

confidence in his own ability. Throughout he held together the brass section, which was able to produce a fairly typical sound in the Miller standards "Moonlight Serenade" and "String of Pearls." But in the first-half Goodman bracket Stokes was forced to cover up very murky playing by his colleagues with some fine solo work on clarinet. He went on to raise an erstwhile quiet audience to a high pitch of enthusiasm in his playing of the Woody Herman classic "Golden Wedding."

The vibraphone was supposed to be a great innovation and Bennie Gunn, a Wellington musician, made a valiant effort to play it. There is no doubting this boy's keenness and versatility—he plays a useful guitar and in the dixie brackets slapped a string bass with more abandon than accuracy. On the vibes Ben Gunn jingled his sticks like so many pieces of eight and never quite managed to get out of the wood.

In other ways this concert was strictly on the commercial side. The Miller atmosphere was merely a by-play to screen the plug for Benny Goodman, whose life-story is the subject of a film in the offing. Then there was a five-minute spot for a record manufacturer's name-the-disc competition ("first you've gotta buy the disc"). And even Myra Love's dressmaker, received a credit line which was not, on second thoughts, undeserved. After all, it must have taken some skill to design a dress that seemed made to fall off rather than stay on. Miss Love, incidentally, was the most appealing of the vocalists. Like her, John Stahl tried to impress on two points—his voice and his clothing. Vocally he was an also ran; his suit would have sent the *Tailor and Cutter* into a tizzy.

Rock'n roll lingers on. It gives drummers a chance to show how much noise they can make and Don Branch made it. Vocalists Benny Levin and Ngaire Gedson gave vent to a wailing monotone which had the hep cats stamping.

RIGHT: Colin Martin plays it soft and low on tenor sax. BELOW: The brass and reeds of Jock Nesbit's 16-piece band on stage at the Auckland Town Hall.



But it was a heavy beat—almost a deadbeat—that served only to drive a few more nails into rock'n roll's coffin. Ngaire Gedson, however, came up with a few standards in which she gave as good an imitation of Kay Starr as you'd hear south of the line. But neither she nor Myra Love compared with Judy Woods, who slew 'em at an earlier jazz concert this year. Similarly Dave Forman's Tear-it-Apart dixie group had little of the colour or comedy which Bobby Griffiths brought to the task. Yet it was well-executed jazz that Forman turned on, and it was just that much closer to New Orleans than the 16-piece band's hotted-up dance music. The crowd liked it that way, too.

The audience can make or break a jazz concert. The best one this reviewer has attended, given last October under the direction of Bruce MacDonald, was also the rowdiest. The music, as played by Crombie Murdoch, George Camp-



bell, Colin Martin, Lockie Jamieson and others, was of a far higher standard than anything Nesbit's boys have achieved. But it just didn't catch on. The crowd yelled for Jamieson's drums to go wild and clashed with compère Pete Young. Such was the refinement of Murdoch's music that it was spoiled for a large part of the programme by the stamping and clapping of bodgies and wiggins. Jock Nesbit has overcome this problem with a larger band and louder arrangements, and by giving the less inhibited elements in his audience those corruptions of jazz that they demand. For the puritan this leaves the radio and private jam sessions as the only mediums where good New Zealand jazz may be fostered.

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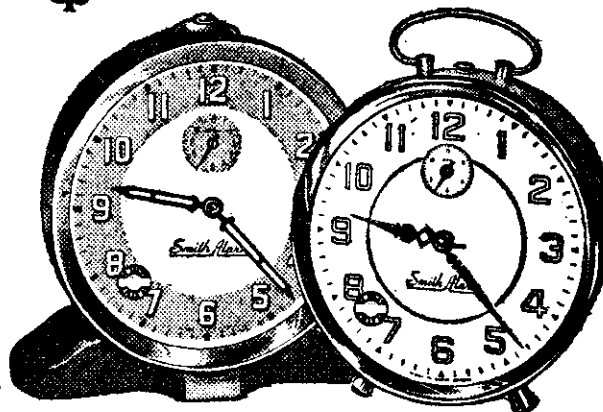
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