

# THE MUSICAL BUNCH

By DAVE PEYTON

## Things in General

### The Music Arranger

The music arranger is the fellow who doesn't have to worry about a job playing music, staying awake all night blowing and fiddling in night-life resorts, inhaling poisonous smoke in the lungs, and a dozen other things. Arranging music is a very pleasant occupation if the arranger knows the theory of the art and also the practical side. In one of my articles several months ago in this column I suggested study of this branch to the bunch. You cannot go wrong. It may seem hard in the beginning, but after you get the drift of it you will sit back and say, "I wouldn't take anything for the sacrifice made in learning how to arrange music."



Dave Peyton

### The Start

Go to some first-class harmony teacher or to some school with a reputation, ask for the course of counterpoint, harmony and instrumentation. Many have finished in four years and I know of a few who have had exceptional ability and have mastered the art in less time. After you finish try to get in the office of some arranger in order to complete the practical side. The music nowadays, especially the modern dance and popular song music, carries little theory in its orchestral construction. Many figures which sound musically good to the ear are not theoretical. Here is where each arranger has displayed individuality, as most every one of America's popular music arrangers have a distinctly different style. Make up your minds, bunch, to learn the art of arranging music. In years to come it will make you very independent.

### A Sad Flight

It is so very pitiful to see the old musicians running around here and there trying to make a living. With gray hairs they are not wanted in the dance orchestras, nor in any of them, with the probable exception of the symphony. Father Time clips their vitality. They haven't got the pep and punch of the younger players, hence their misfortune. Are you going to let yourselves get in this position? Follow this writer's advice, get busy, use your idle time in trying to perfect your knowledge of music, and avoid this sad plight.

### Pouring Oil

"Pouring oil" is an expression created by the musicians in Chicago. By that they mean some band has played better than the other. Last Saturday night at the Savoy ballroom in Chicago three orchestras played, Clarence Black and his gang, Carroll Dickerson and his gang, and Erskine Tate and his gang. The latter bunch was the guest orchestra and the former two are regularly employed at the Savoy.

Erskine Tate's master musicians opened their program with a brilliant rendition of the "Slavic Rhapsody," later giving a slow stomp number for his second offering. The crowds applauded the single and combined playing of these musicians and everybody danced. Several numbers were played in dance tempo, which delighted the steppers.

A note was handed to the house orchestras by Mr. Fagin, asking them to join in and play the "Savoy Blues" with the guest orchestra. This was wonderful. The three bands, consisting of 37 players, rocked the beautiful ballroom with their scintillating music. It was Louis Armstrong, a member of Carroll Dickerson's orchestra, whom this writer has termed the "Jazz Master," who saved the hour. As the boys would say, Louie poured plenty of oil and it soaked in too. The crowd gathered around him and wildly cheered for more and more. Louie really poured oil last Saturday night

and Carroll Dickerson was as proud as a peacock of his robust jazz master, Louis Armstrong.

### Our Fine Arrangers

Among our arrangers of music Will Vodery is recognized as the foremost. His experience has been broad and on Broadway his name is famous as the arranger for many of the great show successes. He is on the staff of Flo Ziegfeld and arranged much of the music for Ziegfeld's Follies. This writer, with a studio in Chicago's Loop for the past 15 years, has been an ardent student of Mr. Vodery's arrangements and I have quite a few times been taken for the great music master. They say we resemble each other. This is a compliment, as I have always considered Mr. Vodery a very handsome person. Harry Burleigh is another who has confined his work to the vocal line. His arrangements are listed with the largest deluxe song publishers all over the world. Charles L. Cooke, William Still, J. Rosamond Johnson, Joe Jordan, Russell Wooding and Donald Redmond are about our best music arrangers. They are men who know theory and are not faking their way through. There is one certain thing about music arranging, you cannot fool anybody. Musicians have to play them and if the goods are not in them, you as an arranger will have to quit your business flops and there you are. Get the knowledge right in the beginning and you may prove in time to be just as good as the above-named well-known music arrangers.

### About Clay's Bunch

Following is an interview with Buddy Brown, one of the theatrical correspondents of the Defender, had with Sonny Clay, director of the orchestra that was alleged to have been expelled from Australia for misconduct:

"Dear Dave: I just had an interview with Sonny Clay, who has just returned from Australia.

"Personally, Sonny is a hard working, capable, conscientious, talented, gentlemanly and efficient musician. I was one of his first acquaintances, when he first landed in Los Angeles, unheralded and unsung, a few years ago. I've watched his gradual rise until today he has one of the outstanding bands of the Coast. So I publish verbatim extracts from the Australian press and personal letters from influential people of that country to Sonny Clay and let my readers be the judge. But: Judge ye not your fellow man, lest ye be judged yourself also."

"To American Pressmen and others whom it may concern: Sydney, Australia, March 30. This is to certify that small notice should be taken of Australian press remarks concerning an incident in Melbourne, where it was alleged that members of Sonny Clay's band had staged a party with several white girls, at which disgraceful scenes had taken place. The facts are as follows: In the court case which followed the magistrate dismissed the evidence of the detectives and discharged all concerned. This meant that the Negro musicians had been arrested on a "mistaken charge" and that they had not transgressed the bounds of law. However, the Australian press, having "strong views" on the "Color question," seized upon the incident as a "good story" and wrote it up until they reached the borders of persecution and victimization. There is more behind the case than meets the eye, and there is more than a suspicion that the whole affair was a "frame up" against the Negro. Only five members of the band were concerned in the incident. Five of the remaining 12 being members of the A. E. F. and possessing excellent war records. Yet all shared the unenviable publicity. In the face of the tirade of criticism the management had no alternative than to send the company back to the U. S., but I wish to state that it is thought that Sonny Clay and his handsmen have had a "very raw deal" and one which we have no power to offset or rectify, however willing we may be.

"As far as the Tivoli theaters are concerned the conduct of the members of Sonny Clay's band has always been faultless and there can be nothing but sympathy for the company in their unfortunate position."—(Signed) William Maloney, publicity manager for

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J. C. Williamson, Tivoli vaudeville circuit of Australia, Ltd., Sydney, Australia."

"This letter and dozens of others from business people, fraternal orders and influential professional men of the Antipodes is in the possession of Sonny Clay and he showed them to this writer. It seems to me that this should clear this bunch of any stigma of disgrace, and shows that prejudice has crept into Australia the same as every other place. Mr. Maloney goes on to say in another letter: 'So far as I can see your only offense was in your color, and I regret that very much.'"

## Lowery and His Band

P. G. Lowery called his men to report at Madison Square Garden, New York city, April 25. He has spared no pains in selecting the best talent obtainable. His band this season will be the best musical unit he has ever got together. The reed section has been strengthened and the bass section by the addition of Ben Goodall, the baritone wizard.

He has selected a repertoire that will meet the wants of the public from "Memphis Blues" to second Hungarian Rhapsody, and a full line of popular music and standard marches. Lowery was the first director to introduce high-class concerts in the annex department with the circuses.

## Handy's Concert

On Friday evening, April 27, close to three thousand people filled Carnegie hall to hear the W. C. Handy orchestra and jubilee singers in a program of blues and spirituals. The program was well received and many numbers were encored several times. Mr. Handy when he appeared on the stage received thunderous applause lasting several minutes. Rosamond Johnson and Taylor Gordon, a xylophone solo by W. C. Handy Jr., Thos. (Fats) Waller, and an old-fashioned cakewalk shared honors.

## NOTES

Last Saturday night three orchestras vied with each other for honors, but an unfair deal was instituted when the three were put together on "The Savoy Blues." The management should allow every orchestra to go individually for themselves. The guest orchestra did not fare so well with the dancers and their life was saved by this arrangement of putting the three bands together. It is unfair to the house orchestras. Nevertheless when the "Savoy Blues" was finished the mob was standing around Carroll Dickerson's band loudly walling to Louis Armstrong for more, more, more.

The news is rife that the celebrated Paul Ash is going to leave Chicago next week. I suppose all of the Race Paul Ashes can have their hair cut now and get back to normalcy, since they have no competition.

Verona Biggs and William Carr, both able presidents of the Musicians and Waiters unions, respectively, entertained this writer last week with a midnight luncheon. Mr. Biggs paid the bill with that big broad smile of his. Unfortunately the two presidents caught me in a hungry mood and I do not think they will invite me again soon. Very little change was returned to Mr. Biggs from his \$10 bill. Thanks to the two presidents.

Several well-known white orchestras are to be booked into the Savoy ballroom, it is advertised. None of them will do what Paul Ash did. Of them all, Mark Fisher will be the best bet. Our local orchestras are doomed with this invasion in our district. When we do get a break in white localities we are engineered out by the white brother musician, but when they come into our backyard we welcome them with open arms. It is rumored that Leo Salkin is one mostly

responsible for their booking, as he is the right hand man of the Savoy manager.

Eddie South, the famed violinist, and his orchestra are features on the Victor records and not on the Brunswick, as recently stated in this column. To Mr. Bradford, I beg your pardon.

Chauncey Douns and his 10 Rinky Dinks of Kansas City, Mo., are fast coming into fame since Benny Moten and his orchestra left the burg to fill an engagement in New York. Iola Allen is featured singer with the bunch.

Joe Williams, pianist, and Robert Stepteau, saxophonist, are now in the band and orchestra on the Bill Haines show.

Willie Long, cornetist, formerly with the Kid Thomas show, is now jazzing 'em up with the Troy Floyd orchestra, now playing at the Hotel Plaza, San Antonio, Tex.

H. M. Lankford, trombonist, formerly with Sidney's Southern Syncopators, is now living in St. Louis, Mo. Mail to 3838 Windsor Pl.

William Franklin, trombonist, will begin service in the Regal theater orchestra Monday. This young man has the pipes of Caruso. He was formerly with Tate's orchestra.