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New Recordings

TIME FOR DANCING

MAYBE it's time for dancing; or maybe it isn't. Jazz and the "pop" world being what it is today, the latest disc may turn out a rhythm that will keep you and your dancing partner on the beam or, almost as likely, you could find yourself tied up in the improvisations of a jam session.

Of course, if it's Don Carlo and his Orchestra playing the *World's Greatest Rumbas* (Nixa NPT 19009), you'll know where you are. I wouldn't know whether these are the All Black-Springboks of the rumba world, but this is pleasant and relaxing music with a smooth and toe-tickling rhythm. And *Mainstream at Nixa* (Nixa NJT 501) will carry you along, too, with quiet but sometimes inspired swing, especially from Bruce

Turner's alto sax in Ellington's "Time's A-Wastin'" and Kenny Baker's trumpet.

Whether it's age creeping up on me, I don't know, but after listening to a large bunch of jazz discs I had the feeling that they almost all came out the same—the same old tunes garnished with the same old corny pseudo-improvisations and the same instrumental wise-cracking efficiency. It was unfortunate, perhaps, that among the bunch

By OWEN JENSEN

were re-dubbings of some old-timers, what the fan calls the "classics" of jazz. These had something to them.

The Bix Beiderbecke Story (Philips BBL 7014), for instance, with some of the best tunes of the twenties and the incomparable cornet playing of Bix Beiderbecke would make some of the newer stars a little dim. Then there's the famous blues singer, Bessie Smith, who, in her own way, had a touch of genius in her vocalism. You'll find it is

The Bessie Smith Story (Philips BBL 7019 and 7020), with Louis Armstrong, who seems to have been more inspired in those days—the early twenties—than he is sometimes today. Along the same lines with that extra something that is sauce to the goose is Josh White, cross between folk singer and exponent of the blues. If you like this sort of thing, you'll like Josh White in *Blues and . . .* (Nixa NJL 2).

Among the old-timers, but not quite so old, is the *Luncheon Special* (Philips BBL 7037), by Jimmie Luncheon and his Orchestra. This must be swing at its near best.

Keeping up the old tradition, the new jazz of the Lionel Hampton Quintet (Clef MGC-628), with Buddy de Franco on the clarinet and Oscar Peterson, piano, is worth your attention for its light, easy-going swing. Illinois Jacquet and his Orchestra (Clef EP-126), somewhat more sophisticated and sweet, has its points, too. But for something slick, crisp and crackling, the recommendation goes to the Mel Powell Trio (Vanguard PPL 11001). They know how to be original, too. And before we leave this department, a word for the *Jo Jones Special* (Vanguard PPL 11002) for jazz that has the true improvisatory character.

Delibes, Johann Strauss and old Bach, too, are still among the tops for dance that lifts you right out of the groove. Sir Adrian Boult and the Philharmonic Promenade Orchestra make lovely music of Delibes's *Coppelia*, *Sylvia*, and the *Naila Valse* (Nixa NCL 16009). And so, too, do the Vienna State Opera Orchestra conducted by Franz Litzauer with the Bach-Walton ballet music *The Wise Virgins* and, on the reverse side of the disc, *The Good-Humoured Ladies* (Vanguard PVL 7024). The Vienna State Opera Orchestra, conducted this time by Anton Paulik, give grace and zest to waltzes, polkas and marches of Johann, Jr., and Josef Strauss (Vanguard PVL 7007).

And Some Mozart

Some of the most delightfully-played Mozart to come our way is in two of the violin and piano sonatas—K.306 in D Major and K.481. The players are Nap de Kliin (violin) and Alice Heksch (piano) (Philips ABR 4028). Alice Heksch uses a Mozart forte-piano, whose tone teams up well with the violin.

The Vienna State Opera Orchestra's Mozart Symphony No. 40 in G Minor, K.550 (Vanguard PVL 7014) is a noble piece of work, more solid, perhaps, than lyrical. Conductor Felix Prokaska's interpretation of *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* on the reverse side is meticulous, but sounds a little too serious for a serenade. The Hamburg Symphony Orchestra conducted by Paul Schubert also playing *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* (Festival CFR 10-610), extracts more zest from the music, but lacks the greater finesse of the Viennese players.

Mozart's Piano Concerto in D Minor, K.466, played by Rudolf Serkin and the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Eugene Ormandy (Philips ABR 4006) should be good. And so it is; but not so good as one would expect.

Mozart demands the absolute in meticulousness in the performance of his music, but mostly he asks for simplicity. A little more of this simple approach would have added to the beauty of the Barchet Quartet's playing of four Mozart string quartets—K.212 in A Major, K.210 in B Flat, K.211 in C Major, and K.213 in E Flat (Vox PL 7480). But there is no doubt about the precision of the performance and its lyrical richness.

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