



## He Plays As He Pleases

**H**UMPHREY LYTTELTON, who has been described as the only non-American jazz musician of any importance, bought his first trumpet, "a de luxe streamlined Manhattan," while playing truant from Lord's at the age of 15. His recently-published memoirs, *I Play as I Please* (MacGibbon and Kee, 15s.), tells how it got the better of an old Etonian in the end. When he came out of the Guards, meaning to be a school master, he found brushing up his geography too irksome, and decided to study art.

"I studied illustration under John Minton, who derived an endless amount of amusement from my pen-and-ink illustrations. This would have been more gratifying if they had been intentionally humorous. But it was my attempts at dramatic and romantic illustrations of such books as *The Mill on the Floss* and *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* which made him laugh most uproariously." So he went back to his trumpet.

Considering his aversion to geography, it is uncertain whether Mr. Lyttelton, better known to jazz fans as "Humpf," knows where New Orleans is, but he is authoritative on the post-war history of New Orleans jazz in Britain. If you do not know the difference between "Smokey Mokes" and "Fidgety Feet," here's your chance to learn. He is indignant with those who believe in drug-ridden Soho dance clubs. To make disillusionment doubly sure, he twice

explains that when fights break out in dance clubs, the musicians are safe as long as they keep on playing.

I am heartened to learn that he cannot sight-read music and finds it no inconvenience. "By far the greater proportion of the world's music," he contends, "is produced by musicians who have no knowledge whatever of the absurdly complicated European system of musical notation." He might have mentioned Donald Peers, who recently admitted in court that he was a member of this illustrious company of the uninitiated.

When he and his band on their Charing Cross Road rooftop were commemorating the publication of the book, someone boldly asked Humphrey Lyttelton how he got on with his cousin, the Secretary of State for Colonial Affairs. "People often ask me," he replied, "if he approves of my activities. They never ask me if I approve of his."

The views of politicians are likely to be as emphatic on this subject as on all others. The Assistant-Postmaster-General in Britain, David Gamman, certainly does not approve of the influence of American jazz.

"I don't believe that in the long run the British people will listen to this wailing cacophony of a crooner grasping a microphone like a lifebelt, and call that music," he told a London audience. "It is a passing phase."

—J. W. GOODWIN (London)



N.P.S. photos

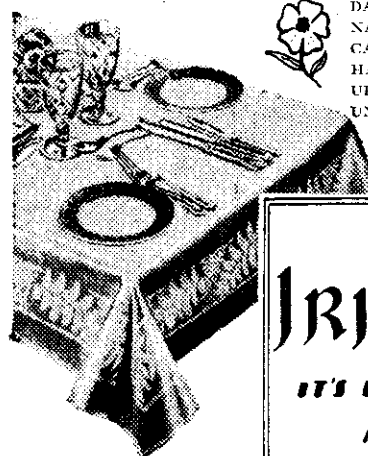
FRANCIS ROSNER (left) and ERIC LAWSON will be the soloists on violin and viola respectively in a performance by the National Orchestra of Mozart's *Sinfonia Concertante, K.364*, at the Wellington Town Hall on Saturday, September 25. All YC stations will broadcast the concert from 9.0 p.m. onwards

N.Z. LISTENER, SEPTEMBER 17, 1954.

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