An Analytical Review of "SWEET SUE"

As played by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra on Columbia Record No. 9572 (12 in., 4s. 6d.)

BY
AL DAVISON, M.A.
Mus. Bac. (Cantab.) F.R.C.O.

FOREWORD

NOT only was modern dance music originated in America but it has been left to the Americans to devise the lines on which it has evolved.

In England there are now many good "dance" musicians and many good dance bands, but only because they have copied what Americans originated.

How were they able to do this?

It is true that we have been visited by American dance bands and solo artists whose performances we have been able to hear, but if anyone were to ask you what has been the most widely employed medium by which British musicians studied the progress of American dance music I think you would have to reply American gramophone records. Ask yourself whether such a great many of us could have become even as proficient as we are without them, any more than the public would have taken so wholeheartedly to this form of music as a means of popular entertainment had it not continually been shown by American records how good it could be at its best, that is to say its best to date.

NOW it is a curious fact that while there are many who will readily admit that the gramophone taught them practically all they know about modern dance music, yet to-day they desert it as a means of further education. This is really disastrous because there is more to be learnt from the gramophone just now than there has ever been previously, and for this reason:

What started as dance music is rapidly proving that, owing to its progress it will have to be recognised in the near future as something serving a far greater purpose than merely an accompaniment for dancing, and already, although it has by no means reached the limit where there is no further scope for development, modern rhythmic music has arrived at a stage where at its best it is worthy of being considered as a form of music which is by no means valueless even when adjudged with the highest of artistic standards in mind. In fact, at such a stage has it arrived that it is plain to see that it is more than likely that shortly the influence of the general atmosphere of modern dance music, and more particularly perhaps the subtleties of interpretation which produce what we broadly term dance rhythm, will have a strong effect on the work of the great master composers of to-morrow.

If this happens, and I am only one of many who believe that it will, a knowledge of the subject acquired by having studied it during its evolution will be of the greatest value.

A PERFORMANCE which shows one of the greatest advances of recent times is the "popular concert" interpretation of "Sweet Sue" by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra (Columbia Record No. 9572, 12 in. 4s. 6d.) There is so much that is of interest in this rendering that I feel it will be of benefit to all to consider it more deeply than one usually does when just listening to it purely for the sake of enjoyment.

A MUSICAL performance may be said to depend always on three main factors. Firstly there is the artistic ability of the composer; secondly, the technical ability of the orchestrator in putting the composer's ideas into effect; and thirdly, the individual interpretation by the musicians of the mere notes as shown n the score.

This record of Whiteman's certainly conveys two of these points at their best. The original melody of "Sweet Sue" may, or may not, be anything much as a composition—it depends upon one's taste in these matters—but the orchestration and performance are certainly of a standard which it would be worth while to apply to music of any class, and, it must be admitted, have in this case made a melody, which many may feel is after all very ordinary, into something which should readily appeal to the most artistic and scholarly of lovers of music.

The object of the following analysis is to endeavour to show, not only to which of the three points mentioned the various movements and the phrases of which they are composed owe their musical appeal, but, where this appeal is found to be due to the technical ability of the orchestrator, to explain as far as possible what he has done from a theoretical point of view, and where it is due perhaps more to musicianship to point this out so that others may emulate it.

I do not wish to blow my own trumpet, but before proceeding I want to mention the course I have written on "The General Theory of Music," which has been published in THE MELODY MAKER and terminated in the last (March) issue.

There were, of course, many who, immediately they found this course was theory, turned their backs on it. Theory, they found, was dull. It seemed to be learning rules and technicalities, the use of which was not at the time apparent. But how often is the value of technicalities obvious to us at the time when we have to learn them? Did we ever recognise to what use they were to be put when we were learning strokes and pot-hooks? Yet now that we can write we realise the part they played in enabling us to reach that end.

The course, I think I can truthfully say after having read through the whole of this chat to you, dealt with every theoretical matter to which I shall have to call your attention as we proceed, and, if you are cognisant with the technicalities of music which I explained to you in it to the best of my limited ability, you will realise that I gave you practically all the information necessary to enable you, not merely to understand my following analysis, but actually to make an orchestration similar to that from which Whiteman's band has performed "Sweet Sue"—providing, of course, that you have the gift of origination.

HAVING patted myself on the back so nicely, I must now proceed to belittle myself. I might as well do it myself, for if I don't you will only find me out and I shall appear still more foolish.

You may remember that almost the last thing I wrote in the Course was to urge the practice of "seeing what you hear." I have had to practise what I preached with a vengeance, but in the case of this record there are several places where I must confess frankly that I am beaten. I think, however, that there is some excuse for me, for I have had to contend with such a multiplicity of moving parts (the orchestra is anything from twenty to thirty strong), to say nothing of the difficulties of hearing certain notes which in the record are almost entirely obscured

by instruments (or the voice) playing notes above and below them.

Possibly some readers of this may be able to hear more than I could. If so, I shall be most interested if they will let me have their opinions concerning any passage where they think I have run off the rails.

The Analysis

IF you read my last month's instalment of the aforementioned *Course on Theory* you will remember that I likened a musical movement to a short story. A complete arrangement such as this "Sweet Sue" might be likened to a complete novel, each movement being the chapters thereof.

(1) The Introduction

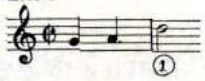
The introduction of the record serves the same purpose as an introduction to a novel might. Its purpose is to introduce the subject. In style, it must, of course, be in keeping with that in which the score, or novel, is written, and generally in an appropriate manner pave the way for what is to follow.

Equally, though, the introduction must be interesting in itself and have some point which will immediately attract the attention of the listener as well as place him in a frame of mind suitable to receive that which is to follow, possibly by giving a suggestion of what is coming, but without disclosing the plot and so causing its points to be familiar and so seem stale as they are unravelled.

Let us see how far Whiteman's rendering supports this theory.

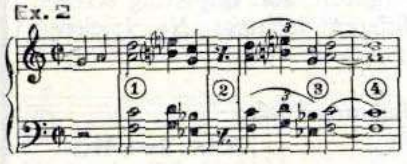
You will notice that the introduction starts with the first three notes of the chorus as in Ex. 1. These immediately put us into touch with the subject.

Ex. 1



Having gone so far, this phrase (or shall we say, *incident in the* "plot"?) is not discussed or developed in the manner in which it will be later. It proceeds instead as in Ex. 2:—

Ex. 2



—and may be likened to a simile of what is to follow, in fact as the rendering proceeds we shall find that this is, perhaps, quite a fair way of describing it.

Into this simile extraneous matter, as you will see from Ex. 2, is cleverly woven. Whether or not it is to be presented to us again we do not know. But it is sufficiently strong in plot and character to command our immediate attention, and that is obviously its main purpose. Even if we do not hear it again later, no accusation can be levelled against it that it has nothing to do with the story because it is always influenced by its first three notes which are part of the plot. As a matter of fact, we are given later at least a reflection of this extraneous matter in the harmonisation of the verse, as I shall point out when we reach it.

Probably you have already noted from Ex. 2 that the extraneous matter consists of a series of Secondary 7ths in their first inversion (alternatively known as chords of the added 6th, as I explained in Exs. 117, 132 and 133 on pages 1127-9 of the October, 1928, issue of the MELODY MAKER).

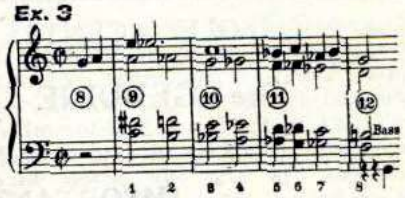
You will notice that each note of these chords is at a distance of a tone from its adjacent notes. This is an ingenious way of producing the effect of the whole-tone scale. Although the melody line cannot be looked upon theoretically as being part of a whole-tone scale, since the notes of which it is comprised are all diatonic to the scale in which the movement is written (*C* major), the notes which form the *harmony* are *not* all diatonic, and the false relation between the diatonic and the non-diatonic notes (i.e. between $E\natural$ of the second chord in bar 1 and the $E\flat$ of the third chord in the same bar), combined with the Consecutive fifths in the bass and the Consecutive tones between the top and third of the four parts, produce the strangely rugged effect without any inflection of the diatonic melody notes.

In passing, notice also that the first chord in bar 1 (the first inversion of a Secondary 7th) is the same as used in the printed orchestration, where, in several instances, it is used with a dominant bass note and the upper notes become, therefore, notes of the chord of the dominant 11th, or appoggiatura notes to the 3rd and root of an ordinary dominant 7th chord (see pages 1255-6 of the November, 1928, issue of THE MELODY MAKER).

Another subtlety worth noticing is that while the bars shown in Ex. 2 are played by full orchestra *ff* the first time, the repetition of them which follows in the record is *pp* by the brass section as an echo. This echoing of phrases is, of course, one of the oldest of musical effects, but it is always attractive when appropriately employed. In the record the value of the echo is ingeniously enhanced by the hesitation immediately after the triplet. This hesitation is, I think you will agree, the making of the phrase.

The original three notes of the chorus, or incident in the plot, are now developed further as in Ex. 3.

Ex. 3



The harmonisation here is a downward succession, by semitones, of the 3rd, 5th and 7th of a dominant chord, which together with the melody form at:

(1) the 3rd inversion of a dominant major 9th chord, turning to minor 9th (root *D*).

(2) a minor 13th chord with its minor 9th (root *G*).

(3) the 3rd inversion of a dominant 7th chord (root *C*).

(4) the 2nd inversion of the dominant minor 9th chord (root *F*).

(5) the 3rd inversion of a dominant 7th chord (root $B\flat$).

(6) the 2nd inversion of a major 13th chord with its minor 9th (root $E\flat$) the *C* being an appoggiatura note to the (understood) $B\flat$ of this chord.

(7) the 3rd inversion of a dominant 7th chord (root $A\flat$).

(8) the 3rd Inversion of a dominant 7th chord (root *G*).

You should observe that these chords start on the supertonic of the key centre (the note *D* in the key of *C major*) and their roots proceed by Dominant-Tonic movement (a 4th upward), the dominant 7th of the key centre at (8) being reached by falling one semitone from (7) in the manner with which you are familiar when you speak of a series of consecutive 7ths.

The appreciation of the effect obtained by the clever usage of the tone colour of the various instruments employed I think I can leave to your unaided imagination. You will readily notice the beauty of the appealing demand for sympathy obtained by the oboe in bars 9-12 as a contrast against the assertiveness of the earlier brass, and I have already mentioned the echo effect by the brass in bars 5-8.

(2) The Introduction of the Verse Theme

NOW we come to a movement which may or may not be considered a continuance of the introduction as, although in its straight treatment it is rhythmically closely

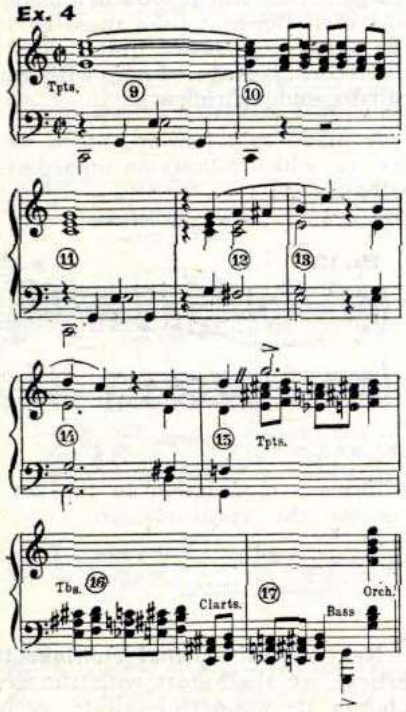
akin to the introduction, actually the melody of the verse *is used in its* entirety. Be this as it may it is a delicious morsel.

Free imitation of the quaver phrases *of the melody occurs in the* inner parts during the semibreve-holding-notes of the melody, and the harmony moves in a series of secondary 7ths (not whole-tone scale this time, but the consecutive 5ths are prominent) which forms the reflection of, and produces a similar colour to, the harmony of the extraneous matter *previously mentioned (see* Ex. 2).

A pause is given at the 8th bar of this movement and the repetition of the melody in bars 9, 10 and 11 (see Ex. 4) *is taken* by trumpets with "wow-wow" mutes (but no wow-wow, mark you—that went out years ago), accompanied by wood wind in the low register using the normal harmony.

From bar 12, strings continue the melody of the verse to the end of the movement, stopping suddenly on the first beat of bar 15. *The whole* of the verse is played in free tempo with much *rubato* after the manner of a sentimental ballad, and how refreshing it is. Then occurs the repetition of a pretty harmony at different octaves by trumpets first (in bar 15) then trombones (bar 16) and finally clarinets—bass, alto (the proper name of which is *Corno di Bassetto* or Basset Horn) etc., also as in Ex. 4.

Ex. 4



You will notice that the "pretty harmony" is formed by grace-notes or appoggiaturas moving in 6ths and 3rds to plain dominant harmony.

Notice, too, the wonderful balance *of the short dominant* chord at the very end of this movement (last beat of bar 17). No particular note or instrument is discernible, but even so comparatively simple a matter is worth taking to heart, as you can readily observe by comparison between the finished excellence of the Whiteman orchestra and the everyday sort *of work which you have on your* own doorstep.

(3) *The First Chorus*

NOW begins the first chorus in dance tempo.

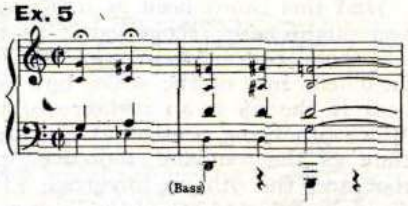
Whiteman obviously intended this as one of the features of the record.

The whole chorus is played throughout by the four trombones (or a combination of trombones and French horns)—with wow-wow mutes, but again, you will notice, carefully omitting any of the horrible and happily out of date "wow" effect. There is but little difference in harmony here from the commercial orchestration by *Arthur Lange. If anything* the record is simpler, and the appeal of the movement is due to the tone colour produced by the use of the aforesaid mutes and not to anything tricky or futuristic in the way of harmony.

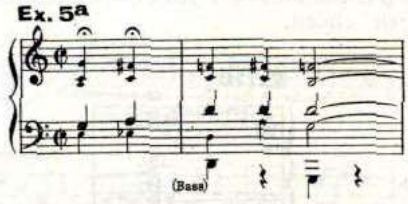
You should notice particularly that while the melody is in the tenor part, the upper and lower trombones are so skilfully balanced as to allow the melody to be clearly apparent, though I'll wager that scores of listeners will, through their habitual carelessness, swear the melody is on top.

The actual harmonies at the beginning of the chorus I have attempted to write down in Ex. 5 but whether this is exact, or Ex. 5a is nearer correct or the disposition of the parts is as it should be I am unable to say. The highest part and the melody I know to be correct and these you can hear for yourself if you *listen with care.*

Ex. 5

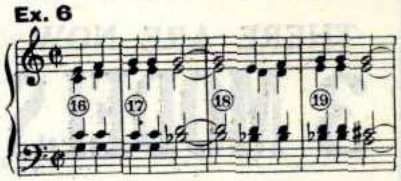


Ex. 5a



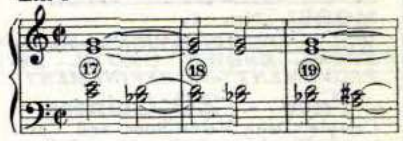
Before we leave this chorus I must direct your attention to the harmonisation of the 17th, 18th and 19th bars. The disposition of the parts as nearly *as I can hear them is as in Ex. 6.*

Ex. 6



You will notice that the framework of the harmony is as in Ex. 7, and that the notes form passing notes from the chord of *C* through *G minor* to the notes of the chord of A7. The notes *G* and *E* of Ex. 7 also form pivot notes, the use of which I described on pages 88, 89 and 90 of the January 1929 issue of the MELODY Maker.

Ex. 7



The delightfully simple (one might almost say "straight") but amazingly clear and impelling rhythm which is peculiar to Whiteman alone, is also an outstanding feature of this trombone chorus.

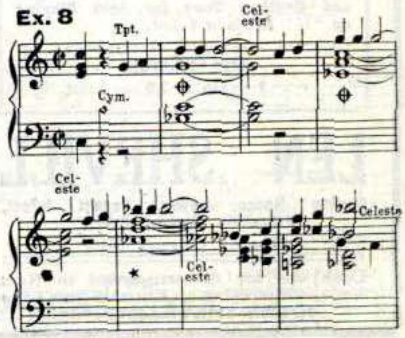
It comes from the perfect phrasing by these brass instruments and is *ample proof that rhythm* can be instilled into the straightest of melodies by correct interpretation providing the accompaniment features rock steady tempo, and a plain four in a bar with a nice breadth by the bass on the 1st and 3rd beats and neat after (as well as first and third) beats by banjo and piano.

(4) *The Modulation*

WE now have a short modulating bridge passage. As in the introduction, the first three notes of the chorus are employed, and you should note carefully how the use of this material — a salient feature of the "plot"—keeps the character of the main theme *(the refrain) before* the listener's ear.

The passage is a sequence of three Dominant harmonies (as in Ex. 8) used in just the same way as I explained to you on page 90 of the January 1929 issue of the MELODY MAKER when dealing with the subject of modulation.

Ex. 8



You will also notice that the point marked* in the third sequence is not exactly the same as the similar point of the melody (marked ⊕) in the first and second sequences. In the first two sequences the chord of the major 9th is used at the points marked ⊕ while in the third sequence the root note of the Dominant harmony is used instead of the 9th itself. This alteration to the third sequence I also explained to you on page 193 of the February, 1929, issue of the MELODY MAKER.

In this modulation you should listen carefully to the beautiful tone of the alto clarinet on the 7th of the Dominant chords (good practice this for ear training) and the 'celeste "echo effect" repetitions of the chords.

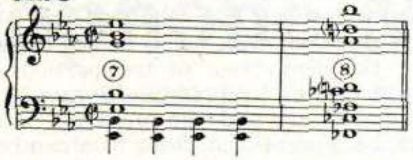
Through these Dominant 7th harmonies, each resolving in the orthodox way which I showed you some months ago in the course, we reach a new key centre.

(5) *The Verse*

IN this new key centre the verse follows; Melody on oboe with a fairly full accompaniment and harmony as in the commercial orchestration up to the 8th bar. Note pedal notes of four crotchets in the bar.

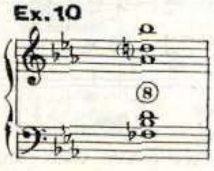
Then a subtlety occurs which has intrigued, and will continue to intrigue, many an ear. It got me badly. It is the wonderful effect produced by an unusual dissonance in the piano chord in bar 8 of this movement. I think I have it correctly in Ex. 9.

Ex. 9



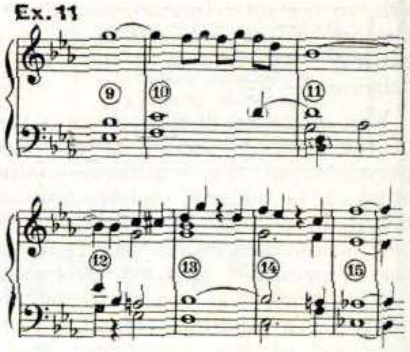
Had this chord been as in Ex. 10, you might have recognised it as the "French 6th" occurring on the flattened 2nd of the scale, but as I hear it the $C\flat$ is an instance of the Minor 9th being present at the same time as the root and, moreover, the root and the 9th are inverted. The $F\flat$ is the inflected 5th of the Dominant 7th chord.

Ex. 10



The harmony of the next bar (bars 9, 10 and 11 of the verse which I give in Ex. 11) is interesting.

Ex. 11



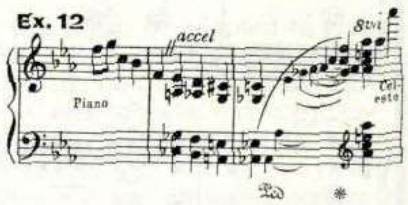
The effect of the open Fifths here arising from the use of plain Diatonic Triads gives a mediæval or "plain-song" colour and foms an example, not of modern harmony, but of the pleasant relief which is afforded by the use of plain and suitable harmonies in a manner differing from the *accepted* use of Dominant and Tonic harmonies. The effect is enhanced by the vibratoless clarinet which takes the melody.

The tied-over *G* forms a suspension at the beginning of the 10th bar (4th species Counterpoint), and the *D* of the 11th bar may be considered as a "retarded" $E\flat$ as indicated by the suspension which I have put in brackets; or, if you like, the *G* of the 11th bar may be considered as a major 13th resolving *upwards* to the Dominant 7th—the other Dominant notes I have placed in brackets.

Solo violin, in place of the whole string section, which you will remember was used the first time these bars of the verse were heard quite early in the record, is featured here with much rubato and sentiment.

A piano solo join-up, much as in Ex. 12, which follows on immediately after Ex. 11—

Ex. 12



—forms a modulation to the key of $D\flat$ for the vocal chorus.

Next month, when I continue this article, we shall start with the vocal chorus, its wonderful celeste accompaniment, and reach I hope what many will consider the masterpiece of the whole performance, Bix Beiderbecke's trumpet solo.

AN ANALYTICAL REVIEW of "SWEET SUE"—*Continued*

As played by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra on Columbia Record No. 9572 (12 in., 4s. 6d.)

by AL DAVISON, M.A.
Mus. Bac. (Cantab.), F.R.C.O.

* * *

CONTINUING from where we left off last month we now come to the Vocal Chorus and its Celeste Accompaniment.

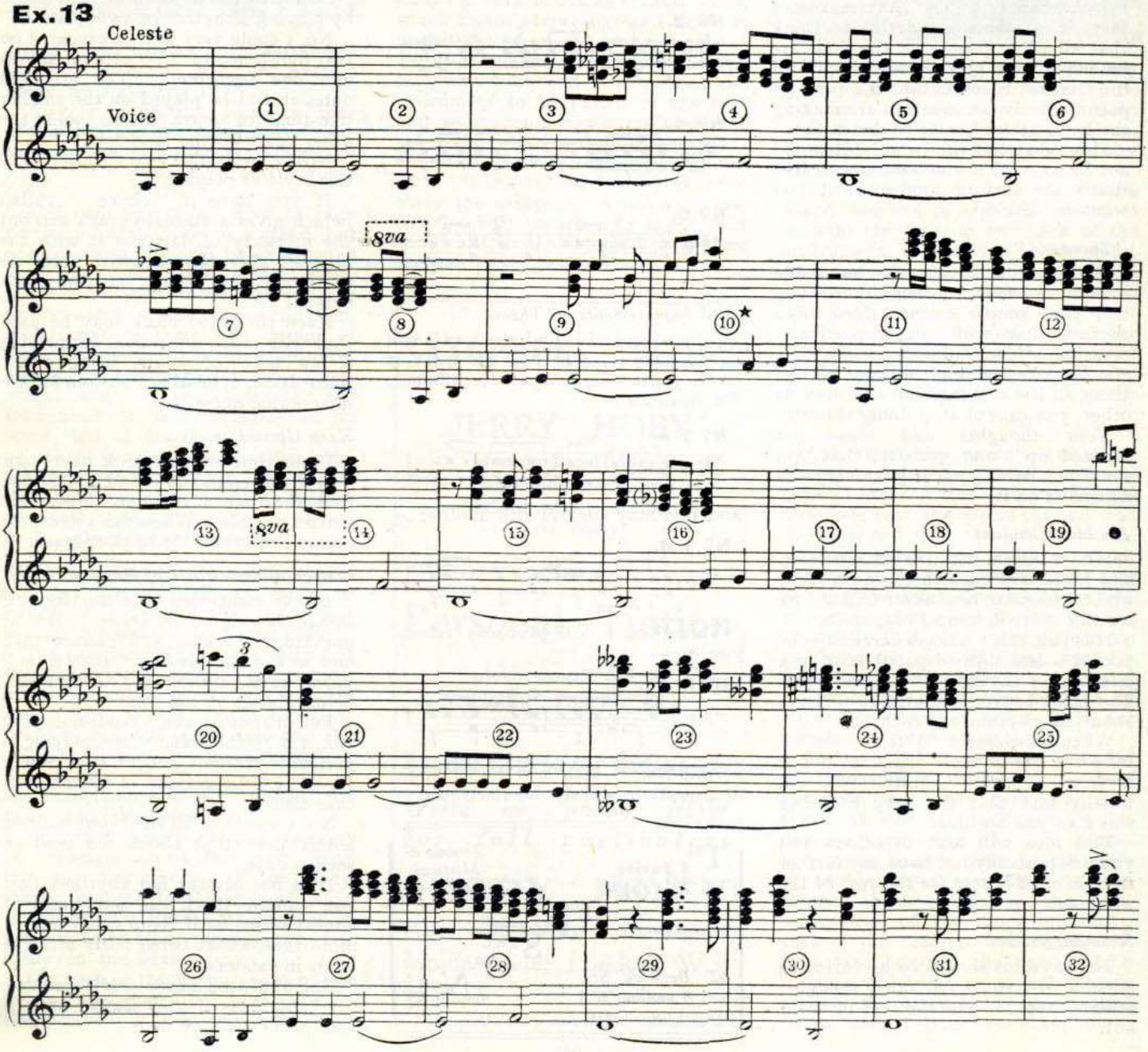
In Ex. 13 I give you the voice line complete and as much as I am able of the celeste accompaniment. I have found it difficult to catch the latter as perfectly as would be necessary to write it absolutely completely and correctly, but I think I have been able to get near enough to it at least to show you sufficient on paper to enable you to appreciate visually the ingenuity to which many of the phrases, the beauty and rhythmic style of which doubtless intrigued when you first heard the record, can justly lay claim.

The vocal chorus, as you will know if you read "Needlepoint's" excellent review of the record in the February 1929 issue of THE MELODY MAKER, is sung by "Skin" Young, who at the time was a member of one of Whiteman's two vocal sections.

The Celeste accompaniment is played by Bix Beiderbecke, the famous member of Whiteman's Band, whom you will perhaps know better as a trumpet player.

It may be taken as almost a certainty that this Celeste accompaniment was not in the arrangers' score, but is an original conception of Bix. In fact, perhaps I should not be far wrong if I went further and said that possibly it was extemporised

Ex. 13



at the time of the recording, for Bix is one of those geniuses to whom this sort of thing comes naturally.

Perhaps I might be forgiven for pausing here to stress the value of the cultivation of any natural talent for extemporising which you yourself may possess. The value of good orchestrations cannot be over emphasised, and practically all the best American, and certainly all the best English "dance" records are prearranged by expert arrangers—but many of them, particularly the hot ones, only to a certain extent. You will be safe in taking it as a fact that all the best hot solos, and very many of the novel counter-melodies and effects played by individuals, are the original, and often extemporised on the spur of the moment, ideas of their performers.

THERE are probably numerous reasons for this. One of them is that there are other people, besides the composers and orchestrators of the various "popular" numbers which are recorded, who have novel ideas on the subject of their interpretation, and one of the great beauties of modern rhythm interpretation is that it gives scope for musicians to illustrate their originality instead of being tied to the score as one is in legitimate music.

Not that I am decrying legitimate music on account of this, or suggesting that it should be varied at the caprice of a performer. No, that would be unwise, for few if any of us could improve upon the ambitious work of the great classical masters.

But the melodies which the modern rhythmic orchestra is called upon at the taste of the public to perform are mostly very simple little airs, usually constructed on the cut-and-dried basis of the 16 or 32 bar movements, divided up into set 2, 4 or 8 bar phrases and always on more or less the same routine, and no one will say that in nine cases out of ten they are not made doubly entertaining by the original effects which the first-class modern rhythmic musician has proved himself so dexterous at devising and incorporating into them.

IN fact, it may be said that if these melodies are to be made to sound anything to anyone with even a normal intelligence they demand these embellishments, and though the musician who cannot extemporise but plays his part perfectly is preferable any day to a man who has some idea of hot style but is a poor reader and generally an inferior musician, the player who gets to the top and becomes the real star is one who can play his part beautifully, or extemporise good stuff in modern rhythmic style, with equal ease and perfection.

You will notice that I use the words "made doubly entertaining by the original effects which the *first-class* modern rhythmic musician has proved himself so dexterous at devising." I stress the words "first-class" because there are so many lesser lights who try their hands at producing original stuff which, though it may be original, often has little else to recommend it.

IT is no use attempting to deviate from a written part, be it of a commercial orchestration or special arrangement, unless one is certain that the deviation is an improvement. And to devise original solos and effects one must have a very keen appreciation of the difference between what is good and what is bad. By anyone who has any natural aptitude at all, this appreciation can be cultivated to a great extent (providing one has sufficient knowledge of the theory of music to recognise what has happened) by the study and analysis of the work of famous artists. The theoretical knowledge I endeavoured to give you in my course on the General Theory of Music, which terminated in the March 1929 MELODY MAKER; to bring to your notice more deeply and explain salient features, the full significance of which may not have struck you when you were merely listening to this record of "Sweet Sue" simply for entertainment, is my excuse for perpetrating this article on you.

TO return to the study of the record. I am still trying to make up my mind whether I think the singing or the celeste has enthralled me the more.

For a few bars only the piano is heard accompanying the voice and this piano accompaniment is very simple—plain after beats. In fact one wonders at first why something more elaborate is not attempted. But the reason is supplied immediately the celeste is heard. It is so that the piano shall not obscure the beauty of the celeste effects.

But let us deal with the vocal performance first. Passing over all too briefly the delightful sweetness of the voice we come to the consideration of the singer's variation of the original melody.

The first difference occurs at the point marked* in bar 10 of Ex. 13 where the $A\flat$ and $B\flat$ are sung 8va, and the $E\flat$ of the second beat of bar 11 is changed to the low $A\flat$. Simple isn't it? The phrase formed by the $E\flat$ and $A\flat$ of bar 11 is merely a normal answer, an off-set, a balance if you like, to the phrase formed by the $A\flat$ and $B\flat$ of bar 10. But would you have thought of it? Would you have realised the wonderful effect such a simple device would have produced, the finishing touch which the low $A\flat$ would give to the phrase formed by all the four notes? It is such devices as these which mark the great artists. It matters not whether what they do is simple or involved. What counts is the musical result. With rare exceptions the work of such artists as these is simple when boiled down to mere notes. It is the manner of delivery, the artistic choice of context and balance which make the difference between the true artist and the rest of us.

Incidentally you will find this going up when the original melody goes down (as instanced by the $A\flat$ and $B\flat$ of bar 10), is a very effective device when appropriately employed, and is used by numerous vocalists and soloists who understand its value. Its appropriate usage is one of the many devices which go to produce what for want of a better word we "dance" musicians call style.

THE next difference occurs early in the third eight bar phrase and is a subtlety of true ingenuity.

In bars 17 and 18 of the second† chorus of the commercial orchestration the way for the change of harmony in the accompaniment which occurs at bar 19 is paved by a passing note in either bar 17 or 18 (according to which of the choruses you consider —see † below). This passing note creates a dominant 7th or tonic harmony—it being the natural passing note to the root note of the dominant 7th on the submediant which is the harmony of bars 19 and 20. The voice (or melody) line of course conforms to these harmonies of the accompaniment, the change of harmony being demanded by the melody where it actually occurs in bar 19.

In the record the same harmony continues in the accompaniment throughout bars 17, 18 *and* 19, and does not change until bar 20.

The cleverness of this is that it allows the voice to anticipate, and so suggest, the new harmony by means of alteration of the melody note from the 5th degree to the 6th, 8va low, of the scale on the third beat of the 19th bar.

The reason for the alteration, which probably came about quite naturally during performance, and was not thought out in advance, is quite likely this:

The change of harmony in the orchestration weakens the value of the word "dreams" in bar 19 by

† I have mentioned the second chorus of the commercial orchestration because it shows most clearly what happens, though the essential harmonic basis of these 17th and 18th bars is in fact the same in all the choruses.

anticipating it, thus forming an anti-climax. But in the record the voice anticipates on the word "dreams" the harmony which follows, and thus lends added point to the vocal solo insomuch as the harmony of the accompaniment may be said to be dictated by the voice instead of the voice being under the dictates of the harmony. It may seem a small point, but it is another of those subtleties which make just the difference between mediocre everyday stuff and the really ingeniously artistic interpretation.

AN anticipated note is no new stunt in dance music, but to use the dodge to give added prominence to an emotion expressed in words, in which way we can consider it here, quite apart from its purely musical effect is certainly a novelty.

Next, instead of the 8 crotchets of bars 21 and 22 of the original melody being retained, in the record two of the crotchets (and words) of bar 21 have been, as you will obseve if you compare the record with the printed orchestration, held over on to bar 22, thus enhancing, by means of syncopation, the interest of the rhythm of the melody line.

Bar 25 has a variation on the 5th of the chord employing the notes of the 6th and key note in a way which I have already explained to you in the course on the General Theory of Music (see page 194 (Ex. 188) of the February 1929 issue of the MELODY MAKER).

NOW let us revert to the Celeste accompaniment. Probably you will appreciate most of what has been done from a study of Ex. 13, but there are one or two points to which I might advantageously call your attention.

You will observe that the Celeste employs several series of consecutive 5ths all worked as appoggiaturas and passing notes, but to attempt a complete analysis, even of the few I have written down, would fill many more pages than are at my service.

The use of the flat 3rd of the scale in bar 7 is worth particular observation. So also is the phrase in bars 11, 12, and 13.

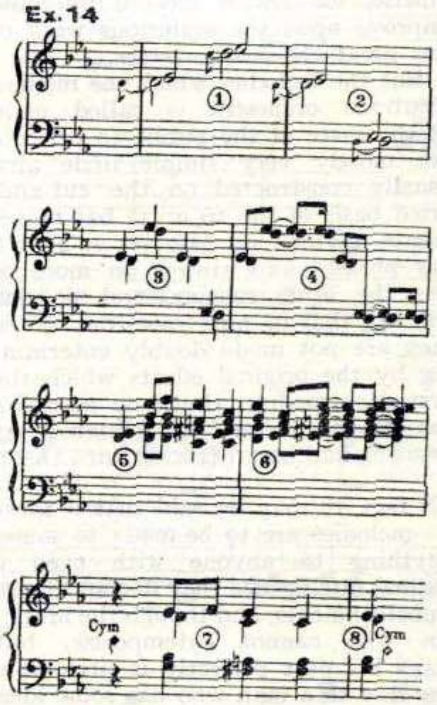
Notice again the flat 3rd, which I have written as *E♮* in bar 15.

The Celeste notes of bars 23 and 24 should give your ears some good practice and you must not miss the phrase, starting with a cunning cross rhythm, of bars 27 and 28.

The modulating join-up, so to speak, "pulls us back" to realities once more. I have written it out in short score for you in Ex. 14. Not its least important duty is to pave the way for the rhythmic movement which is to follow I think its perfection for its purpose as well as its general novelty will be apparent without any further stressing by me.

Note carefully here the anticipated grace notes (or quavers) at the beginning and then try to get the same effect on your own band.

Ex. 14



The tied-over quavers of bar 6 should be examined carefully against the effect produced on the record and also the way the harmony "climbs" to the notes of the Dominant 7th on the 4th beat.

(To be continued)

An Analytical Review—(Continued) of "SWEET SUE"

As played by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra on Columbia Record No. 9572 (12 in., 4s. 6d.).

by
AL DAVISON, M.A.,
Mus. Bac. (Cantab), F.R.C.O.

HAVING dealt last month with the vocal chorus, its celeste accompaniment and the modulation following, we now arrive at the hot trumpet solo by Bix Beiderbecke.

Before dealing with the solo itself, however, I would draw your attention to the accompaniment, particularly as regards its bass.

This bass line is played on a string bass, and a study of it as regards both construction and performance should be as valuable as it should be interesting to every player of not only this instrument, but tuba as well.

In addition it should be decidedly helpful to pianists, arrangers and, in fact, everyone who is concerned not merely with the writing of bass parts, but whose performance is in any way effected by what is being played downstairs, as I might say.

To save you trouble, and to make the relationship between solo and accompaniment the more easily recognisable, I have in Ex 15 written the solo and below it the bass employed (as nearly as I can hear it from the record) and, where obvious, the harmonies or alterations to the original harmony, though if you are "wide" you will notice that this last chorus in the record is much the same so far as the bass and chord structure are concerned as the last chorus of the commercial orchestration.

Firstly I would call your attention to the fact that the harmonic structure does not always have a chord to each beat of a bar, or even two chords to a bar. Sometimes a chord lasts over two or three bars; to these chords the bass forms passing notes.

Actually these bass notes differ considerably from the bass notes of the first and second choruses (to say nothing of the bass notes of the printed commercial orchestration) though with rare exceptions the same harmonic basis is used.

There is very probably a deeper reason for this than the mere desire to offer something different from that which has already been heard.

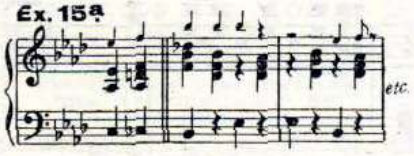
This 3rd chorus is in much quicker tempo than the two previous choruses, *and* there are therefore *naturally more bars per unit of time than in the slower choruses*. If the original harmonies had been adhered to there would have been, logically, more harmonies per unit of time. But by simplifying the harmonies there are more bars to each chord basis, or, in other words, the harmonies do not *seem* to move so quickly. (The passing note effect of the bass notes further accentuates this impression, since they would not be passing notes if the harmony altered for each note.)

This different harmonic treatment prevents the solo from being overshadowed by too much happening in other departments while it is going on—a point to which all dance band arrangers should give every attention, for one of the reasons why hot playing is unpopular with certain sections of the general public is that often too much happens at once for them to be able to take all of it in at the same time.

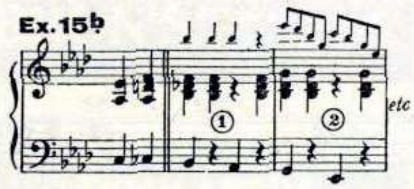
As I have written so much about the disposition of the harmonic structure and the way it differs between the first two and this chorus, I would have you examine more closely this difference. It seems to me a really valuable point to consider and will assist you in understanding the following remarks on both the hot trumpet solo and the string bass accompaniment.

Exs. 15a and 15b are the first two bars of the third and the last chorus, respectively, as in the printed orchestration, and as I told you, Ex. 15b is much the same as in the Whiteman record. I have put them both in the same key for ease of reference.

Ex. 15a



Ex. 15b



The harmonic structure is *essentially* the same in both cases, i.e., of Dominant origin, but unless you really know what is happening you may think that *different* harmony is used. The first half of bar 1 in each case is harmonised by the chord of $B\flat$ minor—i.e., the super-tonic triad. This super-tonic triad consists of the three upper notes of the Dominant major 9th, viz., the $B\flat$, $D\flat$ and F of the chord consisting of the notes $E\flat$, G, $B\flat$, $D\flat$ and F. The second half of bar 1 consists of notes of the chord of the Major 11th, or rather, as I explained to you in the course, of the appoggiatura notes to the 3rd and root of the Dominant 7th chord. In Ex. 15a this chord is in its root position, in Ex. 15b in an inversion.

In Ex. 15b the Major 11th (or appoggiatura to the 3rd of the Dominant chord) is in the bass and forms a *passing note* to the 3rd of the chord which is reached at the beginning of bar 2.

In these first two bars of the chorus written in three different ways in the printed orchestration, you will clearly see the very *practical* application of the *theory* given you on pages 1253, 1255 and 1256 (Exs. 134-153) of the November 1928 MELODY MAKER.

Further, if you are a student and desire to improve your work, you will observe the use that is made of this dry theory in the Whiteman record.

In this last chorus of Whiteman's, the variant harmony, or "appoggiatura" harmony, has been used almost throughout.

The Minor 9th of the Dominant harmony ($F\flat$ in this key) of bar 1 (see Ex. 15) is a very usual inflection of the Major 9th ($F\natural$) which I expect you use on occasions in your own work. Observe that it forms the "semitone between tones" idea which I mentioned to you in the paragraphs between the rows of stars at the top of the centre column of page 300 of the March 1929 MELODY MAKER.

The harmonies at the second half of bar 18 are difficult to hear on the record, but a $G\natural$ is present in the bass and from this I infer that $G\natural$ has been used as a passing note to the F of the Dominant 7th of bars 19 and 20, instead of $G\flat$. The basic harmony of bars 17 and 18 is the chord of $A\flat$, and of bars 19 and 20, a Dominant 7th on F, and you will see that both G and/or $G\flat$ form obvious passing notes between $A\flat$ and F, and that $B\flat$ is the obvious passing note from the C of the $A\flat$ chord to the $A\natural$ of the Dominant 7th on F. This is a parallel

to the harmonies of bars 17-20 of the vocal chorus which we have already discussed.

In bar 23 the original harmony (3rd inversion of Dominant 11th with the Minor 9th) is used, but instead of continuing over the first half of bar 24, the harmony of the 3rd and 4th beats of bar 24 is anticipated.

The string bass appears to be pizzicato throughout; the bow is not used nor scarcely anywhere is the tone or pitch of a note affected by slapping, probably because this latter would make the accompaniment too hot against a solo which itself is about as hot as anything you are likely to come across.

I think that the construction of the part is quite the most interesting thing about the performance of the bass.

Compare, by playing over both of them, Ex. 15 with the bass part of the commercial orchestration of this (or for that matter any other) tune.

You will find that instead of the usual intervals of a fourth or a fifth between the first and third beats, and perhaps an odd join up progression here and there, in the bass of Ex. 15 we have numerous quite long scalic progressions which in themselves form a melodic line which is much less broken up, much more flowing.

The bass notes of bar 1 have already been described.

In bar 2 a passing note (*F*) to the chord of $E\flat$ occurs on the 2nd crotchet. The *C* on the 4th beat is an appoggiatura note to the $B\flat$ of bar 3.

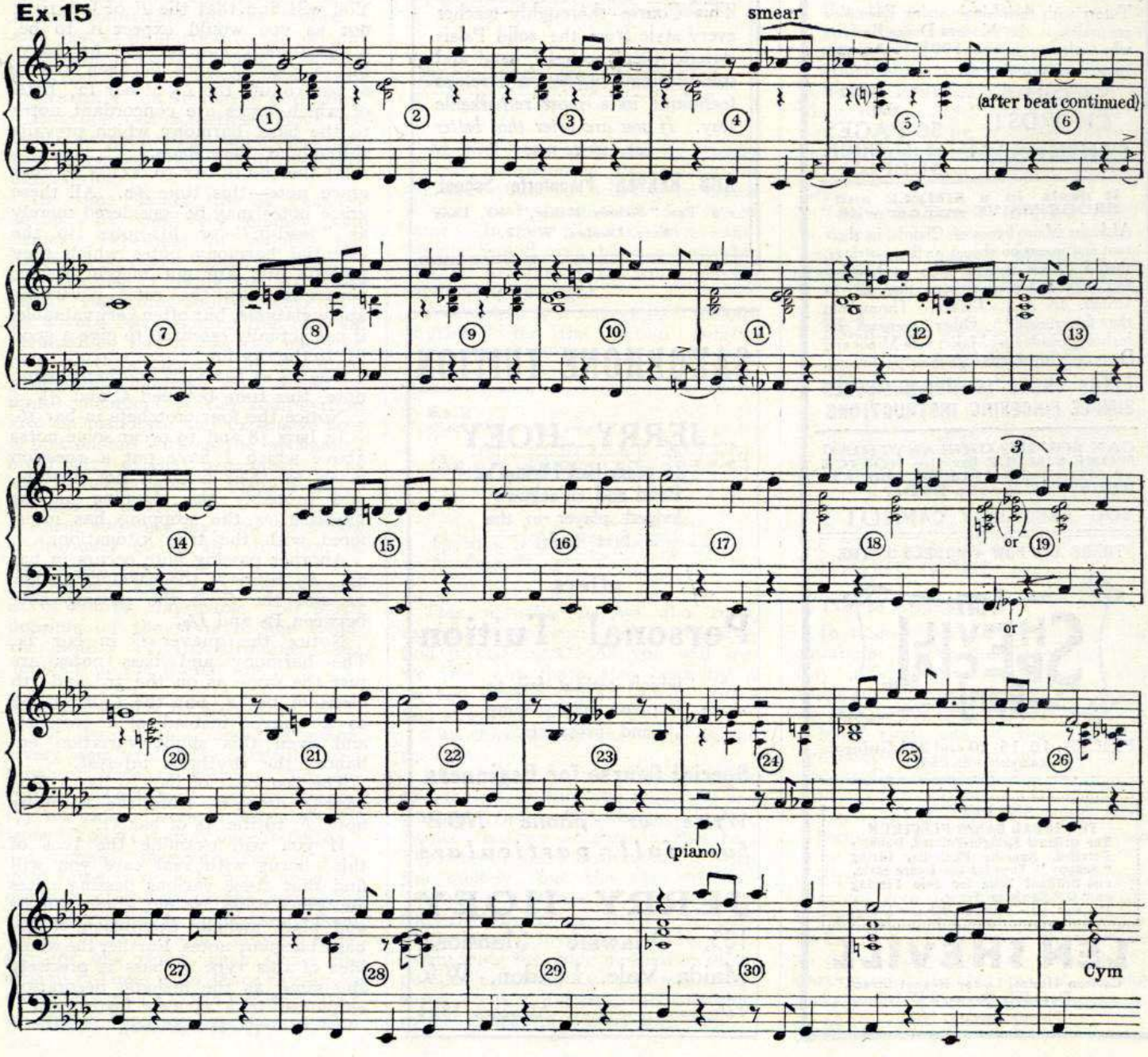
The *F* of bar 4 is the same passing note as in bar 2, and at the end of this bar occurs an example of technical agility which, in this country, is certainly not used. The grace note, *G* at the very end of bar 4 is a grace note to the $A\flat$ of the first beat of bar 5, and the fingering of the notes by the left hand has to be done with as much accuracy as on a violin. The rapidity of the right hand's pizzicato, as well as the slightly greater weight given to the grace note to accent it, are worth studying and show how truly advanced the technical ability of the string bass has become.

The grace note on to the $A\flat$ of bar 7 is another example of this.

Bars 9 to 13 are practically a repetition of bars 1-5 save that the $E\flat$ of the basic dominant harmony is not reached until the middle of bar 12.

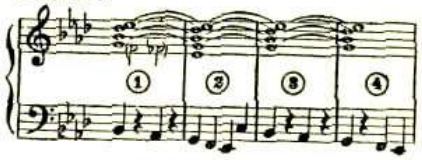
In Ex. 15c I give you the skeleton harmony of these first four bars of

Ex. 15



the phrase with the bass notes as they occur in bars 1-4,

Ex. 15c



and in Ex. 15d the skeleton harmony with the bass notes as they occur in bars 9-12.

Ex. 15d

Play over Ex. 15c and 15d and listen to the bass notes *as a melody*. You will find that the *F* of bar 10 is not as you would expect it to be, a concordant note of the harmony, but a passing note between the *G* of bar 10 and the *E♭* of bar 12, both of which notes are concordant notes to the basic harmony which prevails throughout these bars.

At the end of bar 10 occurs another grace note—this time *A♮*. All these grace notes may be considered merely as "lead-in" or lift-notes to the essential harmony notes which they precede and are not merely always permissible by the rules governing appoggiaturas, but often very valuable, if not actually essential to give a good lift to the rhythm.

The *B♭* of bar 14 is another passing note, this time between *C* and *A♭*.

Notice the four crotchets in bar 16.

In bars 18 and 19 occur some notes above which I have put a question mark, for their pitch is not definite, and probably the slapping *or* the plucking *or* the stopping has interfered with the true intonation.

Another passing note occurs in bar 22. *B♭* minor is the harmony in bar 22 and the *C* is the passing note between B♭ and *D♭*.

Notice the quaver *C* in bar 24. The harmony and bass notes are just the same as on the 3rd and 4th beats of bar 8, but the *C* is played as a quaver instead of a crotchet, and even this slight variation enhances the rhythmic interest.

The last beat of bar 30 has a final passing note, *G*, from the harmony note, *F*, to the *A♭* of bar 31.

If you will examine the bass of this chorus with real care you will find that these various passing notes and grace notes are but a very simple and plain melodic decoration of the basic harmony notes. Further the whole idea of this type of bass is precisely the same as the melodic decoration employed in a melody instrument.

(To be concluded).

An Analytical Review—(*Concluded*)

of "SWEET SUE"

As played by Paul Whiteman and his Orchestra on Columbia Record No. 9572 (12 in., 4s. 6d).

by
AL DAVISON, M.A.,
Mus. Bac. (Cantab), F.R.C.O.

NOW we get to Bix Beiderbecke's hot trumpet solo which many may think the most entertaining part of the record—and it probably is from the rhythm enthusiast's point of view.

To simplify matters I repeat Example 15, the upper stave of which is of the solo as I have taken it down from the record. This example, you will remember. was included in last month's instalment of this review, when we dealt with the accompaniment (as shown in the lower stave) to the trumpet solo.

If a musician saw merely the notes of this solo and its accompaniment written down on paper in the form of a lead sheet and without any indication of the instruments to be employed, he would say at once, not only that rules were broken all over the place, but that it would sound horrible.

But you will realise that the entire dissimilarity between the tonal qualities of the trumpet and the instruments used to accompany it in the record makes it absurd to consider the *combined* results as you would consider three or four part writing by instruments of the same tonal quality. Actually the effect is that the solo is super-imposed upon a background of essential harmony. Both the solo and the essential harmony of the accompaniment are accurate if considered by themselves. The fact that they do not sound to clash with each other in such places where there is lack of conformation between the two is simply because whenever for a moment solo and accompaniment go by different routes to reach a spot already visible from the preceding context, and to which also from the context it is obvious that both are proceeding, the ear can follow the route of both until they once more come upon the same harmonic path, follow it because the vastly different tone colours of solo and accompaniment prevent any chance of the listener being mis-led as to which road each is travelling.

If, of course, the notes of the solo and the accompaniment were being played by the necessary number of, say, saxophones to play the various parts, and closer harmony between solo and accompaniment as well as identical tone colour were featured in consoquence, the result would be very different.

Mind you, I am not making any excuse for bad music. I am merely pointing out that that which might be, and consequently sound, bad under one condition is perfectly satisfactory under another.

The great thing is to know in what circumstances things will sound well and how far one can go under given conditions.

I mention this because one so often hears some very nasty messes caused by one instrument of a section playing a hot chorus of this sort against the remaining instruments of the same section playing their printed parts.

THERE is no doubt that Bix is a born genius. There is probably no one in existence who has quite the same talent for transcribing a given melody in a manner which is at once rhythmical, tuneful, entertaining, novel, and in fact everything a hot solo should be. All his phrases are so delightfully constructed and hang together so well. They are never cheap and there is real musical merit in his work.

He has an extraordinary knack of hitting on notes which, though they seem very far from the more obvious ones which most of us would select in similar circumstances, generally end up by showing the harmony not only clearly but to its best advantage, as well as making a wonderful melody.

He can be humorous or sentimental. In fact he switches about from one to the other so rapidly that you never quite know which way to take him. Probably he doesn't know himself, for it is a hundred to one that he has never analysed his work. He just does it because it's natural. He can't help it. It's just a great gift.

For those who are interested I offer the following analysis of his chorus. From it you will see the relationship that each note has to the harmony. I think this will be of interest, as it shows of what many of his little dodges are made, and consequently how they can be adapted to other numbers.

The lead-in quavers before bar 1 are composed of the *same* notes as the melody proper; i.e., $E\flat$ and F, and form a useful bit of stock-in-trade.

The C in bar 2 is the major 13th of the dominant chord, and is of course an appoggiatura to $B\flat$ (understood) of the 4th beat.

The C's of bar 3 are appoggiatura notes to the essential $B\flat$.

The $C\flat$ of bars 4 and 5 is the flattened major 3rd of the tonic chord. The mental effect is, I think, that of $B\natural$ which is the appoggiatura note to $C\natural$. This is characteristic of present day hot dance music, and I believe Red Nichols did much to popularise the expression. The manner of delivery (the smear) is well worth your careful study, for once you have mastered it you will find heaps of discreet opportunities to use it.

TO write in accurate note value the rest of the phrase (2nd half of bar 5 and bar 6) would be almost impossible. If you possess no "rhythmic feel" at all you might as well hope to understand the language of a Martian, but if you do understand "rhythmic feel" you will appreciate the exquisite phrasing and portamento.

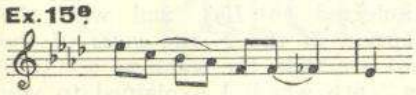
The F of bar 6 is the note explained in Ex. 188 on page 194 of the February 1929 MELODY MAKER.

In the lead-in of bar 8, the $E\natural$ is an instance of the "semi-tone between tones" which I mentioned in the centre column of page 300 of the March 1929 MELODY MAKER.

The $B\flat$ of this bar is a plain passing note and the whole phrase is built on the tonic chord. It is *not* built on a Dominant chord or it would anticipate the Dominant basis of bars 9 and 10 (the harmonies of which are a repetition of bars 1 and 2).

While slavish copying is to be deprecated I can see no reason why one should not embody the main points of such usage into his or her own work. It must be used at the end of a *Tonic* harmony as the lead-in to a new harmony *other than* tonic harmony. One can on any other portion or beat of the bar vary the note values and I give you one or two suggestions in Exs. 15e, f, g and h.

Ex.15e



Ex.15f

Ex.15g

Ex.15h

The *C* of bar 9 is the same as the *C's* of bar 3.

The *B*♮ of bar 10 is the appoggiatura note to the *C* (the 13th). The *C* is the same as in bar 2.

In bar 12 the *B*♮ and *C* of the second beat are identical with bar 10 and the harmony of course is Dominant harmony.

The *G* and *B*♭ of bar 13 are the two appoggiatura notes to the tonic *A*♭.

Bar 15 is of real interest. The first three beats are anticipated passing notes, and the *F* is again the 6th of the chord. You will observe that the anticipated notes are just the opposite to suspended notes or suspensions.

The rubato of bar 18 is another bit of genius that leaves me gasping.

There is a funny note in bar 19 for which I can give no explanation but that it is typically "Bix Beiderbecke." It is the *B*♭. I or anyone else but Bix would probably have used the natural appoggiatura to the *C*, viz., *B*♮.

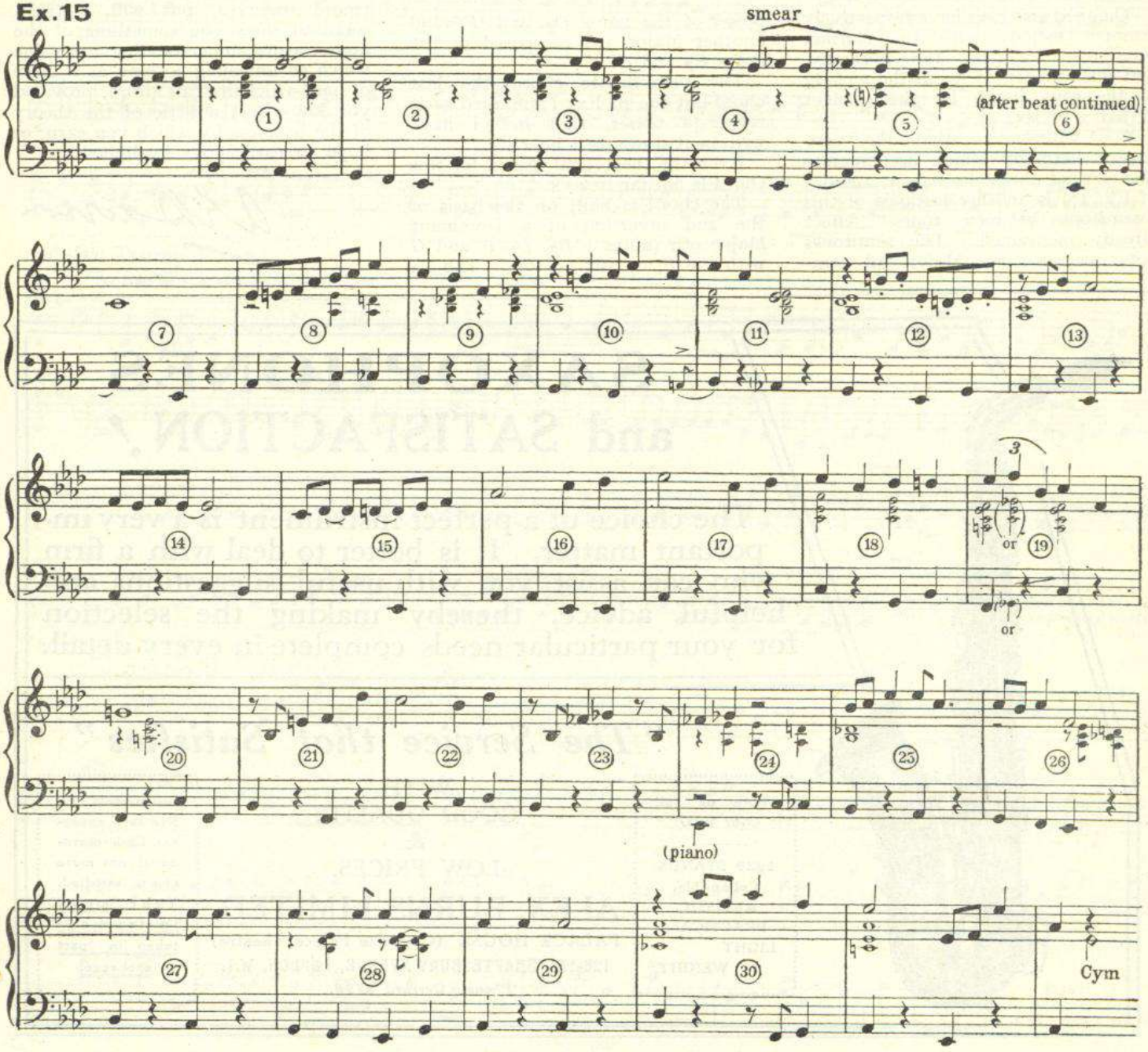
You must notice the *G*♮ of bar 20. Since the chord basis here is a Dominant 7th (or 9th) leading to *B*♭ *minor* at bar 21, we should have been tempted to use a *G*♭ (*a minor 9th*), but no, the *diatonic* note *G*♮ is used.

The *E*♮ of bar 21 is the appoggiatura to *F*.

The chord basis at bars 23 and 24 is a Supertonic triad with the 5th (*F*) flattened (*F*♭) or, if you prefer to name it as such, the upper notes of a dominant minor 11th. The *G*♭ of these two bars is the natural appoggiatura note above *F*♭, but the cream of the phrase is that the *resolution* of the *G*♭ is left to the ear and the accompanying background of essential harmonies.

Bars 25 to 29 contain no fresh notes; the reiterated 13th of bars 27 and 28 must be noticed, however.

Ex.15



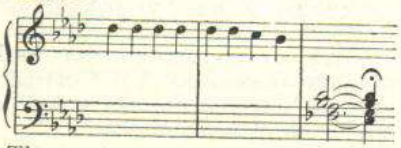
Bar 30 has the same harmony which I mentioned earlier in the article; i.e., the harmony written out and discussed in Exs. 191 and 192 on page 300 of the March 1929 MELODY MAKER.

You should appreciate the final "kick" of the soloist on the 3rd and 4th beats of bar 31.

The Coda

The Coda of the record consists of a repetition of the second half of the chorus. An ensemble accelerando suddenly breaks off to another low register "colour effect" on clarinets as in Ex. 16.

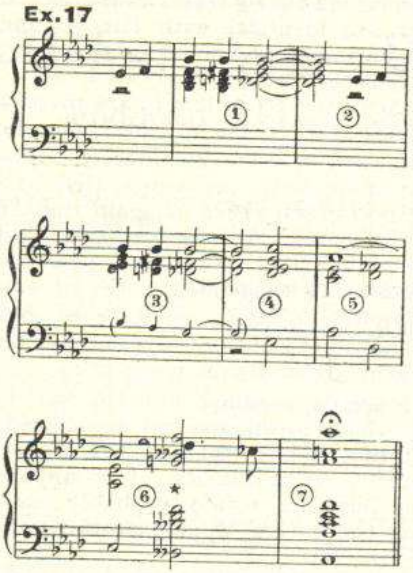
Ex. 16



The next two bars have respectively trumpet melody with the clarinet prominent amongst the harmony, and this is repeated (as in the melody of the song itself) by the clarinet at bar 3 of Ex. 17.

You will notice that the very sugary harmony which accompanies this clarinet phrase (in bars 1, 2 and 3 of Ex. 17) is another instance of this "semitone between tones" effect already mentioned. The semitones occur between one Major 3rd composed of the notes $D\flat$ and F, and another Major 3rd composed of the notes $E\flat$ and G.

Ex. 17



The penultimate chord—the last chord but one in Ex. 17 marked *—is rather a teaser, isn't it? I have written it down as I hear it.

Even the theoretical reason for this chord is not far to seek.

The chord is built on the basis of the 2nd inversion of a Dominant Major 9th (notes : $B\flat$, $D\flat$ F and G with the F, or 9th, on top). The $B\flat$ is inflected to $B\flat\flat$, and with the exception of the F the *notes* of the chord are then the same as a "German" 6th which I explained to you in Exs. 178-9 on page 192 of the February 1929 MELODY MAKER. Considering the German 6th as a Dominant 7th chord, the $F\natural$ is obviously the Minor 13th, but for the sake of easier notation we may consider the $D\flat$ as a $C\sharp$ and the root instead of $B\flat\flat$ as A.

The inner part which you can hear I have written as a dotted crotchet and quaver. It consists of the concordant note $D\flat$ (which we may for the sake of easier notation, consider as $C\sharp$) and the passing note $C\flat$ (the Major 9th which for the same reason we may consider as a $B\natural$) and which resolves upwards to the C of the final major chord.

The foregoing analysis is, believe me, much more abbreviated than the record deserves, but will, I trust, serve to show you something of the appreciation, understanding and value which so unfeeling a thing as a piece of hard vulcanite can afford, provided you know just a little of the theory of the business by which you earn, or hope to earn, your livelihood.

A. K. Barson