

style and design, and all of the flavor and character of a Hungarian rhapsody. As music it is on a slightly higher level than comparable pieces by Georges Enesco, but not so distinctive in treatment or strong in personality as Bartok's suites and dances. Its fanciful orchestration makes it especially interesting for radio, but it surely deserves

a place in the concert hall roll-call of orchestral show pieces. Another of these programs offered a beautiful performance of Charles T. Griffes' *White Peacock*, which has now become a permanent part of our American repertory, reflecting the rays of European impressionism, but convincing in its own way, a work distinguished for sincerity.

THE TORRID ZONE

By MERCURE

INDICATIONS of the intensity of suffering endured by jazz-fans during the two-year record-drought are to be seen in the frantic response to Victor's announced list of one hundred and sixteen past favorites to be reissued — over three million orders. Some shops fear this is inflation, created by a relatively small group who go from shop to shop asking for the same titles. Others find in it a sure indication of the growing interest in jazz. The situation was of course due in part to the impasse between Petrillo and Victor and Columbia. The two companies marked time by drawing on their back catalogues since they are so much in demand — and the fans bought because there was nothing else to choose from. The one advantage of the trying situation was the new availability of items, especially famous jazz albums of the past four years, that have been fetching pretty fancy prices. (In one day the price of Coleman Hawkins' Bluebird recording of *Body and Soul* dropped from eight dollars to thirty-seven cents.) Columbia plays the Santa Claus act right now by reissuing albums of Bessie Smith, Louis

Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, Fletcher Henderson, Ellington, and other classics that fans have been desperately hunting or buying at auction in the past year or so.

Decca, however, is recording, but alas it is Dorothy Lamour and Snow White who head their lists.

For any recordings of interest right now we must look to the small companies — Blue Note, Capitol, Commodore, Hit, to name a few that come immediately to mind. Commodore continues to focus on the solid old Chicago set-up of Condon, Kaminsky, Peewee Russell and the rest, of whom more anon, while Blue Note turns out more exciting items that feature the work of James P. Johnson, Ed Hall and other pioneers who still play with gusto. Listen to Hall's *Rompin' in 44* or *Blue Interval* for a typical Blue Note date. The quintet of clarinet, vibes, piano, guitar and drums is transparent and fluid, offers a weaving of contrasting sonorities that is both charming and contemporary. Yet Hall is a New Orleans man, born in 1901.

Right on the beam and of terrific

popularity is the King Cole Trio (Capitol recordings). Their records sell as fast as they come in, and well they might, for the three young men are remarkable musicians, subtle, alert, with a beautiful co-ordination and a beat that sizzles. I prefer Nat Cole's voice, so slyly intimate, so debonair, in jive numbers such as *Straighten Up and Fly Right* (A buzzard took a monkey for a ride in the air; the monkey thought that everything was on the square . . .), but for perfect diction and lightness of tone listen to the wistful *I Can't See for Lookin'* on the other side. The guitar of Oscar Moore is just as remarkable. With the exception of *Sweet Lorraine* and *Easy Listenin' Blues* the recent album is not to be recommended. Gershwin is not their music. But although there are purists who will dismiss all this as "commercial" (devastating reproach!) they are wrong, for it is brilliant.

The trumpet of Cootie Williams is eloquent as ever in the album *Echoes of Harlem* by the Cootie Williams Sextet (Hit). The first side, from which the set takes its title, is a reworking of the original, recorded when Cootie was with Ellington in 1936. Now the tempo is more deliberate; the music has more impact, and Cootie's famous, muted growl-tone is as sensational and moving as ever. His beautiful open tone and noble ballad-style (so different from the saccharine vibrato of Harry James) make *Sweet Lorraine* another highlight. New men on this date are in part responsible for the excellence of the performance. To be regretted are the unison passages which follow a present style. Tenor and alto sax coupled with trumpet sound pretty awful.

More fine trumpet-playing is heard in

Hot Lips Page's *Uncle Sam Blues* (Uncle Sam ain't no woman, but he sure can get your man!) by Savoy. Page's easy and powerful tone, his firm, uncompromising delivery are magnificent. Like Louis Armstrong his voice is modeled on his trumpet style, his trumpet seems to become his voice. Impossible to tell where one ends, the other begins.

III

The Condon Jazz Concert in Carnegie Hall was tepid and all too familiar. The audience of middle-aged intellectuals relaxed and listened with closed eyes to that good old clarinet of Pee-wee Russell, that fine trombone of Miff Mole. The years fell away, and if the applause between numbers was gentle, it was the gentleness of sleepers after a short nap. In the vast barn this music, which is nothing if not intimate and personal, sounded merely forlorn. There were a few brilliant young musicians on the program, but the trumpet of Lips Page, for one, just wouldn't seem to give. Orderly jamming terminated the program.

To really hear Page, try the Onyx Club some night, preferably toward the end of the week. Fifty-second Street remains the Bayreuth of hot jazz, and pilgrims wander from door to door, to listen to Coleman Hawkins, Tatum or Eddie Heywood, Billie Holiday, the trio of Hodes or Stuff Smith. In the Village there are at present two spots for jazz — Nick's of course, popular as ever, and the Pied Piper on Barrow Street, where you can hear Max Kaminsky's trumpet from out on the sidewalk. In Harlem there are the Sunday afternoon jam sessions at the Heat Wave, but this reporter has not looked in since the place has been enlarged.