

Rating The Records

By FRANK MARSHALL DAVIS
(For the Associated Negro Press)

HARD TO GET BIX

As all students of hot jazz know, Bix Beiderbecke is the greatest white musician in this field. Influenced by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and by Louis Armstrong and King Oliver, Bix in the early 1920's developed a thoroughly individual cornet style that today is spoken of with awe. The band with which he was first associated, and one of the most famous in history, was the Wolverines. Records by this unit are extremely scarce and highly prized. For this reason, the Hot Record Society of New York has made available a special Bix album of five records repressed from 10 old Gennett sides.

Titles in this special collection with descriptive booklet, known as H.R.S. Album No. 2, are FIDGETY FEET and DAVENPORT BLUES; SENSATION and TODDLIN' BLUES; BIG BOY and TIGER RAG; JAZZ ME BLUES and OH BABY; ROYAL GARDEN BLUES and TIA JI'ANA. For those who do not want the entire album, individual records are available.

In listening to these performances, it must be remembered they were recorded in 1923-24, before the days of electric transcription and modern precision arrangements, and therefore are not ill-tubing stuff. But the intelligent listen-

er will thrill to the golden beauty of Bix's horn and the close intensity of the original Chicago style. The Wolverines' music was vital and earthy; they were sincere instead of merely clever. The gusto with which these boys played as well as their musical patterns should provide plenty of appeal as well as the historic importance of these numbers.

Louis Armstrong is with us this week, singing and playing for Decca YOU'RE A LUCKY GUY and YOU'RE JUST A NO ACCOUNT from the Cotton Club revue. This is typical Satchmo in a popular vein. J. C. Higginbotham also gets in some good trombone licks.

Ordinarily I don't like the Savoy Sultans, but their new Decca is all right, WHEN I GROW TOO OLD TO DREAM and JUMPIN' THE BLUES are jump stuff for the jitterbugs, but some good solos are displayed along with weird orchestral effects that take the sting out of the unit's persistency in being out of tune. . . . Jimmy Mundy's second Variety, a great improvement over his first, shows his band has plenty of drive and guts. For that reason you may enjoy his killers of ALL ABOARD and SUNDAY SPECIAL. . . . Best version yet heard of BETWEEN 14th and 18th ON CHESTNUT STREET is by Bob Crosby on Decca. Both this and the coupling, I WANNA WRAP YOU UP, are early Dixieland performances. Teddy Grace sounds awfully good on the latter.

A real contrast between Earl Hines of 1929 and 1939 is offered by Bluebird on ROSETTA and GLAD RAG DOLL, the first waxed recently and the latter made a decade ago but never before released. Both display the Father's truly amazing inventive genius and these solos are filled with runs that probably no other pianist would ever think of trying. Rank this with Hines' best work.