editor, Robert Wise; sound engineer James G. Stewart; special-effects photographer Linwood Dunn; make-up artist Maurice Seiderman and set decorations head Darrell Silvera, among others—including Herman Mankiewicz's widow, Sara.

This testimony has been supplemented with full research on all studio files pertaining to the film, including all drafts of the screenplay. The book is plentifully illustrated with storyboards, preliminary sketches of sets, frame enlargements and production stills.

The conclusions reached indicate that Welles did in fact try to take sole credit for the script, but that he had personally revised about two-thirds of Mankiewicz's draft, and had much input on later revisions made by Mankiewicz. (Assessing the many drafts, Carringer concludes that while Mankiewicz had supplied the story frame and a good share of the dialogue, Welles "added the narrative brilliance—the visual and verbal wit, the stylistic fluidity and...stunningly original strokes.")

Welles was a strong guiding hand in the technical aspects of the film, as well. Carringer notes that he "had an uneasy relationship with the RKO professionals. He admired their enormous technical skills, but he found them...too often unreceptive to new ideas....On *Citizen Kane*, he brought in his own writer,

cinematographer, composer, and even sound specialist." The sole RKO regular who worked closely with Welles in a major capacity was art director Perry Ferguson, a tactful, creative and efficient problem-solver who was the ideal collaborator for a first-time director. Welles not only encouraged his collaborators to be experimental but in fact demanded it—with the result that they took into their work with tremendous enthusiasm, tried new methods and, as Leonard Maltin has said, "broke all the rules and invented some new ones."

According to Carringer, sound engineer James G. Stewart said that "Working with Welles...was one of the most significant experiences of his own professional career. Much of what he knows aesthetically about sound he says he learned from him."

Ditto for cinematographer Gregg Toland, who had experimented with deep-focus compositions, super-fast film, and new lenses in earlier films but who was able with Welles to "experiment freehandedly with them throughout an entire production."

Carringer excels in describing precisely how the film's innovative effects were achieved, taking us through detailed accounts of *Kane*'s scripting, art direction, cinematography, post-production sound looping, editing and scoring. The author also provides much fascinating information on Welles' initial plan to make *Heart of Darkness*, on the reaction to *Kane* after its release, and on Welles' subsequent difficulties in making *The Magnificent Ambersons*. (The new edition has revised material on the latter two topics, as well as many new photographs.)

One flaw of the book is that there are virtually no direct quotes, surely the actual first-hand statements

of Welles' associates would have been more colorful than the by-proxy accounts which Carringer gives us. Another area where the book is curiously deficient is in discussing Welles as the director of the other actors; Joseph Cotten, William Alland, and Ruth Warrick certainly could have provided some insight into this most important aspect of Welles' contribution. But if the book is concerned primarily with technical achievements, it is filled with marvelous detail. Furthermore, the author's only agenda is to tell the actual story and assign credit to whom it is due.

In 1982, Orson Welles told Carringer, "Collaborators make contributions, but only a director can make a film. He is the one element in the formula that cannot be sacrificed." Carringer agrees, but believes that Welles "was fortunate to have collaborators...capable of performing at his level of ambition." (University of California Press, 2120 Berkeley Way, Berkeley CA 94720)



Unspeakable Terror: Silent Horror Films Chronicled

The entire world of film's unspeakable frights is well documented in **Horror in Silent Films: A Filmography, 1896-1929** by Roy Kinnard (McFarland; 278 pages, hardcover; \$42.95 postpaid). In this compact book, Mr. Kinnard—the author of *The Lost World of Willis O'Brien*, a book about the landmark 1925 film—seems to have documented every film of the silent era which deals with haunted houses, ghosts, witches, monsters or hypnotism.



Frankenstein, 1910 edition

Most of these films are presumably lost, which makes the surviving information all the more valuable. The entries become more detailed around the late Teens, since the film industry as a whole was becoming better documented by trade papers. Most of the entries include the producing company, length of the film (usually in reels, occasionally in minutes), year of release (but not specific date), the director, the main cast members, and notes on the plot. Many entries also include more information about screenwriters and photographers, and several include excerpts from original reviews. The films are grouped alphabetically within the year of their release rather than by precise release date, a slight disappointment, since it would have helped track the development of trends in horror films.

Actually, to be precise, none of these films were marketed as "horror films," since, according to Mr. Kinnard, the first film to be referred to as such was Universal's talkie of *Frankenstein*, released in November 1931. Even films such as *The Hunchback of Notre Dame* and *The Phantom of the Opera* were "marketed as colorful, offbeat melodramas...or, as with Germany's *Nosferatu* and other foreign imports, presented as special 'art' films." This causes some hair-splitting in trying to determine what belongs as a silent "horror" film; Kinnard includes the Louise Brooks film *Pandora's Box* because it has moments "as gut-wrenching and intense as anything to be found in any horror film, past or present." Even serials such as *The Fire Detective* (Pathé, 1929) and comedies like Harold Lloyd's 1920 two-reeler *Haunted Spooks* are included.

The 50 or so illustrations—most of them for films made after 1916—include lobby cards and posters. There are two indexes—one for film titles, and one for the personnel. Kinnard describes this volume as "an attempt to document exactly how indebted the horror films of the sound era are to their voiceless celluloid forebears." That thesis might be better served by a lengthy essay rather than a film listing, but the present book is a very useful one. (McFarland & Co., Inc., Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640; (910) 246-4460.)

More of MGM's One and Two-Reel Wonders

continued from Page 1

of the more notable entries is *The Big Idea*, the last of the MGM shorts starring Ted Healy and his Stooges (it was released a week after the Three Stooges' debut short at Columbia, *Woman Haters*). Curly, Larry and Moe don't have a lot to do here—they periodically enter scriptwriter Healy's office, sounding trumpets and squirting him with water. But their boss is funny in his usual caustic way.

Finally, six shorts present the popular WNEW disk jockey Martin Block. He not only introduces some fine big-band numbers, but also interviews the bandleaders. It's a real treat to see Tex Beneke explaining how he joined the Glenn Miller band, and to hear Les Brown talk about his beginnings with a band at Duke University, and to watch the great Ray Noble telling about his first successes in England. (Another treat is to see how vivacious Virginia O'Brien is when not in her "deadpan" character!)

Print quality is superb on all 35 entries. Our only gripe is that there's no insert of notes on the films, an essential item for a collection like this—the titles and release dates are on the box, and that's all the information you get. Aside from that flaw, it's another superb collection from MGM/UA Home Video, and George Feltenstein deserves our thanks for producing a seven-hour treasure trove of rarities from the MGM vaults.

A Hollywood Pro's Nightmare in Tahiti

His real name was Woodbridge Strong Van Dyke II, but he was often called "One-take Woody." W.S. Van Dyke (as his official credit usually ran) directed many of the finest MGM films—among them *Trader Horn*, *The Thin Man* (and three sequels), *San Francisco*, *Marie Antoinette*, *Rose-Marie* and *Tarzan, the Ape Man*. Always a competent director, as his career progressed he seemed to become more and more concerned with getting the pictures out fast.

Maybe Van Dyke was eager to keep things moving because he remembered the nerve-racking four months he spent in 1927-28 making *White Shadows in the South Seas*. The film—a fictional story which cast Hollywood actors among authentic locations and native extras—was shot in Tahiti, which meant that all the usual facilities of a studio had to be built from scratch by local natives. Furthermore, Van Dyke's co-director, documentary maker Robert Flaherty, was the direct opposite of Van Dyke in method and temperament, being quite content to keep grinding out film of real natives until something interesting passed before the lens. Finally, Van Dyke was battling a slight alcohol problem, and was intensely lonely for his girlfriend, Josephine Chipppo, a script clerk who remained at MGM in Culver City.

Van Dyke wrote many long letters to her filled with fascinating, colorful, bitingly funny and gritty accounts of the production—letters which were stored by Ms. Chipppo in an old trunk, unearthed in 1992, and which have now been published as *W.S. Van Dyke's Journal* (Scarecrow Press; 152 pages, hardcover; \$34.50).

Editor and Annotator Rudy Behlmer has supplemented this one-of-a-kind treasure with other colorful articles by Van Dyke and a selection of remembrances by the director's associates. Behlmer's own informative pieces fill in the details. The volume is well illustrated with stills spanning the entirety of the director's career, many of them amusing and heretofore unpublished production shots. This book is a little gem, shedding much light on the personality of a director who until now has been an enigma despite the popularity of his films. (Scarecrow Press, 4720 Boston Way, Lanham MD 20706; (301) 459-3366.)

Music

Kern, Porter Piano Rolls on CD

The Biograph label has released a number of outstanding compact discs featuring the sounds of vintage piano rolls; some of the company's offerings include compositions and/or performances by Fats Waller, Jelly Roll Morton, James P. Johnson and Scott Joplin. Now, Biograph has begun a "Great American Composer" series, devoted to the authors of great show tunes from the movies and Broadway. The two inaugural titles are devoted to **Jerome Kern** (Biograph BCD 142; \$15.00) and **Cole Porter** (Biograph BCD 143; \$15.00).

The Kern collection includes 12 tracks spanning the period from 1921 (with the hit song from *Sally*, "Look For the Silver Lining") to 1941 ("The Last Time I Saw Paris" from the film *Lady Be Good*), with a lengthy medley from *Show Boat* as a finale. The Porter album has 14 tracks, ranging from 1929's "You Do Something to Me" (from the show *Fifty Million Frenchmen*) to 1953's "C'est Magnifique" and "I Love Paris" (from *Can-Can*).

Some of the original rolls were made decades ago, having been played by J. Lawrence Cook (the all-time champion of piano roll artists) and Victor Arden (one-half, with Phil Ohman, of a popular recording piano team in the '20s and early '30s). The recordings, however, are state-of-the-art, and were made with a Steinway Duo-Art Pianola Grand piano. The sound quality is magnificent, and the performances are sparkling—even if they do at times appear to have been augmented with extra trills and fills that only a three-handed pianist could play. The booklet for each volume contains a splendid essay by Joel Bernstein, and lyrics for all of the songs, should you wish to gather your friends around the CD player and sing along. (Available from Biograph Records, Box 369, Canaan NY 12029, or online at <http://www.biograph.com/>)

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New "Stereo" for Old 78s on Avid CD

Having for many years collected music from the monaural, 78-rpm era, I've encountered many attempts by producers of LPs and CDs to turn those old mono recordings into something approaching stereo. As far as I'm concerned, all of those attempts have been misguided in their aim and uniformly awful in the achieved results.

Whether it's a phony-stereo LP made by RCA or Decca in the late '60s, or one of those dreadful "Classic Years" CDs made by Australian producer Robert Parker, the end result is the same: on one channel, you hear nothing but muddy, muffled bass, and on the other the sound is harsh and tinny. These sins are compounded by added reverberation which makes the end result a most unpalatable aural goulash.

Thus, I was all set to really dislike **The Jazz & Vocal Collection** (Avid AMS 568), a new collection of 23 tracks in what the producers bill as "the Clarity and Reality of 3-Dimensional Sound...Stereo From Mono Conversions That Are Really Convincing." Yeah, right, I thought. Thus, it comes as a distinct surprise and pleasure to announce that these "stereo" transfers are very nice indeed.

First of all, audio engineer Richard Broadie (who is also a professional clarinetist and bass player who has worked alongside many jazz greats) has started with excellent source material, in many cases vinyl test pressings which are marvelously clean and pure sounding. Secondly, he has added no extra echo or reverberation, leaving the original tone and texture of the recordings intact. Finally, the stereo effect is a subtle one. Mr. Broadie has tried to achieve a natural stereo effect, not one which artificially "pans" a solo trumpet to one channel and a trombone to the other.

I listened to this CD through two different sets of speakers and through headphones, and in all instances the sound had a spacious feeling to it, one in which you felt surrounded by the band (with bass instruments a bit more dominant on the left channel). However, the sound didn't feel artificial in any way. I still think the best sound of all from the 78s is pure, clean mono—and happily, these transfers recombine seamlessly if you have the "mono" button on your receiver.

This would be a pretty phenomenal collection even if it were in mono. The 23 tracks include a number of welcome rarities, in a variety of styles, from 1920 through 1941. For starters, there's both sides of a 12-inch 78 from 1936 which features Bing Crosby, Louis Armstrong, Frances Langford and the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra doing songs from the film *Pennies From Heaven*, in a beautifully clear transfer. Another treat is "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," a very rare side made by Connie Boswell in Holland with the Ramblers Dance Orchestra in August 1935 (if only the producers had included the other side!). A 1933 duet of "Nobody's Sweetheart" by British trumpeter-vocalist Nat Gonella and American pianist Garland Wilson is simply astonishing. Wilson's fingers race around the keyboard at lightning speed; the track recalls Armstrong's duets with Earl Hines.

If your tastes run to '20s style jazz, you'll want to hear the transfers of Jelly Roll Morton's "The Pearls," Bix Beiderbecke's "Margie" and "I'll Be a Friend With Pleasure" and a 1920 rendition of "I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles" by the Original Dixieland Jass Band. Since these tracks were necessarily taken from shellac pressings, the surface noise is more pronounced and sort of hovers in the air in these stereo transfers—but better than a "NoNoise"-style attempt to eliminate it entirely, taking much of the music with it.

The stereo effect is most pronounced on the big-band recordings, notably "On Little Street in Singapore" by Glenn Miller, "A Hundred Years From Today" by Jack Teagarden and "Jitterbug Waltz" by Fats Waller and his full orchestra. The Miller group in particular sounds full, rich and spacious; the mono-to-stereo transfer compares very favorably with the actual stereo recordings of the Miller band made by 20th Century-Fox in 1941 and '42.

This is an impressive CD in the selection of tracks and the quality of the transfers (even set apart from the impressive stereo effect). The fine liner notes by jazz writer Clayton Kopp are a bonus, too. Avid Records has announced several other titles in this series, among them CDs by Fred Astaire, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, and collections of Boogie Woogie tracks and Cole Porter songs. We'll look forward to acquiring and hearing them; if these titles measure up to this collection, the series will be one that many vintage music fans will want to purchase, even if they prefer monaural sound. (Available from Qualiton Records, 24-02 40th Avenue, Long Island City NY 11101.)



Dick Todd: the Canadian Crosby

In the '30s, many male pop singers owed a stylistic debt to Bing Crosby, but one lived in Crosby's shadow for most of his career. His name was Dick Todd, and during his peak years of popularity, he was tabbed "The Canadian Crosby." (On a radio broadcast with Paul Whiteman on July 4, 1943, the guest star introduced himself with, "I'm Bing Crosby. I sing like Dick Todd.")

Todd, born near Calgary, Alberta on August 4, 1914, had begun playing trumpet and singing with the George Sims band in Montreal while still in high school. At age 19, in 1933, he began appearing on Montreal radio, and soon got a sponsor. During summer breaks from studies at the McGill University for Engineering, Todd led a five-piece band on cruise ships through Barbados and the West Indies. RCA's Montreal representative, Hugh Josephs, heard Todd and signed him to make a couple of sides for Canadian Victor in late 1936. More radio work followed on the CBC in 1937-38, and since the broadcasts reached some areas of the States, Todd was invited to come to New York and record for RCA Victor's budget-priced Bluebird label.

He sang regularly on several American radio shows ("The Magic Key" with Larry Clinton, "Melody and Madness" with Artie Shaw and comedian Robert Benchley, "Avalon Time" with Red Skelton, and the Maxwell House "Show Boat" program), but had his greatest success with the Bluebird records of 1938 through 1942. All told, he made 155 sides before the musicians' strike against the recording companies—and that little unpleasantness known as World War II—put a dent in Todd's career.

There haven't been many reissues of Todd's recordings; there was a two-LP set, *Blue Orchids*, on RCA/Bluebird in 1975. Now the British ASV label has released **Dick Todd: The Canadian Crosby** as part of its Living Era series (CD AJA 5179), and it proves that even though Todd was obviously influenced by Der Bingle, he had a special warmth that was his own. Actually, to these ears, Todd sounds as much like a young Perry Como. (A guy who went out of his way to assist new performers he admired, Todd helped Como secure his own RCA Victor recording contract.) Todd also claimed as influences Donald Novis and a Canadian singer named Russ Titus.

In any event, the 27 sides collected here are a real pleasure. Starting with two tracks from his second American session on April 28, 1938 and continuing through his last Bluebird waxing ("When the Lights Go On Again," cut July 22, 1942), most of the songs are better than average. Some are standards ("Deep Purple," "Lazy River," "It's the Talk of the Town"), others are fine if not well-remembered ("Blue Evening," "Penny Serenade"). While most are ballads, Todd could handle uptempo numbers—and even novelty songs—quite well, as shown by "Hi-Yo Silver" and "When Paw Was Courtin' Maw."

Todd was also helpful to Dinah Shore during the early stages of her career, and made two duet recordings with her which are included on this CD. On two of the earliest tracks, Todd is backed by Larry Clinton's band, with the subsequent orchestrations credited to Leonard Joy, a longtime RCA producer. The sound is full and rich, another sign that the quality of transfers is being significantly upgraded on ASV releases.

Todd never seemed to get his career back on track after he came back from the war. He replaced Lawrence Tibbett on radio's "Your Hit Parade" in 1945, but it was more a last hurrah than a new beginning. He recorded occasionally, scoring in 1950 with "Daddy's Little Girl" on the small independent Rainbow label and having another regional success as late as 1968 with something called "Pennsylvania Turnpike, I Love You." He evidently had a bit of a drinking problem, and certainly suffered from arthritis, for which he was hospitalized in early 1972. He worked on the Ed Sullivan show in New York through the early '70s—but as a stage hand. The story circulated among his many drinking buddies that Dick had died early in 1975, but no one seemed to know precisely when or how.

His glory years were all too few, but in his prime Dick Todd was a terrific singer, even if he did sound a little like that other fellow. As historian Brian Rust so winningly phrases it in his essay accompanying the new ASV compact disc, "No wonder Bing Crosby became so famous and well-liked. As he said himself, he sang like Dick Todd."

Mayerl's Pianistic Marvels

Pianist Billy Mayerl was not a household name in the United States, but in his native England he seems to have had quite a wave of popularity during the early '30s. We've just had the delightful experience of encountering his marvelous compositions and fantastic keyboard technique on a recent CD, **Billy Mayerl Plays Billy Mayerl** (ASV/Living Era CD AJA 5162).

We note that the accompanying booklet credits the "Midland Gershwin-Mayerl Society" for its help in compiling this disc, and while the two are poles apart in terms of recognition Stateside, there's similarity in their piano technique. Mix a little Gershwin in with larger parts of *Zez Confrey* (who composed tricky novelties such as "Kitten on the Keys") and *Bix Beiderbecke* (famed for his delicate, impressionistic "In a Mist") and you'll have an idea of Mayerl's style. He was a virtuoso pianist; he plays passages chock-full of chords and finger-busting keyboard runs, all of it with the greatest of ease and the utmost confidence. (I can't recall hearing a single flubbed note in this entire CD.)

This disc contains 27 tracks recorded in London between 1925 and 1939, most of them Mayerl's compositions. While the titles may imply that these are light classical pieces ("Four Aces Suite," "Mignonette," "Hop O' My Thumb," etc.), there's always a strong rhythm—and many of them are played at a blazing speed. Even so, the melodic quality of these pieces stands out. Mayerl subtitled two of his pieces as "A Syncopated Impression," and that's an accurate description of his music—rhythmic, yet melodic and delicate.

In his arrangements for "Ten Cents a Dance," "Limehouse Blues," "Sing You Sinners" and a medley from "The Desert Song," Mayerl proves himself an inventive interpreter of other composers; his full-orchestra arrangement for his own "Aquarium" Suite is delightful, as is a duet with xylophonist Rudy Starita. While the sound quality on this CD is ever so slightly muffled and doesn't have the presence that it could have, Mayerl's music is a sheer delight—by turns jaunty, poetic, exuberant and poignant. If you enjoy the aforementioned pianists—or even if your tastes run toward Waller and James P. Johnson—you owe it to yourself to hear Billy Mayerl. (Available from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato, CA 94948.)

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

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

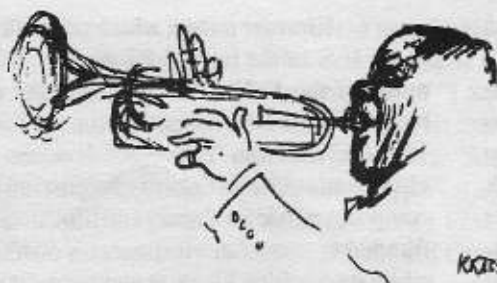
- Adler, Larry: The Great Flapper 7081
 Allen, Henry Red: Swing Out (1929-1935) Topaz 1037
 Almanac Singers: The Complete General Recordings, 1944 MCA
 Arden & Ohman: Keyboard Wizards of the Gershwin Era, Volume III Pearl 9203
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 Barnett, Charlie: Skyliner, Volume 2 (1940-1945) Jazz Archives 15853
 Barnett, Charlie: Wings Over Manhattan Vipers Nest 1002
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 Basie, Count: On the Upbeat (1938-1943) Drive 41063
 Basie, Count: This is Jazz Sony Legacy
 Beneke, Tex: Palladium Patrol Aerospace 1031
 Big Maceo: Bluebird Blues and Heritage BMG/Bluebird
 Bigard, Barney: Clarinet Lament Topaz 1055
 Boswell Sisters: It's You Flapper 7087
 Bradley, Josephine: First Lady of the Ballroom Flapper 7092
 Broonzy, Big Bill: Big Bill's Blues Topaz 1038
 Byas, Don: 1944-1945 Classics 882
 Byas, Don: Tenor Giant (1945) Drive 42447
 Carter, Benny: Advanced Swing (1943) Drive 42449
 Christian, Charlie: An Introduction To Best of Jazz 4032
 Christy, June: With Stan Kenton and his Orchestra (1945-51) Collectors Choice 53
 Clinton, Larry: And his Orchestra, 1938 Collectors Choice 06
 Cole, Nat King Trio: Best of the Vocal Classics, Volume Two Blue Note
 Cole, Nat King Trio: Hit That Jive, Jack (1936-1941) Decca/GRP 662
 Cole, Nat King Trio: The MacGregor Years 1941-45 (4-CD set) Music & Arts 911
 Coleman, Bill: Hangin' Around (1929-1943) Topaz 1040
 Como, Perry: Till the End of Time ASV/Living Era 5195
 Condon, Eddie: Chicago Style ASV/Living Era 5192
 Coon-Sanders Nighthawks: Everything is Hotsy-Totsy Now (1924-32) ASV/Living Era 5199
 Cotton, Billy and his Band: Smile, Darn Ya, Smile Flapper 7085
 Coward, Noel: The Songs of Noel Coward Flapper 7080
 Crosby, Bing and the Andrews Sisters: The Complete Duets MCA
 Crosby, Bob: Eye Opener Topaz 1054
 Crosby, Bob: Them There Eyes, Volume 9 (1939) Halcyon 128
 Dorsey, Tommy: 1936 Classics 878
 Dorsey, Tommy: Sheik of Swing (1944; broadcast recordings) Drive 41081
 Eckstone, Billy: The Magnificent Mr. B Flapper 7086
 Ellington, Duke: and his Orchestra 1944-1945 Classics 881
 Ellington, Duke: Sophisticated Lady (1940-1946) RCA 68516
 Ellington, Duke: Volume 12 - Echoes of the Jungle (1931-32) Hot 'n' Sweet 15232
 Ellis, Vivian: Spread a Little Happiness Pearl 7076
 Europe, James Reese: Featuring Noble Sissle (1919) IAJRC 1012
 Faye, Alice: On Screen and Radio (1932-1943) Vintage Jazz Band 1947
 Fitzgerald, Ella: Ella and Friends (Louis Armstrong, Ink Spots) Decca GRP 663
 Flanagan, Ralph: And his Orchestra, Volume 2 Magic 75
 Flanagan, Ralph: Hot Toddy Aerospace 1032
 Fulson, Lowell: My First Recordings Arhoolie
 Garland, Judy: Collectors' Gems From the MGM Years Rhino
 Garland, Judy: The Complete Decca Original Cast Recordings MCA
 Garner, Erroll: 1944-1945 Classics 873
 Gillum, Jazz: Bluebird Blues and Heritage BMG/Bluebird
 Gone With the Wind (3-CD set, Complete Original Soundtrack) Rhino
 Goodman, Benny: 1937 Classics 879
 Goodman, Benny: The King of Swing (box set) MusicMasters 65130
 Hackett, Bobby: A String of Pearls Topaz 1053
 Hall, Edmond: 1944-1945 Classics 872
 Harris, Wynonie: 1944-1945 Classics 885
 Hawkins, Coleman: Body and Soul (1939-1946) RCA 68515
 Hawkins, Coleman: In the Groove 1926-1939 Indigo 2037
 Hicks, Edna: Volume 1 (1923) Document 5428
 Hicks, Edna; Meyers, Hazel; Smith, Laura: Volume 2 (1923-1927) Document 5431
 Hildegard: The Incomparable (1935-43) Flapper 7066
 Hines, Earl: 1942-1945 Classics 876
 Holiday, Billie: Love Songs (1937-1942) Columbia 64853
 Holiday, Billie: This is Jazz Sony Legacy
 Horne, Lena: The Lady and Her Music Flapper 7091
 Humphrey, Percy: Sympathy Five American Music 88
 Hunter, Alberta: Volume 3 (1924-1927) Document 5424
 Hunter, Alberta: Volume 4 (1927-1946) Document 5425
 Hurt, Mississippi John: Avalon Blues; The Complete 1928 OKeh Recordings Columbia Legacy 64968
 Hutton, Betty: The Best of the RCA Years One Way
 Jenney, Jack: Stardust - 50th Anniversary Tribute Hep 1045
 Johnson, Buddy: and His Band, 1940 Classics 884
 Johnson, James P.: Hot Piano Topaz 1048
 Johnson, James P.: The Original, 1942-1945 Smithsonian Folkways
 Johnson, Robert: Complete Recordings (Remastered) Columbia Legacy 64916
 Jolson, Al: Let Me Sing and I'm Happy: Al Jolson at Warner Bros. 1926-1936 Rhino/TCM Movie Music
 Jolson, Al: Volume 3, From Broadway to Hollywood (1920-29) Flapper 7045
 Kaminsky, Max - Pee Wee Russell: Max & Pee Wee at the Copley Terrace Jazzology 15
 Kassel, Art: And his Orchestra Collectors Choice 13
 Keller, Greta: These Foolish Things ASV/Living Era 5193
 Kemp, Hal: And his Orchestra, 1936-1939 Collectors Choice 09
 Keppard, Freddie: The Legend Topaz 1052
 Kern, Jerome: Biograph Presents From Rare Piano Rolls Biograph BCD 142
 King Sisters: For You Hindsight 168
 Kiss Me Kate: Original Soundtrack Rhino
 Krupa, Gene: 1940, Volume 2 Classics 883
 Lewis, Meade Lux: Tidal Boogie Tradition/Rykodisc
 Lewis, Willie: 1941 Classics 880
 Lloyd, Marie: A Little of What You Fancy Pearl 9097
 Lombardo, Guy: Enjoy Yourself: The Hits of Guy Lombardo MCA
 Long, Johnny: And his Orchestra, 1943-46 Collectors Choice 08
 Manone, Wingy: 1936-1937 Classics 887
 Marteric, Ralph: And his Orchestra Collectors Choice 14
 Martin, Freddy: With Merv Griffin, 1950-52 Collectors Choice 07
 Martin, Sara: Volume 1 (1922-1923) Document 5395
 Martin, Sara: Volume 2 (1923-1924) Document 5396
 Martin, Sara: Volume 3 (1925-1928) Document 5397
 McKinley, Ray: Jiminy Crickets Aerospace 1033
 McKinley, Ray: McKinley Time! Vipers Nest 1001
 Memphis Slim: Bluebird Blues and Heritage BMG/Bluebird
 Mercer, Johnny: The Old Music Master Flapper 7094
 Meyer, Hazel: Volume 1 (1923-1924) Document 5430
 Miller, Glenn: An Introduction To Best of Jazz 4033
 Miller, Punch: Complete Recorded Works (1926-1930) RST 1517
 Millinder, Lucky: Back Beat Topaz 1056
 Monroe, Vaughn: And his Orchestra, 1950-66 Collectors Choice 11
 Monroe, Vaughn: and His Orchestra 1943-44 Circle 116
 Morrow, Buddy: Night Train Aerospace 1034
 O'Day, Anita: Let Me Off Uptown Topaz 1046
 Original Dixieland Jazz Band: Volume 2 (1917-1923) Jazz Archives 15849
 Pastor, Tony: And his Orchestra, 1947 Collectors Choice 05
 Porter, Cole: Biograph Presents From Rare Piano Rolls Biograph BCD 143
 Powell, Dick: The Man From 42nd Street (1933-37) Flapper 7079
 Redman, Don: Chant of the Weed (1928-1938) Topaz 1043
 Reinhardt, Django: 1941-1942 Classics 877
 Rey, Alvino: And his Orchestra, 1942-1945 Collectors Choice 10
 Rooney, Mickey and Judy Garland: Girl Crazy original soundtrack Rhino
 Rossi, Tino: Paris, Voici Paris ASV/Living Era 5168
 Rosza, Miklos: The Film Music of (*Spellbound* and *The Jungle Book*) Flapper 7093
 Russell, Luis: and his Orchestra 1929-1934 Topaz 1039
 Shaw, Artie: 1936-1937 Classics 886
 Simeon, Omer: Omer Simeon 1926-1929 Jazz Archives 15775
 Sinatra, Frank: Sings Rodgers and Hammerstein (contains rare radio tracks, alternate take) Columbia 64661
 Sinatra, Frank: Swing and Dance (includes rare alternate takes) Columbia 64852
 Slim and Slam: Groove Juice Special Sony Legacy
 Smith, Bessie: 1927-1928 Classics 870

What's Old on CD

Continued from Page 14

- Smith, Bessie: Empty Bed Blues ASV/Living Era 5213
- Smith, Laura: Volume 1 (1924-27) Document 5429
- Smith, Stuff: World Jazz, 1943 Progressive 7053
- Smith, Willie: The Lion and the Lamb Topaz 1057
- Sousa, J.P.: Under the Double Eagle Pearl 9249
- Stacy, Jess: Ec-Stacy Topaz 1050
- Suess, Dana: Keyboard Wizards of the Gershwin Era, Volume II Pearl 9202
- Sullivan, Maxine: Easy to Love Flapper 7099
- Taylor, Eva: Not Just the Blues Topaz 1044
- Taylor, Eva: Volume 1 (1922-1923) Document 5408
- Taylor, Eva: Volume 2 (1923-1927) Document 5409
- Taylor, Eva: Volume 3 (1928-1932) Document 5410
- Teagarden, Jack: 1941-1943 Classics 874
- Temple, Shirley: America's Sweetheart Volume 1 and Volume II Flapper 7096/7097
- Thompson, Butch: Plays Jelly Roll Morton Piano Solos Biograph BCD 141
- Three Peppers, The: 1937-1940 Classics 889
- Tucker, Sophie: Some of These Days Flapper 7807
- Various Artists: A Century of Ragtime Vanguard
- Various Artists: A Little Bit of Heaven - 25 Vintage Irish Songs ASV/Living Era 5202
- Various Artists: Ballads in Jazz (1930-1943; 2-CD set) Fremaux 2722
- Various Artists: Boogie Woogie Piano (1924-1935; 2-CD set) Fremaux 2736
- Various Artists: Country—Nashville • Dallas • Hollywood (1927-1942; 2-CD set) Fremaux 2715
- Various Artists: Devil in the Woodpile - Essential Blues Harmonica Indigo 2032
- Various Artists: Esquire All American Jazz Concert, 1/18/44 Jazz Archives 15826
- Various Artists: Great Film Musicals, 1929-1942 Memoir 514
- Various Artists: Hits of '35 ASV/Living Era 5185
- Various Artists: Jazz Kansas City Style (1928-1941) Topaz 1036
- Various Artists: Jazz New Orleans Style Topaz 1048
- Various Artists: Jazz Vocal Groups (1927-1944; 2-CD set) Fremaux 2741
- Various Artists: Jazz Year 1935 Topaz 1045
- Various Artists: Jazzin' the Blues RST 1515
- Various Artists: Juke Joint Jump (Pete Johnson, Freddie Slack, others) Sony Legacy
- Various Artists: Kansas City Legends Jazz Archives 15843
- Various Artists: New York, Volume 1 - Hot Notes (1926-1929) Frog 8
- Various Artists: Roots of Rhythm and Blues (1939-1945; 2-CD set) Fremaux 2750
- Various Artists: Strut That Thing - Essential Piano Blues and Boogie Indigo 2031
- Various Artists: Swinging at the Savoy Jazz Archives 15844
- Various Artists: Women in Blues (1920-1940s; 2-CD set) Fremaux 2718
- Vaughn, Sarah: Time After Time (1941-1947) Drive 41021
- Waller, Fats: 1937-1938 Classics 875
- Weavers, The: The Best of the Decca Years MCA
- Whiteman, Paul: 1939 Collectors Choice 12
- Whiteman, Paul: The King of Jazz ASV 5170
- Wiley, Lee: Hot House Rose Topaz 1047
- Williams, Clarence: 1933-1934 Classics 871
- Williams, Clarence: Complete Sessions, Volume 4 (1924-26) Hot 'n' Sweet 15229
- Williams, Cootie: Echoes of Harlem (1936-1944) Topaz 1042
- Young, Lester: 1941-1944 Jazz Archives 15835

25 Young Men With a Horn



A superb overview of hot horn players from the first two decades of jazz is provided by a new CD, **Hot Trumpets: 25 Great Jazz Trumpeters 1923-1945** (ASV/Living Era CD AJA 5208). The ASV/Living Era folks have been doing more "thematic" compilations as of late, and we imagine

that this one will be followed by hot saxophones, hot pianos, hot drummers, and so on. If indeed this is the start of a new series, it's a great debut.

Since recordings over 50 years old are public domain in Europe and the UK, this British-produced disc can utilize material from a variety of labels; thus, it really contains the most essential jazz trumpet recordings from the period, not just the ones from a given label. Records originally released by OKeh, Victor, Decca, Columbia, Brunswick, Gennett and even the French-based Disques Swing company are included, making this a very comprehensive collection.

Since this package seems to have been designed as an introduction to the great jazz trumpet (and cornet) players of the period, some of the selections are very familiar—and deservedly so. Louis Armstrong's "West End Blues," Bix Beiderbecke's "Singin' the Blues" and Bunny Berigan's "I Can't Get Started" are such essential items that we would've been puzzled if they *hadn't* been included. Other trumpeters, however, are represented by surprising, and gratifying, choices—Ziggy Elman is heard here not in his hit "And the Angels Sing," but in "Swing High," a 1940 flag-waver arranged by Sy Oliver for Tommy Dorsey's big band. Harry James likewise is heard in the surprising "Just a Mood," a beautiful blues which he recorded with Teddy Wilson and Red Norvo in 1937.

Two fine trumpeters from the Bob Crosby band are represented, Yank Lawson in "Five Point Blues," and Billy Butterfield in the lyrical "I'm Free" (which, when lyrics were added, was re-named "What's New?"). Duke Ellington's band was a graduate school for jazz trumpeters, judging from the four Ellington-related tracks featuring Bubber Miley ("Black and Tan Fantasy"), Ray Nance ("Take the A-Train," a solo so great it's become part of the standard arrangement), Rex Stewart (the amazing "Menelik-The Lion of Judah") and Cootie Williams ("Cootie's Concerto").

The trumpeters named above achieved some degree of popular recognition; this CD excels in also showcasing great trumpet men who still remain unknown to the general public. Jabbo Smith's squawky but exuberant style is heard in the 1929 "Jazz Battle," Punch Miller contributes a fine solo on the 1928 "Parkway Stomp," Joe Smith demonstrates why he was Bessie Smith's favorite horn player on the 1926 "Baby Doll," and Bill Coleman gives a splendid interpretation of "What's the Reason?" with pianist Herman Chittison in a 1936 waxing made in Paris. Two other trumpeters who are well worth rediscovering are heard here with clarinetist Mezz Mezzrow: Tommy Ladnier, a New Orleans musician, excels on "If You See Me Comin'" from 1938, and the swinging Frankie Newton adds muscle to "The Panic Is On."

The sound quality is a cut above the standard on ASV/Living Era reissues, which is already a fairly good standard. The transfers here have more high end and presence than usual, and the slightly muffled quality common to ASV collections is not in evidence. Even the earliest discs (Red Nichols' 1926 "That's No Bargain" and King Oliver's 1923 acoustic "Dippermouth Blues") sound clean and clear. The equalization is especially impressive on "Dippermouth," which has more bass and definition than one could reasonably expect from an acoustic.

The booklet is also better than usual; David Fleming's liner notes concisely provide biographical and critical evaluation of each artist in one paragraph each. Full details on personnel, dates, and the location for each recording are also included.

There are many compilations of jazz trumpet records from this period, but this single disc covers the topic better than most two or three-disc sets. It's a superior package in every way, and with a running time of 76:30 it's also quite a value. (Available from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato, CA 94948.)

Durante Classics on CD

Continued from Page 1

lends fine support on the title track and on "Umbriago." Other guest stars include Ethel Merman—who duets with Mr. D. on "A Husband - A Wife"—and Groucho Marx, Danny Kaye and Jane Wyman, who join with Jimmy in singing about "Black Strap Molasses" (also available on another budget-line MCA disc, *Here's Groucho*).

The sound quality is terrific on all ten tracks; the MCA folks have really atoned for their sins of the late '60s and early '70s. The MCA CD reissues now have sparkling sound quality, thanks to the fine condition of the original masters, and the talented audio restoration engineers.

You should be able to find this CD at many retail outlets for \$7.98 or less. Of course, we'd love it if MCA would reissue the album *Jimmy Durante at the Piano* and the other waxings he made for the label, but this one's a great start.

Garland Rarities From Rhino

Turner Classic Movies/Rhino Movie Music continue their series of classic soundtracks from MGM and Warner Bros. films with a new two-CD set designed for Garland fans. **Judy, Judy, Judy!: Collectors' Gems From the MGM Years** (\$29.98) contains 46 songs, 42 of which are receiving their first authorized audio release on this collection.

The collection includes outtakes, rare songs from early short subjects, alternate takes, and extended versions—and eight recordings Garland made for the film version of *Annie Get Your Gun* before illness forced her to withdraw from the project. The CDs also include duets between Judy and Sophie Tucker, Deanna Durbin, Fanny Brice, Howard Keel and Tony Martin.

Several of the digitally remastered tracks have been remixed to true stereo, and the new collection also includes a deluxe booklet filled with behind-the-scenes photos. *Judy, Judy, Judy!* is available in most retail outlets and from Rhino Direct at (800) 432-0020.

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Searching for the Roots of Klezmer

Klezmer music, which originated in the villages of Eastern Europe and migrated to the U.S. at the turn of the century, had a tremendous influence on American popular music of the 1920s-'40s. The ongoing revival of this Old World jazz has increasingly become a search for its roots. **Leopold Kozlowski: The Last Klezmer** (Global Village 168) derives from Yale Strom's same-named documentary film about the last klezmer musician in Poland who grew up in the tradition—a Holocaust survivor who to compose music for theatre and film, notably *Schindler's List*. (Strom, an American writer-filmmaker-musician who heads his own klezmer revival band, Hot Pstromi, met Kozlowski while researching klezmer and gypsy music.)

Kozlowski and Strom are not content to entertain; their mission is to educate and inform. But while this album is part history lesson and part music lesson, it is anything but dull. The music heard on this 25-track CD has an authenticity that would be difficult to find anywhere else; the Eastern European origins of klezmer resonate through every melody. Kozlowski's uncle, Naftule Brandwine (1889-1963), emigrated to America to become a musician along with Dave Tarras, the greatest klezmer clarinetist of the '20s. Virtually every klezmer band in the world today plays at least one piece from his repertoire. Kapelye, an excellent group formed by ethnomusicologist Henry Sapoznik, is no exception.

Kapelye's **Levine and His Flying Machine** (Shanachie 21006) opens and closes with vintage compositions of Brandwine, in performances that absolutely sizzle—proving the accomplished musicianship of this energetic aggregation. The title song—originally recorded by Yiddish theatre actor Charles Cohan for Victor—is a tribute to Jewish financier Charles Levine, whose 1927 trans-Atlantic flight followed Lindbergh's by a few weeks and made him a forgotten footnote in aviation history.

Maxwell Street Klezmer Band, headed by folk singer Lori Lippitz and named after the Jewish neighborhood in Chicago, has found inspiration not only in the legacy of Naftule Brandwine, but the recordings of Mickey Katz, Molly Picon, the Barry Sisters and other fondly remembered Jewish American entertainers. **You Should Be So Lucky** (Shanachie 67006) includes delightful renditions of Adolph King's "Di Rebbetzin" ("The Rebbetzin's Wife") and Ziggy Elman's "And the Angels Sing"—both of which may be heard in markedly different versions on Kapelye's *Levine* for a fascinating comparison.

--Jordan R. Y...

Good Vibes: Lionel Hampton at Decca

Lionel Hampton has made a ton of records, starting in April 1929 (when Hampton was a drummer and occasional singer with Paul Howard's Quality Serenaders) continuing through the early '90s. A 1930 recording with Louis Armstrong of "Memories of You" marked Hampton's recording debut on the vibes, and the start of a new career. August 1936 he had become a member of the Benny Goodman Quartet, which led to memorable small-combo sessions under his own name for the Victor company.

In the fall of 1940 Hampton left Goodman to start his own band, and by December 1941 he'd switched to the Decca label, where he would remain until October 1950. He made some of his greatest records during this period, and the highlights have been collected in a two-CD set, **Hamp: The Legendary Decca Recordings of Lionel Hampton** (Decca GRP GRD 2-652). Starting with "Flying Home" from May 1942 and proceeding through "Twentieth Century Boogie" from September 1950, this collection is not for the faint-hearted. This is full-strength big-band jazz at its most powerful, with Hampton's augmented by sidemen including Cat Anderson on trumpet, Earl Bostic on alto sax, Ilse Jacquet and Dexter Gordon playing tenor sax, Milt Buckner playing piano, and vocalists such as Dinah Washington and Betty Carter.

There are some quieter moments, among them the lovely "Midnight Sun" and "Time on My Hands," and a 15-minute epic version of "Stardust." You can also hear an orchestral bebop in "Mingus Fingers" (composed by his bassist at the time, Charles Mingus) and the stirrings of R&B in "Drinkin' Wine Spo-Dee-O-Dee" and "Hey! Bop." The oversize packaging includes a 22 page booklet with a fine essay by Bruce Blumenthal and full details about all 36 tracks. Steven Lasker's transfers from the original parts and acetate masters have superb sound quality, far better than any earlier reissues.

Jazz Guitarist Django Reinhardt's Records Restored on JSP CDs

Years ago, it was a common belief that Europeans just couldn't play jazz as well as Americans—and then came Django Reinhardt, a Belgian-born gypsy guitarist who swung as mightily as anyone from the States. Reinhardt's peak years were 1934 through 1939, when he recorded with jazz violinist Stephane Grappelly and a rhythm section of two acoustic guitars and a stand-up bass whose players changed rather frequently. The line-up was known collectively as The Quintet of the Hot Club of France.



Reinhardt had an amazing guitar technique—his fingers skip and run nimbly all over the fretboard. It's all the more amazing when one realizes that he didn't have full use of his left hand. Born in January 1910 to a gypsy family in Liverchies, Belgium, Django had begun playing the banjo by age 12; but in November 1928, at age 18, his family's caravan caught fire. Two of Django's fingers were severely burned and paralyzed, leaving him with the use of only the index and middle digits. He resolved to teach himself another

way to play guitar, and in the process developed a technique which some guitarists say allows one to play with more dexterity than using all four fingers.

In 1930, Django heard recordings by Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, and became a sworn convert to jazz. He began performing and recording with a number of orchestras in Paris. In 1934, while working in a band at the Hotel Claridge, Django was playing his guitar in the dressing room, and bandmate Stephane Grappelly joined in on violin. Before long, Django's brother Joseph added a rhythm guitar, and bassist Louis Vola provided the final touch. After this accidental jam session, the musicians knew they had a new and distinctive sound; with the addition of another rhythm guitarist, Roger Chaput, they made their debut on December 2, 1934 at a concert sponsored by Le Hot Club De France, and soon became known as the club's official ambassadors.

Some of their records were issued in the U.S. on Decca (sometimes credited to "Stephane Grappelly and his Hot Four"), and the group achieved a measure of recognition here—they appeared, via short-wave, on CBS Radio's *Saturday Night Swing Club* on June 12, 1937. However, there are still too many American jazz enthusiasts who haven't experienced the thrilling music of this group. Fortunately, there's an abundance of Django CDs out there—in fact, almost too many. Since his prime recordings are evidently in the public domain, there's a plethora of discs taken from dubs, and dubs of dubs, so that the sound quality is less than sparkling. This situation so rankled one Django enthusiast, sound engineer Ted Kendall, that he resolved to produce the definitive Django CD series, one made from the finest sources in existence.

So far, he has produced five CDs for the JSP label, based in London. **Django Reinhardt Volume One** (JSP CD 341) has the Quintet's first 26 recordings from September 1934 to a year later. The first two are extreme rarities made for the Odeon label

(presented here for the first time at the proper pitch) and the other sides were originally issued by Ultraphone. The tunes include two versions each of "I Saw Stars" and "I'm Confessin'," hot performances of "Sweet Sue," "Lady Be Good" and "Crazy Rhythm," and two originals: "Blue Drag" and "Djangology." **Volume Two** (JSP CD 342) jumps ahead to the group's 26 sides made in London for Decca during 1938-39. There are more original compositions by Reinhardt and Grappelly ("Souvenirs," "Stompin' at Decca"), and also a solid repertoire of standards: "Honeysuckle Rose," "Sweet Georgia Brown," "Night and Day," et al. This package has two previously unissued alternate takes—"My Sweet," take 1, taken from a slightly corroded metal master, and take 2 of "Improvisation No. 2," taken from a mint vinyl test pressing.

Volume Three (JSP CD 343) covers the Paris Decca recordings made between June 1938 and May of '39, opening with the gorgeous Reinhardt-Grappelly composition "Billets Doux" and continuing with hot renditions of "Them There Eyes," "Three Little Words" and others. There are two takes of "Jeepers Creepers" and three takes each of "Tea For Two," "I Wonder Where My Baby Is Tonight" and "Hungaria." The solos vary greatly from take to take, and sometimes the entire arrangement is altered.

Volume Four (JSP CD 344) contains 24 gems recorded in 1935-36, including a March 1935 session with tenor sax giant Coleman Hawkins. Other delights include two different arrangements of "Limehouse Blues," a hot rendition of "China Boy," and a lovely reading of "Moon Glow." **Volume Five** (JSP CD 349) covers the Quintet's 1937 Paris sessions for the HMV label, plus an additional three tracks which Django made in November 1935 with pianist Garnet Clark. Three of the 24 tracks are from vinyl test pressings ("Charleston," "Chicago" and "You're Driving Me Crazy") and the sound is sublime. Stephane's violin is especially soulful on "When Day is Done." There are also a couple of fine originals in the moody "Tears" and frantic "Mystery Pacific."

We know that a Volume 6 is in the works (including a session featuring Django and Stephane with American jazzmen Coleman Hawkins and Benny Carter, made for the Swing label in April 1937). Ted Kendall and JSP founder John Stedman are to be congratulated for preserving this gorgeous music in pristine condition. (The JSP Django series is available for \$17.00 per volume from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94948, which also carries other Reinhardt CDs.)

Incidentally, there are a number of sites on the World Wide Web devoted to Django; among the best is one maintained by jazz violinist Steve Gibbons (at <http://www.tezcat.com/%7Estevel/start.shtml>), and another run by Django buff Ian Cooper (<http://www.ozemail.com.au/~ianjazz/django.htm>). You might want to view *Gypsy Guitar* (Shanachie 6301; 24.95), a fine video documentary about Reinhardt's continuing influence worldwide which was reviewed in detail in *Past Times* #12 (video available from Shanachie Entertainment, 37 E. Clinton Street, Newton NJ 07860; (800) 497-1043).

Django passed away in 1953, but Stephane Grappelly (now spelling his surname with a "i" where the "y" used to be) is still swinging, playing his ravishing jazz violin to large and appreciative audiences around the globe. He is also a terrific pianist, an aspect of his great talent which is well documented on the CD *My Other Love* (CBS Records MK 46257).

RUDY!: New CDs Offer a Volley of Vintage Vallee

Say what you want about Rudy Vallee, I like him. Yes, he wrote a self-indulgent book (*Let the Chips Fall*) where he griped and grouched about every little imagined indignity that anyone had ever inflicted upon him. Okay, so he was legendarily cheap to the point of literally having a pay phone in his home for guests' use. Yeah, I know he had a tremendous ego. Believe me, I've heard people tell of the tacky-to-the-point-of-disbelief one-man show he did in his final years, manning a broken-down slide projector and cassette recorder himself from the stage.

But in his prime, he did have a dignified sexiness, a very pleasant if not spectacular voice, and a willingness to tackle many different kinds of material. In addition, he had a wild sense of humor and happily attached his name to some of the craziest records ever issued (Cyril Smith's Bronx-cheering "The Old Sow Song," for one; Clifford Stanley's screeching, yelping rendition of "Sweet Sue" and "Dinah" for another; and Rudy's own hysterical break-up while singing "There Is a Tavern in the Town" for a topper).

I wish there were a definitive CD out there which would contain all of his hits and some of the zany novelties and present them in fine sound quality. A recent CD from Pearl/Flapper, **Rudy Vallee: Heigh-ho Everybody!** (Flapper PAST CD 7077) comes close to the ideal in the choice of selections, but misses the mark by a wide margin in sound quality.

The key songs are here, of course: "I'm Just a Vagabond Lover," "The Whiffenpoof Song," "The Stein Song," "Deep Night" and "Heigh Ho, Everybody, Heigh Ho"; so are engaging and funny songs such as "Kitty From Kansas City," "Nasty Man," "Let's Do It" and "When Yuba Plays the Rhumba On the Tuba." Unfortunately, some of the 22 tracks have a muffled quality to them; others are marred by the obvious use of splices to remove ticks and pops. It sounds as though the producers have used a 1986 reissue LP on the Halcyon label, which had the same audio flaws, as their source material for some tracks. This is disappointing, since most of the Flapper CDs of late have had excellent sound quality.

On the other hand, we've finally gotten around to hearing ASV/Living Era's compact disc edition of **Heigh-ho Everybody, This is Rudy Vallee** (ASV CD AJA 5009). This was first issued as an LP in 1981; for the CD edition, released in 1992, ASV made a new master tape and the sound quality is much improved. "Stein Song," "Kitty," "Heigh-Ho" and "Let's Do It" are here as well, with more obscure songs such as "Dream Sweetheart" and "Salaaming the Rajah" (so early that Rudy is not even the featured vocalist!). The hot jazz side of the band is showcased in "Outside" and "You'll Do It Someday, So Why Not Now," a salacious ditty which really epitomizes the Twenties. While the Flapper CD has tracks spanning 1929 to 1938, the ASV collection concentrates on the 1928-30 period, when Rudy was about as popular as Sinatra would later be.

A recent release is LaserLight's budget-priced **Rudy Vallee: I'm Just a Vagabond Lover** (LaserLight 12 596), which sells for around \$7.98 or less. Weighing in at a light 12 tracks and

29:03, this album is quite a mixed bag, but an enjoyable one. Most of the tracks are evidently from '40s broadcasts and are in very n sound quality; the tunes include fine renditions of "As Time G By," "Yesterdays," "Love is Sweeping the Country" and a different version of "The Stein Song." A handful of tracks are taken fr '20s and '30s-vintage 78s, a couple of them ("My Time is Y Time," "Mad Dogs and Englishmen") key tracks which surprisingly are unavailable on other CDs.

A brand-new CD from the Italian label Promo Sound in "The Entertainers" series is **Rudy Vallee: Dancing in the Moonlight** (CD 349). It turns out to be nothing more than a re-sequenced rip-off of a CD released by Take Two Records in 1992, **The Voice That Had Them Fainting** (TT 405 CD). The 20 tracks, as chosen by Take Two's Jim Bedom, lean toward selections that are less known but still wonderful. Spanning Rudy's recordings from 19

through 1936, the tunes include hot versions of "Doin' the Raccoon" and "Makin' Whoopee," as well as more characteristically crooned items as "I'm Keepin' Company," "Just an Echo in the Valley," and "Pretty Girl is Like a Melody." There are also tunes which ought to be better remembered, among them "Me Minus You," "The Song" and "An Earful of Music."

The Italian issue (only one of hundreds of European CDs which pirate the work of American producers and other European companies!) does have some nice artwork and poodle-lover Rudy would no doubt be pleased to see the white furry friend that accompanies him on the cover. But we suggest that you buy the Take Two edition; its booklet, incidentally, has a fine essay from pop music scholar and Vallee compadre Ian Whitcomb, as well as some

nice photos and information on the recording dates. (The Promo Sound disc has no notes whatsoever.) The ASV, Flapper and Take Two CDs are available from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 192, Novato, CA 94948; the LaserLight CD is widely available at record and department stores.

Two souvenirs from Rudy's 1940s radio shows are available on a CD from the Facet label entitled *John Barrymore: From Matinee Idol to Buffoon* (Facet FCD 8112; reviewed in *Past Times* #23). If you really want to experience Mr. Vallee's considerable gift for comedy, however, the best example is in Preston Sturges' film **The Palm Beach Story**, available from MCA/Universal Home Video on VHS cassettes (MCA 80380), and on laserdisc (40380). Rudy lends deft comedy support as a charming (somewhat stodgy and clumsy) multimillionaire who befriends Claudette Colbert after she leaves her penniless architect husband (Joel McCrea).

Vallee has a real flair for understated comedy; he displays the stodginess and the naivete of the character while still making him charming and sympathetic. His dry, subtle delivery is a welcome note in a comedy which otherwise is loud and boisterous—but undeniably funny. It's a nice reminder that Rudy Vallee had a knack for comedy as well as a winning way with a song.



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David shares his rare paper records with us as he tells us about these records which were sold weekly from the newsstands of America in the early 1930s [broadcast format]. Great music, great fun. All were hits!

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BH cas Berigan on the Air 1936-37

Radio transcriptions of the great trumpeter Bunny Berigan at his best. Selections include: *Now it Can Be Told*, *That's A-Plenty*, *You've Got to Eat Your Spinach*, *Baby* and more.

BH cas 3033 The Elegant Style of Hotel Dance Bands 1927-1936

Features the society dance bands of Henry King, Ambrose, Ben Black, Richard Himber, Fred Culley, Eddy Duchin and many more.

Joe Monte Presents:

BH cas 4000 Songs From Forgotten Films 1928-1934 Vol. 1

Features music from such films as: *Gang*

War, *The Singing Fool*, *Hot for Paris* and *Broadway*...with great music by Paul Whiteman, The Rhythm Boys, Jay Whidden, Henry Busse, and songs like *Little By Little*, *Singin' in the Bathtub* and *Love Thy Neighbor*.

BH cas 4003 Cab Calloway - The Dime Store Recordings 1930-33 V1

A great collection of hard to find classic Calloway. Selections include Fats Waller's tune *Viper's Drag*, *Happy Feet* from the film *King of Jazz*, *Sweet Jenny Lee*, *It Looks Like Suzy*, *Stardust*, *Kickin' the Gong Around*, *You Gotta Ho-de-Ho* and more.

BH cas 4004 Rah Rah Rhythm: Collegiate Music 1926-32

Hot dance steps, snappy tunes, songs about fraternities. This rare tuneful collection pays homage to the era of the collegiate. Selections include: *College Days*, *Yale Blues*, *The Harvard Hop*, *He Ain't Never Been In College*, *Flapperette* and more. Features bands from Ted Wallace and his Campus Boys to Fred Waring and his Pennsylvanians, Monroe's Dance Band to Guy Lombardo....a fun caper for all!

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BH cas 1051 The Magic of Maldonado's Broadway

Radio/TV

43 Years of Steve Allen's Wit

Along with Stan Freberg (whose fantastic new foray into the world of audible comedy we reviewed in PT #24), one of the few comedians still working today whose roots are in radio comedy is Steve Allen. Yes—radio comedy. Steve's first nationally carried show was *Smile Time*, heard on Mutual in 1946, and he later had a half-hour comedy series on CBS before going into television.

Of course, Steverino has been one of the consistent delights of the tube since the '50s, and many vintage moments of his alternately subtle and silly (but always literate) humor have recently been collected on a new CD, **Steve Allen On the Air! The Classic Comedy of Steve Allen** (Varèse Sarabande VSD-5703; \$15.98) contains 22 tracks (running 77 minutes) and spans Steve's career from 1953 through May 4th of this year (!), although most of the material is taken from kinescopes of Steve's classic programs from the '50s.

Steve's classic translations of fairy tales into "Bebop's Fables" from 1953 are included, along with several "Man on the Street" sketches with Louis Nye, Don Knotts and Tom Poston. (On one of these, beloved character comedian Franklin Pangborn guests as prissy bird-watcher William Wellington Waterbury.)

Other classic routines include three of Steve's "Question Man" bits with Tom Poston, and a spoof of country and western music called "Range Round-Up" co-starring Imogene Coca and a newcomer named Elvis Presley. The two 1996 tracks prove—as if proof were needed—that Mr. Allen's wry wit is as sharp as ever.

Steve Allen's accomplishments as an author, composer and performer would be enough for three full lifetimes—but he also created a brand of humor that fully seized upon the unique visual aspects of television while retaining the verbal wit of the best radio comedy. (Leno and Letterman haven't done anything yet that Allen didn't do earlier, and better.) This CD proves that classic TV can be as much fun to hear as to watch, as long as the star of the show is the eloquently amusing Mr. Allen. (Varèse Sarabande Records, 11846 Ventura Blvd., Suite 130, Studio City CA 91604.)

Cantor Meets Lucy, Desi, Groucho, Jack...

Eddie Cantor excelled in many different aspects of show business; starting as a singing waiter, he became a vaudeville favorite—and subsequently a headliner on Broadway, a top radio attraction, and a TV star. There aren't too many left who remember him as a stage comic, but thousands of people still remember his varied radio programs from 1931 into the '50s.

They can still hear some of those programs too, thanks to the efforts of Cantor's very devoted grandson, Brian Gari, who is also a noted songwriter. Mr. Gari's latest tribute to his grandpa is a new CD, **The Eddie Cantor Radio Show: Cantor Loves Lucy** (Original Cast OC 9617), which includes two complete half-hour shows.



The first show comes from April 28, 1943, and features not only Ms. Ball, but her Cuban husband—who had just won acclaim for a supporting role in the film *Bataan*, and who was just about to enter the service. Desi's musical number is surprisingly sedate—no loud "Babalu" here—and his banter with Cantor about keeping the wife unaware of extramarital smooching is a little ironic in light of subsequent events. At one point, however, Lucy and Desi prove how happily married they are with some smooching of their own, which certainly impresses the studio audience.

The program is full of '40s brash, slapstick comedy (Desi dramatically rattles off a beautiful romantic Spanish phrase—which translates

"Slip me some lip, drip!"). There's a healthy amount of wartime sentiment, too, as Desi Shore reads a poignant letter from a new bride to her soldier husband, and Fred Astaire stops by to make a pitch for war bonds.

The second program dates from June 9, 1943, the 29th anniversary of Eddie's marriage to Ida. The happy union is celebrated at chez Cantor by old friends Burns and Allen, Groucho Marx and Jack Benny. Gracie reads a nonsensical poem to commemorate the occasion; Groucho delivers a full load of non-sequiturs. Naturally, Groucho does a bit of ad-libbing (to Cantor's frantic exclamations of "We're late already!"). More surprising is that Jack Benny—stopping by to deliver a congratulatory telegram—also ad-libs liberally. The sound quality is just dandy on both shows, save for a minor repeating sound noise during Eddie's medley of old-time songs ("By the Beautiful Sea," "When You Were a Tulip") near the end of the second show. Both programs are very funny, and we'll happily purchase as many of these shows as Brian Gari cares to release. This album can be ordered from the Eddie Cantor Appreciation Society, P.O. Box 312, Mount Gay, WV 25606 (\$13.95 for CD or \$9.95 for cassette tape; add 3.00 for shipping); the group's website is <http://members.aol.com/ecantor/index.html>.

Incidentally, Brian Gari isn't the only one of Eddie's relatives keeping his spirit alive. Lee Newman, Cantor's great-grandson, has included a number of the wide-eyed comic's most engaging songs on his new CD, **Relatively Singing** (Original Cast Records OC 9527). "There's Nothing Too Good for My Baby," was originally recorded by Cantor in 1931; this version has additional lyrics by Eddie's daughter Janet. "Merrily We Roll Along," the venerable Merrie Melodies theme written by Cantor, is heard for an all-time brief 1:29. Walter Donaldson's classic song for Eddie, "Makin' Whoopee," is a must-have in such a collection; Newman includes the verse and extra choruses culled from various Cantor performances. Likewise, the rare verse is included for "Ida! Sweet as Apple Cider."

It so happens that Lee Newman's other great grandfather was composer Jimmy McHugh, and his songs ("I Can't Give You Anything But Love," "I'm in the Mood for Love," "On the Sunny Side of the Street") are also paid tribute, along with three songs written by cousin Brian Gari and three Newman originals. There's no attempt to recreate a '30s sound in the arrangements, but the contemporary, keyboard-oriented settings just prove how well these songs hold up. Newman's whispery, light tenor is pleasing, and well-suited to these often whimsical songs. (Original Cast Records, Box 496, Georgetown WV 25829; (203) 544-8288.)

Hot Jazz From NBC's Chamber Music Society

One of the most unusual—and most wonderful—radio shows of the early '40s was NBC's *Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street*, which debuted on February 11, 1940, and ran until December 30, 1942. (It was revived on ABC in 1943-44—with a slightly abbreviated title, natch—and returned for two brief runs on NBC in 1950 and '52.) The program celebrated traditional jazz, a music which had been neglected all through the '30s, but which had recently come back into vogue thanks to the success of cornetist Muggsy Spanier's records, and the Commodore records by Eddie Condon, Pee Wee Russell et al.



Dr. Henry "Hot Lips" Levine

The tone of the show was firmly tongue-in-cheek, with the various barrelhouse musicians referred to by dignified names. The two house bands were under the leadership of trumpet player "Doctor" Henry "Hot Lips" Levine, and "Maestro" Paul Laval, a clarinetist. There was nothing jokey about the music played on the show, however. The musicians, a team of crack NBC studio men including trumpeter Angie Rattiner, trombonist Al Philburn and drummer Sam Weiss, had terrific jazz chops. Moreover, the vocalists (including "The Tennessee Diva, Dinah Shore" and "Mademoiselle Lena Horne") were the perfect compliment to the band, and the songs chosen were jazz classics or excellent standards. Guest stars had legitimate jazz credentials, among them "Professor" Sidney Bechet on soprano sax, pianist "Doctor" Jelly Roll Morton, and composer-vocalist "Doctor" W.C. Handy.

With the show's popularity and the ease with which it would transfer to records, NBC's parent company, RCA Victor, did just that in several sessions held between November 1940 and February 1942. Those discs—along with three selections taken from actual broadcast transcriptions—are presented in a recent CD, *NBC's Chamber Music Society of Lower Basin Street* (Harlequin HQ CD 60; \$15.98). It's a joyous romp from the kick-off to "Muskrat Ramble" which opens the proceedings, Sidney Bechet rocking the house with Henry Levine and his "Barefoot Dixieland Philharmonic." Levine and his men, barefoot or not, stomp through "Shine," "Beale Street Blues," "John Henry Blues" and of course "Basin Street Blues." The Paul Laval "Woodwindy Ten" runs its paces through "Bach Goes to Town," and "Runnin' Wild," and accompanies Mme. Shore on "Mood Indigo," "Sophisticated Lady" and "Star Dust." Diva Horne is splendid on a jaunty "Careless Love" and "Beale Street Blues," among others, and another vocalist on the show, Linda Keene, is impressive on "Georgia on My Mind" and "Way Down Yonder in New Orleans."

Sound quality on all 25 tracks is excellent; surface noise is at a minimum, and the full audio range is heard clearly. The three selections taken from an actual broadcast (June 16, 1940) actually sound slightly clearer; a highlight of these is W.C. Handy's vocal on "Sounding Brass and Tinkling Cymbals," in which he proves that he was a better composer than singer; no matter—it's a historic appearance by a great man, and it's wonderful to have it available. It is too bad that this package doesn't include Jelly Roll Morton's guest shot on the show—which was released years ago by French RCA as part of a "Jazz Tribune" Morton two-LP set, now out of print. Morton, guesting on the July 14, 1940 show, gave out with "Winin' Boy Blues" with the Levine band, and then unexpectedly seized the spotlight. He launched into a rocking "King Porter Stomp" which thrilled the studio audience, but which caused frantic cuts in the planned schedule.

It would be wonderful if someone could clear the rights to the original broadcasts; they're a goldmine of fine jazz performances (35 complete shows are known to exist). Until such a miracle happens, though, this Harlequin CD is a fine reminder of one of radio's finest series. (Available from Worlds Records, P.O. Box 1922, Novato CA 94948.)

Glenn Miller WWII Broadcasts Released

A little over a year ago, American network news carried a story about the exciting discovery of some recordings made in London by Major Glenn Miller and the American Band of the Allied Expeditionary Force—a group which, despite its ponderous name, was one of the most swinging big bands ever. Some of these recordings were released last year in England on the Conifer label, and a few copies were imported to the States. Now, they've received an official American release as a two CD set entitled *Glenn Miller: The Lost Recordings* (RCA Victor 09026-63820-2; \$24.98).

If you're an absolute Miller completist, you may want to search for the Conifer set, since it included a couple of songs by Dinah Shore with Miller's band which, sadly, are not included on the U.S. release. The 36 tunes which remain include 16 items which are "new to the Glenn Miller discography," and all of them are in superb sound quality.

These tracks were recorded in London at EMI's Abbey Road studios, between October 30 and November 27, 1944—only two weeks before Miller disappeared in a plane over the Atlantic. They were originally six half-hour broadcasts made for the American Broadcasting Station in Europe (ABSIE) as part of the American propaganda campaign. The six shows were broadcast directly to German troops (and evidently got through, despite German attempts to jam the transmissions).

Since the program was targeted to a German-speaking audience, the hostess for the program was Ilse Weinberger. She banters with Major Miller, who speaks in English, and sometimes in a halting phonetic approximation of German. Further, eight of the tracks have the lyrics sung in German. "Long Ago and Far Away" is tackled twice, once by Johnny Desmond and again by Irene Manning; Ms. Manning's German version of "Begin the Beguine" is fine, but "Mary Is a Grand Old Name" is perhaps a little too apple-pie American to translate well into the Teutonic tongue. Drummer-vocalist Ray McKinley wisely sticks to his native language for "Cow Cow Boogie," "Beat Me Daddy, Eight to the Bar" and "Is You Is or Is You Ain't My Baby?" (introduced by Ilse as "Bist du oder bist du nicht mein

Continued on Page 30



Diva Dinah Shore

Fifty Years of Radio: The '50s and '60s By Frank Bresee



*Editor's note: Frank Bresee is uniquely qualified to write about radio history, as the writer and producer of the weekly **Golden Days of Radio** program, syndicated worldwide for years on the American Forces Network. We're honored that Frank offered this history of radio's early years.*

Radio's fabulous Fifties came in like a lion....

Though the upstart medium of television was beginning to rear its head, the four major networks — ABC, CBS, NBC and

Mutual — acted as if it didn't exist. They were even joined by the Johnny-come-lately network, the Liberty Broadcasting System, which began feeding ten hours of programming a day to 240 affiliates across the country. My radio station, KSCI on Catalina Island, originated many programs and dance band remotes from Catalina for LBS.

Bob Hope signed a new five-year contract with NBC, and Groucho Marx followed suit with a \$3 million deal, one of the largest up to that time. ABC bought "The Screen Guild Players" from NBC, and re-signed host Don McNeil and his morning hit "The Breakfast Club" for another 20 years.

In November of 1950, NBC tried a noble experiment: a lavish 90-minute Sunday afternoon spectacular called "The Big Show." It boasted a \$100,000 weekly budget and starred Tallulah Bankhead as the hostess of a star-studded variety program featuring the likes of Fred Allen, Jimmy Durante, Groucho Marx, Rudy Vallee, Danny Thomas, Ethel Merman, Martin and Lewis, plus Meredith Willson and his Orchestra. When Milton Berle appeared on the program with Tallulah, he was already known as "Mr. Television," but for a brief moment he proved that radio could still be king.

Arthur Godfrey, who had begun on CBS Radio in 1945 with a 30-minute show, was entertaining the nation for 90 minutes a day and his sponsors were lining up around the block. What neither he nor they knew was that he would soon be doing the same thing on television for even bigger audiences and even better money. It was about that same time that Steve Allen, a talented young comedian, was hosting a late-evening show on KNX radio in Los Angeles. But he too was soon to move on to the decidedly greener pastures of the small screen, where he would become a big star as the first host of NBC's "Tonight Show."

Still counterprogramming to stem the tide of audience defections to TV, NBC began its long-running weekend series, "Monitor," in 1954. The program, created by the NBC Network genius Sylvester "Pat" Weaver, was fed to the affiliated stations all day, all weekend. Hosted by Gene Rayburn, Barry Nelson and Henry Morgan, among others, it featured segments with Bob and Ray, Fibber McGee and Molly, plus newcomers Bob Newhart, Mike Nichols and Elaine May, and Shelley Berman. It was a big success (in the ten years it was on, Monitor achieved an audience

of 13 percent of all adult Americans during the weekend broadcasts) but it didn't stop, or even slow down, the inexorable advance of television.

"Your Hit Parade" with the "Lucky" seven songs of the week, continued on through the decade, as did other music programs such as "Manhattan Merry-Go-Round," "Carnation Contented Hour," and the "Bell Telephone Hour." On Sunday evenings, Bert Parks still had the whole country tune in to hear "Stop the Music." But the nation's tune kept changing anyway.



Stan Freberg, Summer 1957

Far from ready to surrender though, CBS debuted comedian Stan Freberg with a network comedy show in 1957, and we heard the most brilliant new comedy material radio has given us since Henry Morgan in the mid-Forties—until Freberg was canceled, due to poor ratings, after 15 weeks.

Oblivious, Walter Winchell kept on with his weekly rapid-fire newscasts during this decade of change, continuing to report it all with an intense excitement that has yet to be equalled, let alone understood. Though "Jack Armstrong, All American Boy" vanished from radio in 1951, another Jack—Jack Benny—remained on CBS every Sunday afternoon, but

only for another four years. Then he too vanished into television for good.

Perhaps Tallulah summed up the twilight of the era most touchingly when she sang Meredith Willson's theme song from "The Big Show" for the last time: "May the good Lord bless and keep you; whether near or far away. May you find that long-awaited golden day today. May your troubles all be small ones; and your fortunes ten times ten. May the good Lord bless and keep you till we meet again."

By the end of the 1950s, only a few of the original network programs remained. Jack Benny switched to television, as did Bob Hope, George Burns and Gracie Allen, and so many others. Edger Bergen with his ever-present sidekick Charlie McCarthy tried hosting a TV quiz show, "Who Do You Trust," and "Superman" had switched from a five-a-week afternoon radio serial to a weekly prime time television event.

Ma Perkins, who went on the air in 1933, finally called it quits in November 1960. Virginia Payne had played the title role for 27 years, and with television now dominant, it seemed like the proper time to retire. On her last program (broadcast November 25, 1960), Ma Perkins, in a touching goodbye to her radio audience, had these words:

"Ma Perkins again. This was our broadcast number 7,065. I first came to you on December 4th, 1933. Thank you for being so loyal to us these 27 years. The part of Willy has been

Continued on Page 30

When Radio Was Program Guide

November 1996 - January 1997

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 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 1-847-465-8245 extension 223, Monday through Friday between 9 AM and 5 PM Central Time.

NOVEMBER 1996

Broadcast Week One

Our Miss Brooks 3-13-49 "Bad Cafeteria Food" starring Eve Arden / **Bill Stern Sports Newsreel** 1945 w/guest, Joan Edwards

Broadcast Week Two

The Lux Radio Theatre 2-8-43 "The Maltese Falcon" starring Edward G. Robinson (part 1)

The Lux Radio Theatre 2-8-43 "The Maltese Falcon" starring Edward G. Robinson (conclusion) / **Gunsmoke** 8-13-55 "Johnny Red" starring William Conrad

The Shadow 2-26-39 "Horror in Wax" starring Bill Johnstone / **The Charlie McCarthy Show** 11-2-47 w/guest, Fred Allen (part 1)

The Charlie McCarthy Show 11-2-47 w/guest, Fred Allen (part 2) / **The Whistler** 11-12-50 "A Friendly Case of Blackmail" starring Bill Forman

The Adventures of Philip Marlowe 3-21-50 "Deep Shadow" starring Gerald Mohr / **Lum & Abner** 1945 starring Chester Lauck and Norris Goff; Program #368

Broadcast Week Three

Suspense 11-3-49 "The Search for Isabel" starring Red Skelton / **The Abbott & Costello Show** 11-29-45 starring Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (part 1)

The Abbott & Costello Show 11-29-45 starring Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (part 2) / **The Green Hornet** 1930s "Put It On Ice" starring Al Hodge

The Lone Ranger 10-18-43 "Listen to a Lonesome Gun" starring Brace Beemer / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 3-16-43 starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part 1)

Fibber McGee & Molly 3-16-43 starring Jim and Marian Jordan (part 2) / **Gangbusters** 1930s "The Case of the Hue and the Cry"

Tales of the Texas Rangers 4-8-51 "Bad Blood" starring Joel McCrea / **Bob & Ray** 1950s starring Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding

Broadcast Week Four

Box Thirteen 1950s starring Alan Ladd / **Johnny Dollar** 5-28-56 "Matter of Reasonable Doubt" starring Bob Bailey (part 1 of 5)

The Six Shooter 1954 "A Friend in Need" starring James Stewart / **Johnny Dollar** 5-29-56 "Matter of Reasonable Doubt" starring Bob Bailey (part 2 of 5)

Dragnet 7-3-52 "The Big Trio" starring Jack Webb / **Johnny Dollar** 5-30-56 "Matter of Reasonable Doubt" starring Bob Bailey (part 3 of 5)

The Jack Benny Program 4-10-49 w/guest, Barbara Stanwyck / **Johnny Dollar** 5-31-56 "Matter of Reasonable Doubt" starring Bob Bailey (part 4 of 5)

Suspense 6-6-46 "The High Wall" starring Robert Young / **Johnny Dollar** 6-1-56 "Matter of Reasonable Doubt" starring Bob Bailey (part 5 of 5)

Broadcast Week Five

Have Gun, Will Travel 11-22-59 "Fair Fugitive" starring John Dehner / **Burns & Allen** 10-2-49 starring George Burns and Gracie Allen (part 1)

Burns & Allen 10-2-49 starring George Burns and Gracie Allen (part 2) / **Sergeant Preston of the Yukon** 10-4-48 "The Extra Uniform" starring Paul Sutton

Mr. Keen, Tracer of Lost Persons 2-17-44 "Mr. Trevor's Secret" w/ Bennett Killpack / **The Great Gildersleeve** 12-16-45 "A Night at the Opera" w/ Hal Peary (part 1)

The Shadow 3-5-39 "Sabotage By Air" starring Bill Johnstone / **The Great Gildersleeve** 1-27-46 starring Hal Peary (part 1)

The Great Gildersleeve 1-27-46 starring Hal Peary (part 1) / **The Life of Riley** 1-28-45 starring William Bendix

The Cinnamon Bear 1937 Chapters 1, 2 and 3 of this 26-chapter classic Christmas story!

DECEMBER 1996

Broadcast Week One

Gunsmoke 12-20-52 "Christmas Story" starring William Conrad / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 4 of 26

The Charlie McCarthy Show 12-14-47 starring Edgar Bergen and guest, Gary Cooper / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 5 of 26

Suspense 12-23-48 "Holiday Story" starring Herbert Marshall / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 6 of 26

Fibber McGee and Molly 12-24-46 "Christmas Show" with Jim and Marian Jordan / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 7 of 26

The Cinnamon Bear 1937 Chapter 8, 9 and 10 of this 26 chapter Classic Christmas story.

Broadcast Week Two

Our Miss Brooks 12-25-49 "The Magic Christmas Tree" starring Eve Arden / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 11 of 26

Family Theater 12-14-49 "The Other Wise Man" starring Jeff Chandler / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 12 of 26

The Phil Harris & Alice Faye Show 12-25-49 with Phil Harris and Alice Faye and guest Jack Benny playing Santa Claus / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 13 of 26

The Six Shooter 12-20-53 "Ponset's Christmas Carol" starring James Stewart / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 14 of 26

The Cinnamon Bear 1937 Chapters 15, 16 and 17 of this 26 chapter Classic Christmas story.

Broadcast Week Three

The Lone Ranger 12-24-48 "Christmas For Sandy" starring Brace Beemer and John Todd / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 18 of 26

The Life of Riley 12-23-49 "Christmas Club Let-Down" w/ William Bendix / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 19 of 26

When Radio Was Program Guide

November 1996 - January 1997 Continued

Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar 12-24-61 "The Phony Phone Matter" starring Mandel Kramer / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 20 of 26

The Great Gildersleeve 12-24-47 "A Dog for Leroy" starring Hal Peary / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 21 of 26

The Cinnamon Bear 1937 Chapters 22, 23 and 24 in this 26 chapter Classic Christmas story.

Broadcast Week Four

Duffy's Tavern 12-18-46 with Ed "Archie" Gardner and guest, Joan Bennett / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 25 of 26

The Jack Benny Program 12-19-48 "Christmas Shopping for a Wallet for Don Wilson" with Jack and all his gang / **The Cinnamon Bear** 1937 Chapter 26 (Conclusion)

The Screen Director's Playhouse 12-23-49 "Miracle on 34th Street" starring Edmund Gwenn / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 12-25-53 "Christmas at Home" w/Jim and Marian Jordan

The Lux Radio Theatre 11-24-41 "Maisie Was a Lady" starring Ann Sothern (First 45 minutes of an hour-long show)

The Lux Radio Theatre 11-24-41 "Maisie Was a Lady" starring Ann Sothern (conclusion) / **Frontier Gentleman** 2-23-58 "Last Stand" with John Dehner

Broadcast Week Five

The Adventures of Ozzie & Harriet 1940s "New Year's Resolutions" starring Ozzie and Harriet Nelson / **The Abbott & Costello Show** 12-30-43 with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (part 1)

The Abbott & Costello Show 12-30-43 with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (part 2) / **The Burns & Allen Show** 1-3-46 "New Year's Resolutions" starring George Burns and Gracie Allen

JANUARY 1997

Broadcast Week One

Suspense 12-28-58 "The 32nd of December" with Frank Lovejoy / **The Charlie McCarthy Show** 11-9-47 with guests Maurice Evans and Lulu McConnell (part 1)

The Charlie McCarthy Show 11-9-47 with guests Maurice Evans and Lulu McConnell (part 2) / **The Adventures of Philip Marlowe** 2-7-50 "The Long Arm" with Gerald Mohr

The Shadow 1-7-40 "Murder in the Death House" with Bill Johnstone / **Vic & Sade** 1945 with Art Van Harvey and Bernadine Flynn

Broadcast Week Two

The Whistler 4-7-47 "The Sheriff's Assistant" with Bill Forman / **Fibber McGee & Molly** 4-25-44 "Managing a Cannery in Portland" with Jim and Marian Jordan (part 1)

Fibber McGee & Molly 4-25-44 "Managing a Cannery in Portland" with Jim and Marian Jordan (part 2) / **The Green Hornet** 1940s "Bait For a Two-Timer" with Al Hodge

The Lone Ranger 7-14-43 "Bad Man's Bluff" with Brace Beemer / **The Abbott & Costello Show** 1-11-45 with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (part 1)

The Abbott & Costello Show 1-11-45 with Bud Abbott and Lou Costello (part 2) / **Gangbusters** 1930s "The Case of the Quince Killers"

Dragnet 7-10-52 "The Big Hate" with Jack Webb / **Lum & Abner** 1945 Program #369 with Chester Lauck and Norris Goff

Broadcast Week Three

Tales of the Texas Rangers 6-1-52 "Sellout" with Joel McCrea / **The Jack Benny Program** 4-24-49 w/ Jack Benny and all his gang (part 1)

The Jack Benny Program 4-24-49 with Jack Benny and all his gang (part 2) / **Box Thirteen** 1948 with Alan Ladd

The Six Shooter 1-10-54 "Hiram Garver's Strike" with James Stewart / **Burns & Allen** 10-9-49 with George Burns and Gracie Allen (part 1)

Burns & Allen 10-9-49 with George Burns and Gracie Allen (part 2) / **Have Gun, Will Travel** 12-28-58 "No Visitors" with John Dehner

Yours Truly, Johnny Dollar 12-3-49 / **Bob & Ray** 1950s with Bob Elliott and Ray Goulding

Broadcast Week Four

Gunsmoke 12-27-52 "The Cabin" with William Conrad / **The Life of Riley** 10-15-44 "Babs Elopes!" with William Bendix (part 1)

The Life of Riley 10-15-44 "Babs Elopes!" with William Bendix (part 2) / **Suspense** 3-6-47 "Elwood" with Eddie Bracken

The Lone Ranger 4-10-44 "Calamity Jane" with Brace Beemer / **The Phil Harris & Alice Faye Show** 11-27-49 "Lady Wrestler" with Phil Harris and Alice Faye (part 1)

The Phil Harris & Alice Faye Show 11-27-49 "Lady Wrestler" with Phil Harris and Alice Faye (part 2) / **The Screen Director's Playhouse** 1-27-50 "It Had To Be You" with Joan Fontaine

The Adventures of Superman 3-4-49 "The Mystery of the \$10,000 Ghost" with Clayton "Bud" Collyer / **Unsolved Mysteries** 1936 "The Horror of Bene Debele"

Broadcast Week Five

The Saint 6-18-50 "A Sonata for Slayers" with Vincent Price / **The Stan Freberg Show** 10-20-57 Program #15 (last of series) with Stan Freberg, June Foray, Daws Butler and Peter Leeds (part 1)

The Stan Freberg Show 10-20-57 Program #15 (last of series) with Stan Freberg, June Foray, Daws Butler and Peter Leeds (part 2) / **The Hermit's Cave** 1930s "The Author of Murder" with Mel Johnson

The Shadow 12-31-39 "The Cat That Killed" with Bill Johnstone / **The Great Gildersleeve** 2-3-46 with Hal Peary (part 1)

The Great Gildersleeve 2-3-46 with Hal Peary (part 2) / **Dimension X** 9-22-51 "Requiem"

Rocky Fortune 2-23-54 "Decoy for Death" with Frank Sinatra / **Lum & Abner** 1945 Program #370 with Chester Lauck and Norris Goff

Hammett's *The Thin Man*, *Sam Spade* and *The Fat Man*

By Carl Amari

Dashiell Hammett's popular *Thin Man* series came to NBC radio on July 2, 1941, produced and directed by the great Himan Brown. The weekly *Thin Man* show was earning Hammett a pretty penny, and by 1946, he agreed to allow CBS to bring his other famous detective, *Sam Spade*, to the air—further adding to his bank account. That same year, hungry for more, he decided to create a detective series especially for radio, this time for ABC, called *The Fat Man*.

By 1947, all three shows were earning Hammett \$6,000 a month, which by today's standards would be worth about \$2 million per year. With that much revenue coming in, you'd think his attitude toward all of these programs would be positive, but it wasn't...it was cynical. He is quoted as saying, "My sole duty in regard to these programs is to look in the mail for a check once a week. I don't even listen to them. If I did, I'd complain about how they were being handled, and then I'd fall into the trap of being asked to come down and help. I don't want to have anything to do with radio. It's a dizzy world...makes the movies seem highly intellectual."

The Adventures of the Thin Man was actually as much a comedy as it was a detective thriller. Based on the 1934 film, itself based on the Hammett novel of the same year, it chronicled the amusing adventures of Nick Charles, an aristocratic, semi-retired private eye who had a knack for turning up dead bodies.

Nick was assisted in his adventures by his eccentric, beautiful wife Nora. William Powell and Myrna Loy played the characters on the silver screen and Les Damon and Claudia Morgan, two radio pros, handled them on the air. The series was one of radio's most successful detective shows, lasting until 1950.

The Adventures of Sam Spade, *Detective* came to CBS radio on July 12, 1946 and was an instant success. The characters were based on Hammett's 1930 crime classic, *The Maltese Falcon*. Spade was a hard-boiled San Francisco detective whose first question to a prospective client was usually "How much money you got on you?" Sam dictated his cases to his ditzy,

Continued on page 26



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Hammett's Radio Detectives

Continued from page 25

man-hungry but faithful secretary, Effie Perrine. Each case came out as a report—dated, signed and delivered. Spade's license number 137596 was always included at the beginning of the report. Howard Duff starred as Sam Spade and Lurene Tuttle played Effie; *Sam Spade* ran until 1951.

Arguably the best of Hammett's radio detectives was *The Fat Man*. It premiered on January 21, 1946 and was a solid success. *The Fat Man* was Brad Runyon, an overweight private eye who didn't let his 239-pound frame get in the way of his sleuthing. Brad Runyon, the "Fat Man" was a character completely opposite to Nick Charles, the "Thin Man." Where Nick Charles was tall, suave, married, aristocratic and martini-sipping, Brad Runyon was short, heavy, hard-fisted, charming and sensitive.

Stepping into the oversized role of Brad Runyon was Jack Scott Smart. Smart was a cinch for the part because, as he would often say, "it takes a fat man to sound like a fat man," and Smart was indeed a fat man. He tipped the scales at around 270 pounds which was distributed over a 5 foot, 9-inch frame. *The Fat Man* lasted for six seasons on ABC and never lost its popularity.

All three series came to a screeching halt by 1951, not because of poor ratings or the pressure of TV, but because of politics. In 1950 Hammett, who was peripherally involved in leftist politics, caused a stir with the House Un-American Activities Committee when he refused to give names of other activists. He was tried and imprisoned for his failure to cooperate with the Committee and was blacklisted along with other fine artists and entertainers who fell victim to the anti-Communist hysteria of the day. The networks felt that, although Hammett's shows were very successful, they had become tainted and were quickly canceled.

Carl Amari is the executive producer of "When Radio Was," a nationally syndicated vintage radio show hosted by Stan Freberg. He is also CEO of Radio Spirits, Inc., one of the nation's leading suppliers of "old-time radio" shows on cassette. For a free catalog listing thousands of radio shows available through Radio Spirits, call toll-free 1-800-RADIO-48 (1-800-723-4648).

Boisterous Broadcasts By Bing and his Buddies



In *Past Times* #20, we told you about a series of CDs from the British-based Parrot label with great moments from Bing Crosby's Philco Radio show. Now, the domestic

Viper's Nest imprint has issued its own collection of choice segments as a new CD, **Bing Crosby: Live Duets 1947-1949** (Viper's Nest VN 1003; \$12.00). All 20 tracks have absolutely sparkling sound quality, and the performances sparkle too.

"Then I'll Be Happy" with Peggy Lee swings mightily, with a hot arrangement and fine support from the John Scott Trotter orchestra. Bob Burns' bazooka accompaniment adds a unique tonal color to "Just a Gigolo," and Bing's duets with Jimmy Durante on "Chidabee Chidabee Chidabee" and with Groucho Marx on "When It's Night Time in Little Italy" are predictably more mirthful than musical.

Two sketches of "Your All-Time Flop Parade" with Ethel Merman, each running about twelve minutes, are highlights not only of this disc but of Crosby's entire radio career. This lampoon of the Lucky Strike "Hit Parade" features deliberately atrocious songs sent in by listeners or penned by Crosby's songwriter pals, among them such gems as "Boise, Idaho," (by UC Berkeley student Ed Walsh) "Tears in My Ears," (Burke and Van Heusen) "Tortured" (sent in by listener Bessie Patterson of Tucumcari, New Mexico and containing the remarkable lyric, "You're with someone new/ In our old apple orchard/ and I'm not only blue/ I'm tortured"). One of these ditties, "There's a Flaw in My Flue," tickled Frank Sinatra so much that he later recorded it for Capitol!

A four-song medley with Al Jolson and a wonderful rendition of "Lazybones" with Louis Armstrong and Jack Teagarden makes one marvel at the caliber of talent to which Crosby's listeners were treated each week. Bing's infectious laughter from the sidelines indicates what a good time he was having during these broadcasts, and the fun is absolutely undimmed almost fifty years later. (Available from Jazz Catalogue, P.O. Box 1936, New York NY 10113-1936.)

Radio Spotlight: Jean Vander Pyl

Probably best remembered as the voice of Wilma Flintstone on television, Jean Vander Pyl was a busy radio actress from the mid-'30s through the end of radio's golden era. Beginning her career in Los Angeles before it was a major center of radio production, Miss Vander Pyl's career blossomed as more and more big-time shows relocated to Hollywood. She worked on such shows as *Amos 'n' Andy* and *Fibber McGee and Molly*, and later became a regular on radio's *Father Knows Best* (playing Margaret Anderson) and *The Aldrich Family*. In addition to being a versatile and talented actress, Miss Vander Pyl was also sought for doing the live commercials, a segment which of course was very important to the advertising agencies which owned the programs.

My father was a traveling man and up until the time I was 14 we never stayed in one place more than two years. I was born in Philadelphia and that's where I had the first inkling that I wanted to be an actress. We moved to California in the beginning of '34 where I went to John Burrows Junior High School. Later, at high school in Beverly Hills, I started in the drama department and they had a verse choir where people spoke in unison, like a Greek chorus. And I was in plays constantly. We did the Shakespearean Festival in tents, because they were repairing the theatre building from the '33 Long Beach quake.

When I was in high school I wanted to find a dramatic coach, and I met an old wardrobe lady who knew Jane Morgan, the actress who later played the little old lady on *Our Miss Brooks*. When I graduated in '37, Jane said, "Would you like to do radio this summer?" I said "Sure, I'd love it!" Jane took me to an AFRA meeting (the American Federation of Radio Artists) to see who we could meet. And afterward a man named Ted Bliss came up, a producer at KHJ. A lot of the big people were working there at the time, directing, writing radio shows. Jane said, "Ted, I want you to meet my little protégé, Jean Vander Pyl. She's a very good actress and she'd like to get into radio." He looked at me and said, "What're you doing tomorrow morning at 9:30?"

Ted worked for KHJ producing a show called *Wedding Bells*; I was to play a young bride. This was broadcast live, so my audition was on the air! We did read it two or three times before airtime. I realized later that Ted was covered if I hadn't been good, because there were two parts for women in the show, one large part and one small; the larger part was for the young girl, and Margaret Leighton—a prominent radio actress—had the other role. I know if I hadn't worked, Ted would've switched the roles and gotten out of it.

Los Angeles was still a small town, and it was so intimate that it was almost like a family. Everyone knew--and helped--everybody else. When the first trans-continental show came through, *Hollywood Hotel*, all the actors told all the others, "Don't miss the audition!" They had an open audition for that show; the whole studio was just packed with actors. And they were so excited. They said, "It's only three days work, but you get \$25!" That was a good week's salary.

I started with Los Angeles radio when it was in its infancy. The first big disruption was when all the Chicago soap operas went off the air and they all moved to Los Angeles. *Scattergood Baines* was one of the first shows to come out from Chicago. We liked them. They were no threat. But then they started coming in droves! The hard part was that the directors came, too. Suddenly here were these nice new shows in town and these nice new actors and these nice new directors who knew their own people; the locals were closed out.

I got parts on many shows by first doing the commercials. The agency would hire me to do a commercial, the director would hear me and say that's the girl I'd like for such-and-such a part. The fun thing was that we sat at the table while the stars rehearsed. I had always wanted to work with Lucille Ball on her radio show *My Favorite Husband*, but after doing commercials on the show for two weeks, I did not want to be on the show! What a temper. She knew what she wanted and she was good, but she didn't care who she stepped on. I just about cried for Richard Denning, who played her husband.

I did the "Super Suds" commercial on *Blondie* every Sunday for a year. Every Sunday I had to say, "...with less scrubbing out of towel, sheet and shirt." The orchestra leader every Sunday said, "Ya gonna say it this week, Jean?" They were all just waiting. The copywriters used to write these wonderful alliterations that looked so good in print--but try to say them. A fate worse than death that we wished on all copywriters was that they'd have to read their own copy live coast-to-coast.

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Miller Broadcasts Released

Continued From Page 21

Baby"). During one session when Desmond was sick with the flu, Cpl. Artie Malvin—a member of the Crew Chiefs vocal group—stepped in; he does a fine job on "Where or When" (or "Wo und Wann").

Jerry Gray was one of the arrangers for the orchestra, and his charts for "Holiday for Strings," "Smoke Gets in Your Eyes" and his own compositions "Caribbean Clipper" and "Jeep Jockey Jump" are superb. The band, of course, is splendid. Miller hand-picked the very best musicians available to Uncle Sam, and with a line-up that included Zeke Zarchy and Bernie Privin on trumpets, Hank Freeman and Peanuts Hucko on saxophones, Mel Powell playing piano, the ever-faithful Trigger Alpert on bass and the swinging Ray McKinley at the drums, the band couldn't help but swing. Miller had excelled at romantic ballads with his civilian band, and the 20-man string section of the AEF band imparts an even more beautiful sound to the dreamy numbers. Available in most record stores, this collection is another example of the tremendous amount of great music created by Glenn Miller in his all-too-brief lifetime.



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Radio Drama in the '50s and '60s

Continued from Page 22

played right from the beginning by Murray Forbes. Shuffle was played for 25 years by Charles Egleston, and for the past two years by Edwin Wolfe. The Fay you've been hearing these past few years has been Margaret Draper. The part was played for many years by Rita Ascot. For 15 years, our Evey has been Kay Campbell. Helen Lewis plays Gladys, and Tom Wells has been played by John Larkin and Casey Allen. Our director is Richard Leonard. Our writer for more than twenty years has been Orrin Tovrov.

"Ma Perkins has always been played by me, Virginia Payne. If you'll write to me, Ma Perkins, at Orleans, Massachusetts, I'll try to answer you. Goodbye, and may God bless you."

"The Romance of Helen Trent," another longtime favorite, gave up on her long and usually fruitless quest for "romance after 35." And one of the last soap operas to leave the radio airwaves was "The Right to Happiness." Finally NBC cancelled it—feeling, perhaps, after 21 years, the listeners had had all the happiness they could handle. No doubt about it, the tastes of the American public were changing.

"Amos 'n' Andy" left the air, as did "The National Barn Dance." But Arthur Godfrey continued on with no end in sight. He lasted long enough to celebrate his 35th year with CBS. He had been on the air almost since the birth of the network itself.

Eventually, some of the old shows began to come back. Stations and listeners were discovering the excitement of radio drama. "The Shadow" was back, as was "The Lone Ranger" and "The Green Hornet." There was so much demand that I began a regular program on the Armed Forces Radio & Television Service, featuring old radio shows plus in-person interviews with most of the radio personalities of the '40s and '50s. "The Golden Days of Radio" was on the air, every week, for an incredible twenty-nine years. It appeared that radio did not die—it was just recorded for broadcast at a more convenient time.

News, talk and disc-jockey shows began to dominate the airwaves. John Gambling had a popular program on New York's WOR, and he was quickly followed by the equally popular Jean Shepherd, who became kind of a counter-culture hero for insomniacs. In Chicago, Wally Phillips began a morning talk show on WGN, and Joe Pyne in Los Angeles became the first of the hard-nosed hosts by putting down the people who called in. The listeners loved it, and soon he was heard coast-to-coast.

With his suggestive "Feminine Forum," Bill Ballance was also known to millions across the country. He was Number One, and so popular, that in a very short time copycat shows began springing up on local stations all over the country. His show remained, and he was tops for well over a quarter of a century.

The networks continued their service to the affiliated stations, but it had turned into mostly news and sports. Walter Cronkite, Mike Wallace, Harry Reasoner and Dan Rather broadcast regular reports, and the dean of radio news, Lowell Thomas, pressed resolutely into his fourth decade on CBS.

In an interview I did with Mr. Thomas, he brought up some startling facts. He told me, "I did my first broadcast 51 years ago—the first one was an ad-lib one-hour program that I did on KDKA, Pittsburgh, telling the story of man's first flight around the world. So when I first broadcast, here are some interesting statistics. Eric Sevareid was 13 years old; Howard K. Smith, 11; Daniel Shorr was 9; Walter Cronkite was 9; Mike Wallace was 7 years old; Edwin Newman was 6; David Brinkley was 5; Harry Reasoner 2. Bob Pierpont, John Chancellor, Barbara Walters, Roger Mudd, Marvin Kalb, Dan Rather and nearly all the others, they were not even born." Lowell Thomas went on to say that he felt he had been very lucky to be able to continue as a newscaster on CBS for so many years.

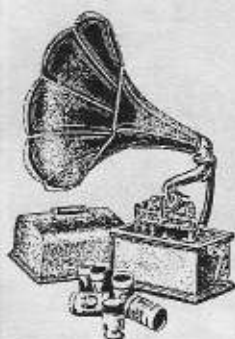
Paul Harvey no less bravely persisted with his daily 15-minute newscast on the ABC Radio Network. But radio's longest running variety show, "The Breakfast Club," closed its kitchen for good on December 27, 1968. From its beginning as "The Pepper Pot Program," 34 years earlier, Don McNeil had entertained a nation through a depression, one big war and a couple of smaller ones, five US presidents, five Popes, three Kings and one Queen.

When Don McNeil concluded his last show, he took a fond look at his years on the air, and then closed with his familiar line, "Be good to yourself." He might have added, "Better than TV has been to us!"

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Pop Culture

Mr. Edison's Christmas Gift



One of the loveliest Christmas presents you could give a collector of vintage records—or anyone else—is a charming little book that takes less than an hour to read, but which will reverberate in the

memory for a long, long time.

The Christmas of the Phonograph Records (University of Nebraska Press; 48 pages, paperback; \$5.95) is a lovely memoir by Mari Sandoz; it was originally published posthumously in December 1966, not long after the author died at 70. She evidently had an amazing memory, because this story about a hard but fulfilling life on a Nebraska farm resonates and crackles with vivid detail.

Although it reads like fine fiction, the story is autobiographical. Not long after the turn of the century, Mari's father, a Swiss emigrant named Jules, spends most of a \$2,100 inheritance on an Edison cylinder phonograph and 300 records—despite the fact that the four children need shoes. The treasures arrive just before Christmas. Although it's an extravagance, the phonograph brings a needed lift to the spirits of the Sandoz family, their friends and even a couple of enemies.

The story is supplemented with a fine introduction by folklorist Linda Hasselstrom, and is illustrated with period line art. Record collectors will enjoy Ms. Sandoz' vivid description of the early recordings—most of them classical, but also including titles by Ada Jones and Collins & Harlan. The author remembers one record as "Casey at the Telephone," probably substituting "Casey" in error for "Cohen." One hates to quibble, though, because this little book is so filled with rich, evocative detail of long-vanished customs—and it demonstrates powerfully how Mr. Edison's talking machine began to change this way of life. (University of Nebraska Press, 312 North 4th Street, Lincoln NE 68588-0484; (402) 472-3581.)

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Early Film Musicals

Continued from Page 5

sound revolution," Mr. Bradley writes. Most of the films, eight chapters worth, come from the 1929-1930 span; the handful of 1931 musicals are dealt with in one lone chapter, "Without a Song."

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This is an essential book for any film library. Copiously illustrated with rare stills and packed with new information, it sheds much new light on a vital but heretofore neglected aspect of film history. (McFarland & Co., Inc., Box 611, Jefferson NC 28640; phone, (910) 246-4460; fax, (910) 246-5018.)

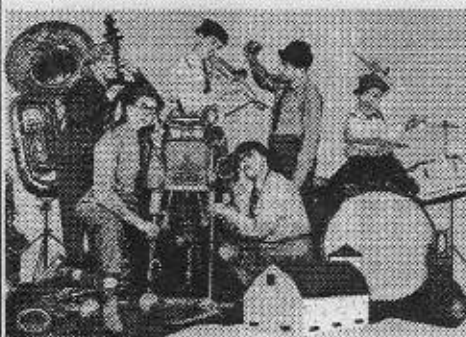
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