

trarily by some incompetent person. I did not introduce into the score, written in 1927 for small orchestra, any *percussion instruments*."

Bela Bartok

I regret very much having innocently collaborated in creating an inaccurate impression of Mr. Bartok's work. Of course this is one of the great problems in listening to and writing about radio music. As everyone knows, much license is taken by broadcasters with composers' work, unless composers themselves are present and, knowing of such changes, specifically forbid them. I don't know if Haydn and Beethoven

have any legal rights today concerning the proper performance of their music. But I have talked to a number of executives of the big networks and they have unashamedly admitted that their arrangers do often and, as a matter of course, score a Beethoven symphony for twenty men. A few years ago Frank Black wrote in *Esquire* that he had introduced four saxophones into a Haydn symphony, and proudly boasted that he believed no one heard the difference. I know several contemporary composers who have suffered in this respect, but I don't know if any of their legal rights are violated. If they are, the simple solution would seem to lie in directly communicating with the radio company involved.

THE TORRID ZONE

BY MERCURE

THE Apollo Theater seems the one sure place in town for a lively stage-show. There is no comparison between the tired elegance of the Ellington performance at the Capitol and the fresh young band of Buddy Johnson, which made its first appearance there this summer. There is nothing strikingly new in the Johnson band, but their boogie slides in the smoothest of grooves, and both Buddy and his young sister Ella put their songs over with a personal charm that wins the house. Johnson has a knack for creating hit tunes, and *Let's Beat Out Some Love* (Decca) — one of his best — is still a terrific favorite uptown. At the Capitol with Ellington is Lena Horne, but her glamor and beauty cannot make up for her anonymous voice, now completely ironed-out and smoothed by the Hollywood process.

High spots during the summer months at the Apollo were Teabone Walker, Billie Holiday and Lil Green. Teabone sings blues to the electric guitar in a way that makes them yell for more and more. He is no crooner but a magnetic personality who is felt in the last seat on the top floor. "Send!" the women's voices cry out in the dark. "Send! Baby, aren't you goin to *send* for me?"

Billie Holiday had them too in the hollow of her hand, but strangely enough this time the adored Lil Green got a low reaction. This I feel sure was the fault of Tiny Bradshaw's band which played in a harsh noisy way that had no connection with the complex intonations of her voice. She has to be heard as pure soloist, with the lightest of accompaniments. When she sang *In The Dark* they turned out the lights in the

theatre: no spot on the singer, and only the exit signs glowed as we listened to

. . . but I swear it's fun, yes it's fun to be . . . *kissed* . . . in the da-hahk.

The bands of Lionel Hampton, Jimmie Lunceford and Count Basie have all rocked the stage in the past few weeks, and most recent of all was the debut of Earl Hines' augmented band which promises no good for swing. Hines (once one of the darlings of jazz) now includes a violin section, a cello and a harp, performed by young girls fresh from the music college, to add luster. The result is even more unfortunate than it sounds.

III

The first sign of new recording life in the first thaw after the Petrillo winter, is the waxing of four records by Decca of Louis Jordan's band out on the coast; *Deacon Jones*, *Ration Blues* and *Is You Or Is You Not My Baby* are all expected to go over in a big way. Ellington's latest are *Sentimental Lady* with *A Slip Of The Lip* on the other side (Victor). The first is in Ellington's wistful mood, and Johnny Hodges' alto solo is perfection for this. The other piece, by young Mercer Ellington, is more timely than exciting. Erskine Hawkins, Twentieth Century Gabriel, gives us *Bear Mash Blues* (Bluebird), which is well worth having. Apollo has released several recordings of Vivian Eley, who does, among other things, one more version of *See See Rider*. She sings in a straightforward, musical way, with a soothing tranquillity. She also does that uptown juke-box evergreen, *Baby Don't You Cry* (not to be confused with Erskine Hawkins' *Don't Cry Baby*.)

Decca continues in its reissuing of old Brunswick records, and by now their new series is beginning to give a richly varied cross-section of American jazz in the past twenty years. The *Chicago Jazz* album contains early Benny Goodman records (1928-29), when Glen Miller and Jimmy McPartland were in the band. This is nicely balanced by the album, *Harlem Jazz*, 1930, which contains a record each of Ellington, Don Redman, Fletcher Henderson, and Luis Russell. One side of Redman's disc contains the famous *Chant of the Weed*, which fans have raved over, and which actually sounds like a highly corned extract from the *Sacre*. But most of the others still seem very much alive. The *Riverboat Jazz* album takes us back to the pre-Chicago period, although the actual records were made in the late 'twenties. Jimmie Noone's expressive and sensitive clarinet speaks in the records of the *Jimmie Noone* album, another addition to the Chicago jazz reissues. In the piano recordings there is the album of *Barrelhouse Piano*, simple and vigorous honky-tonk music that we once called ragtime, innocent of any hint of boogie. But this latter style has not been overlooked in the series, for there is a fine selection in the *Boogie Woogie Piano* album, which will convince any doubter of the great room for stylistic variations in this kind of piano playing. My preference is for *Cow Cow Blues* by Cow Cow Davenport, and after it the *Dirty Dozen* of Speckled Red. It is to be hoped that Decca will go on with this series, although the lifting of the Petrillo ban may change their program completely. The next albums announced are *Oklahoma* and *A Touch of Venus*.