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# JAZZ FAN

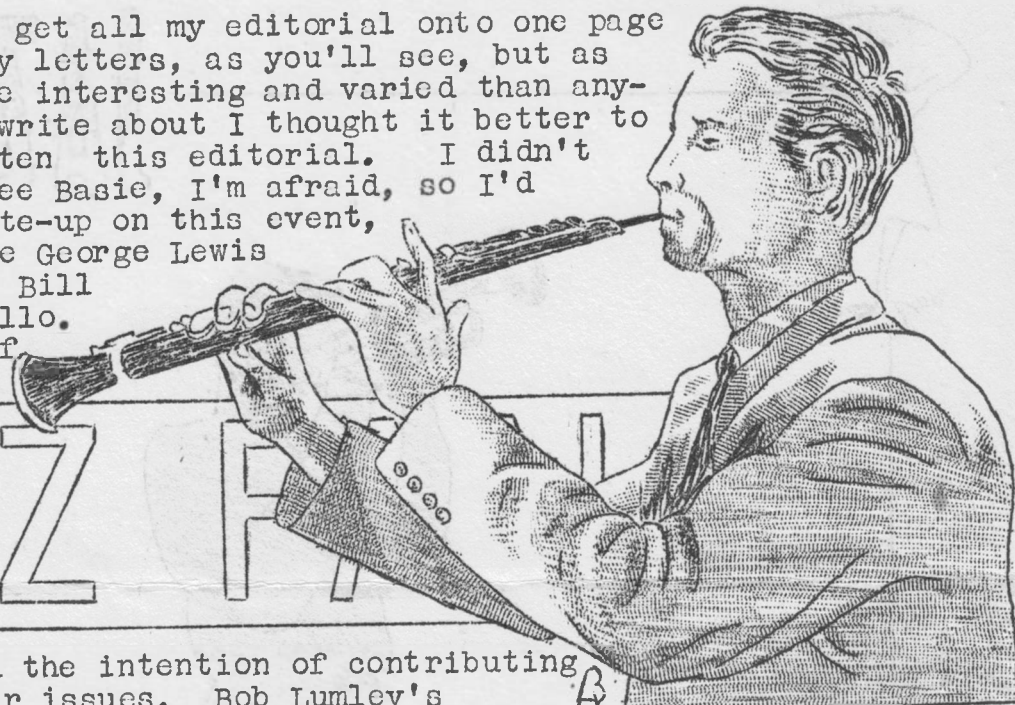


Vol. 1 - No. 7

The... has been... all... let's hope the next one will have... best... but for now...

J A Z Z F A N. An irregular publication circulated mainly in fan-  
 dom but chucked at anyone who is interested. No charge while we  
 stick to eight pages or less but ten page issues and over will cost  
 you 2d. to cover the postage, nothing if you receive it by hand.  
 Jazz Fan is an MJM publication. Companion to TYPO and BURROUGHSANIA.  
 Articles and art work connected with jazz, skiffle, r&r welcomed.  
 Issued from: 36, Semley Road, Norbury, S. W. 16. by Mike J. Moorcock.  
 For MAY 1957. No. 7. ++++++

Hope I manage to get all my editorial onto one page  
 this issue. Mainly letters, as you'll see, but as  
 the letters are more interesting and varied than any-  
 thing that I could write about I thought it better to  
 put 'em in and shorten this editorial. I didn't  
 get the chance to see Basie, I'm afraid, so I'd  
 appreciate 1) a write-up on this event,  
 2) a write-up of the George Lewis  
 tour. Howd'ya like Bill  
 Harry's editorial illo.  
 Look out for more of  
 Bill's art-work



as he has expressed the intention of contributing  
 more stuff for later issues. Bob Lumley's  
 little music-playing BEMS (altho' perhaps slightly modelled on  
 Rotsler's BEMS, as Bob admits) adorn practically every page, I hope  
 you like them as much as I do. Bob's style has steadily improved  
 since I first knew him and I predict that if he keeps at it, in  
 a year or so he will be up to fandom's high standard. Alan Date  
 is in hospital and missives from No. 36 have either not reached him  
 or missives from the hospital have not reached me as I haven't  
 heard from his for some time. Art-work for issues up to Alan's  
 recovery will **feature** only Lumley and Harry, unless another batch  
 of Rotslers comes through.

Being absolutely stony broke, I can't say when this issue will  
 reach you as I haven't the money to buy paper to print it on but  
 I'll do my best. I've just finished running off B'ania which was  
 expensive. By the way, while on the subject of other MJMZines -  
 HOWSABOUT MATERIAL FOR T Y P O ?? Nothing has as yet been forth-  
 coming and I can't attempt to plan it until I know what I've got  
 to put in it.

The 6. 5. Special has been showing a lot of crud lately,  
 all ~~R&R~~ Groups and sech. No Humph, not even any skiffle, but  
 let's hope the next one will have something of interest to  
 Jazz fans. Bye for now,

*Mike .*

BOB LUNLEY'S

SKIFFLE  
NEWS



One of the latest groups to make the grade as far as discs are concerned is the '2. 19. Skiffle Group', my feelings about them are very mixed. Although I like all the lyrics and the way they are played, I'm not too keen on the vocal arrangements of two of the numbers featured on their recently issued E. P.

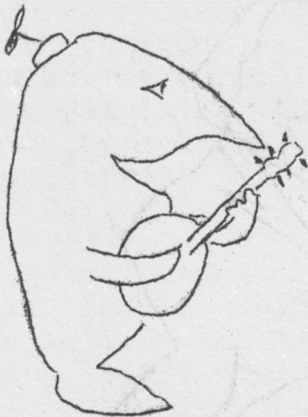
The blurb on the back of the record sleeve reads: "The Group comprises four youngsters who see their skiffing as a genuine attempt to re-interpret interesting folk material," later: "They treat the ballad, the spiritual and the blues of their choice with the respect they consider it deserves." Well, that's as may be - here's my criticism.

FREIGHT TRAIN BLUES is not the 'Blues' at all but the 2.19's version of the song recorded by Nancy Whiskey and the Chas McDevitt Group of FREIGHT TRAIN - the 'Blues' is an entirely different number and I have never heard it on record, the first verse goes like this:

I hates to hear that Freight Train Blow (Boo Hoo!)  
I hates to hear that Freight Train Blow (Boo Hoo!)  
For every time I hear it, I know that I got to go.....

And is one of my favourite blues, it tells the usual story of a girl who's run away from her man and he wants to follow her but can't afford the fare so he tries to jump a Freight Train.





The version by Nancy and the 2.19s (not forgetting half-a-dozen other r&r and skiffle groups) tells of a man on the run from the law and isn't remotely like the 'Blues' in tune or lyrics. Nancy's version is from the girl's angle - the 2.19's from the man's. Their treatment of it degenerates into sentimental-pop-stuff and is practically an insult to the tune, being far too slow for one thing (i.e. the words "Freight Train, Freight Train, going so fast" sound as if they've not only murdered the song but are singing its funeral dirge).

On the other hand, RAILROAD BILL is a fast, rhythmic song which is not too slick and not too crude and it's worth getting the record for this alone (it's also available on 78). Ballads always appeal to me.

The other side features I'M LOOKING FOR A HOME which is full of rhythm but also suffers slightly from the over-sentimentalised pop treatment.

THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN is quite good but is spoilt by Mike Wallace's phoney 'negro' accent which is indescribably awful.

The disc costs 13/7½ and is published by ESQUIRE E.P. 126.

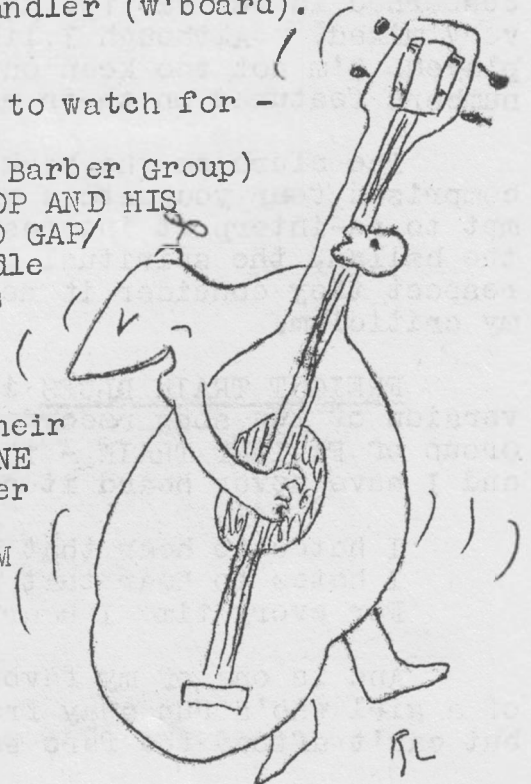
The Group comprises Mik Lauder (gtr. vocal) Mike Wallace (gtr. vcl.) Jack McCormack (bass) Davey Chandler (w'board).  
Recorded 20.2.57.

Just a brief mention of these Groups to watch for -

Dick Bishop (one time with the Chris Barber Group) cut his first disc recently as DICKIE BISHOP AND HIS SIDEKICKS (sidckicks unnamed) of CUMBERLAND GAP/NO OTHER BABY, he includes a very good fiddle player in this Group but the other side is strictly pop. It's worth getting, tho' just to hear that fiddle which is great!

HYLDA SIMMS and the CITY RAMBLERS, their disc of ROUND AND ROUND THE PICKET LINE/NINE HUNDRED MILES is better than a lot of better known people and she has recently cut one or two more discs, BERYL BRYDEN'S BACKROOM SKIFFLE, marred by a very badly arranged accompaniment and Beryl's slight tendency to sing flat, but the numbers are good straight blues - CASEY JONES/KANSAS CITY BLUES by Decca.

BOB LUMLEY.





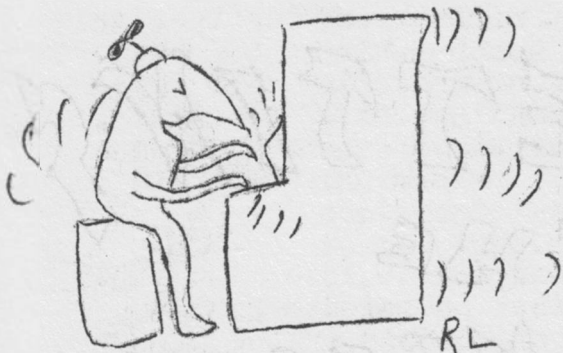
Many more letters than usual, this issue, if I don't publish your letter, I'm afraid it's because I can't find it.

SID BIRCHBY

Well, as to how Lu Watters and his Yerba Buena Jazz Band came to be so called, all I know is what Rex Harris recalls, namely that the name is that of the island in San Francisco Bay where they first played. That would be about 1940. I have their LP recorded at Hambone Kelly's in 1950, and some of the best bands on it are those of Lu's own compositions: EMPEROR NORTON'S HUNCH, SAGE HEN STRUT and ANTIGUA BLUES. What the difference is between the two bands I don't know.

RON BENNETT (on JF 5)

Then there's JAZZ FAN. Unfortunately, from my point of view at any rate, you seem to deal with the 'French' idea of jazz - the rock 'n' roll tripe. I don't consider skiffle



in its present commercialised form as jazz. Hell! Don Harley and I used to do as well, in the years before he had to leave the country like that (you might send him a JAZZ FAN?). We'd visit one another's home and with an upturned chair, a kazoo, a recorder, a ruler, a washboard and a clarinet or any combination of the six, we'd really go. Mal Ashworth once took part in one of these sessions. Eventually,

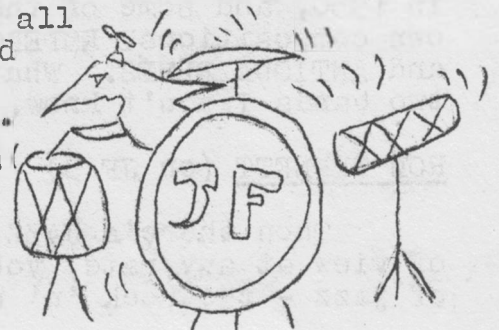
it got to the stage where Don and I could, say on kazoo and recorder, switch pieces in the middle of a line (i.e. from the Saints to Bill Bailey) together without prior arrangement and we even finished together too. I've also had a couple of terrific skiffle sessions with Dave Vendelmans, with me on a Belgian-type recorder and Dave on guitar ((You must bring your guitar to the Con, if you're coming, Dave)). Vocals and all. Great! But play around like this for cash, and get numbers specially written in the old idiom - they're copies too - not half as good as the original - and no sir!

Why is the Johnson EP worth getting when I already have two of the four tracks on 78? Incidentally, there's a point about that track of ALEXANDER'S. After the first time through, Johnson leads off the solos in typical unimaginative but straightforward (with plenty of drive) style. Then suddenly George Lewis cuts across Johnson who drops out. Now I've heard it said that in later years Bunk's lip didn't last as long as it should have done, and the rest of the band often had to take over when this happened. I believe this recording to be a good example of this occurrence, but Don disagrees with me, thinking I'm reading too much into what is merely an introduction to a solo. May I have your opinion?

((Since this letter arrived, Ron has had my opinion but has altered his own - what do YOU think ???))

SANDY SANDFIELD (some of whose letter had to be censored)

I'm going to make a series of general comments on things that have caught my eye in the current JF (6). First, there's the first page. TALENT V. GIMMICK. Now, for a start, without a modicum of talent, no amount of gimmicks can succeed, even when the artiste concerned is carved up all over the profession. It's rather an odd thing, but such remarks as .... "Badly tuned guitars ... three chord repertoire. .." are as perfect an example of history repeating itself as one could possibly imagine. In almost the same words, the swing enthusiasts of the middle thirties castigated the Jazz of the "Golden Era" and in very much the same





way have blind modernists spoken of traditional jazz.

Here are two facts with which to puncture this hysterical ballyhoo. The Blues which is the basic form of all Jazz, has traditionally only four types of harmonies, in sequence: The chord of the major, the seventh rooted on the major, the seventh of the subdominant and the dominant seventh belonging to the key.

There are only four chords in music: The tonic the dominant, the subdominant and the diminished. All the complicated harmonies beloved of the modernists are only these chords with other harmonies added above them.

What's ridiculous about booking the Presleys and Steeles into the Cafe de Paris if their presence helps to swell the profits ?

Must agree with the statement "... she looks like a girl (period.)" You should have seen her in that black dress New Year's Eve.

Archie's question about Donegan can best be answered by the simple statement that any guitarist who knew his instrument could make most of the chord sequences used in skiffle in (almost) one position, thus appearing to never or hardly ever move his hand. Take a blues in E major. E in the first position, A7 in the second, E in the first, B7 in the second. On a TV screen these movements would be scarcely perceptible. Listen to the guitar, don't watch it. Can't see how a folk song like Worried Man can be called commercial. As I understand it, commercial music is the music played by commercial dance bands. ((Surely commercial music is music which is commercially profitable ??))

The phrase "Rock and Roll" is American negro slang for sexual intercourse.....

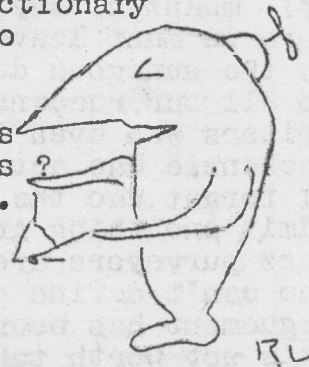
I'm getting a bit sick of this castigation of Donegan just because he has been successful. He's better than anyone else in the field or he wouldn't have got where he is. ((Ahead of anyone else, maybe ?))

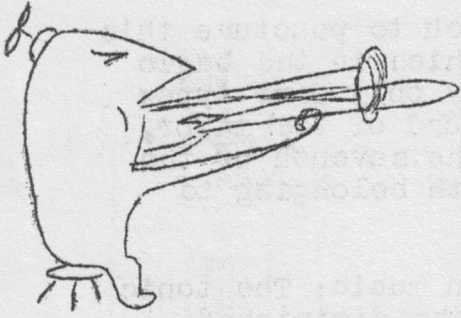
"Yerba Buena" doesn't mean peppermint in Spanish. It means "Good Earth". ((According to Ron Bennett's Spanish Dictionary it means Peppermint, also according to John Brunner who told me in the first place, you work it out!!))

Have you noticed the number of top line skiffers who are banjo fugitives from traditional rythm sections Donegan, McDevitt and Dick Bishop come to mind at once.

ARCHIE MERCER

I'm now going to tear into you over your cover article. I disagree violently. You're arguing that people who are better musicians should have the right to the most money.



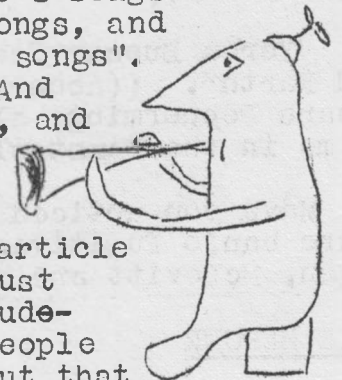


Irrespective of whether they're actually EARNING said money. I'm no expert on Tommy Steele - I can't say for sure that I've ever heard him - but I'm under the impression that his records sell well - therefore, people who buy records must like him. He's pleasing the mob - and therefore he's earning his money. Talent or ability or hard work or practice doesn't enter into it. An artist can have all four of those and still remain unknown.

Just because he's got nothing which anybody in particular WANTS to listen to.

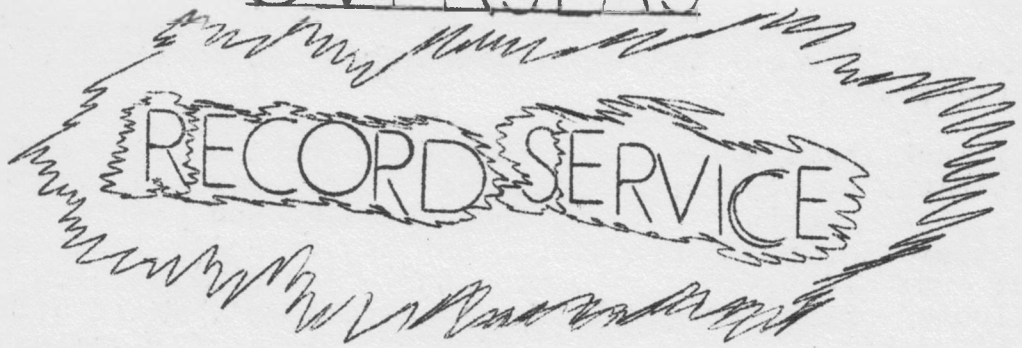
I know there's the angle that these best-selling incompetents are put there by publicity-conscious backers and the like - true enough. To a certain extent, these backers and people create the public taste for their product. But the capacity to like said product must exist, surely to goodness. It's my opinion that the talented artist, if given the same treatment, would still not be as big a hit. So the untalented artist is performing more of a public service. So he gets more money. ((Having to cut this a bit owing to space, Archie)) Another way of looking at it - the talented performer is saying in effect "I want to do just what I please and I want you to pay me for it". Otherwise he would forget his talent, develop a gimmick and then compete on equal terms for top billing. If he's a really sincere performer caring more for meeting his own standards than for pleasing the crowd, he should get out of the profession and take a job like everybody else. Then he can make music in his own way and in his own time. And ENJOY it. And I venture to suggest that the state of music in general will be the healthier for it.

I like the sword-and-shield-figures in the corners. In fact I like the way all the little illos are matched up with their captions - excellent work! The McDevitt article was interesting also - at last - the Greenhorns article. By the way - how many chords can YOU play? ((Hem, er - well you see - three I'm afraid)) Talking about the Greenhorns, I'd like to take you up on where you say that you don't like featuring other people's songs - Skiffle's supposed to be based on American folk-songs, and surely to goodness ANY folk son's "other people's songs". ((I meant to say arrangements of blues, sorry! And here we must leave Archie and GETTING THE MESSAGE, and as the sun goes down in the West we say farewell to all our readers, and thanks to all the letter writers who aren't featured, especially Christina Mackenzie who actually AGREED with my front page article (I forget who the other person was). Oh! You must admit one thing Archie and others, that these pseudo-jazz purveyors are giving jazz a band name with people who can't define good jazz and imitation jazz - but that argument has been going on long enough in other prozines so it's not worth taking up here.)) Letters always welcome. Mike.





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