

JAY AND KAI— The Johnson & Winding Quintet

PERSONNEL: Johnson and Winding (trombones), Hinton or Marshall (bass), Katz (piano), Harewood or Wilson (drums).

FIRST PRESENTATION: 2YA, 10.30 p.m., September 24.

AT first glance the instrumentation of this group appeared absurd. The quintet, consisting of two trombones and rhythm section, had been a constant attraction in the contemporary New York jazz scene, and it featured the two foremost trombonists of the present jazz era. Both had had experience with name bands since 1941, and their partnership, broken up last July 29, brought out the best qualities in each.

For thirty minutes we are treated to the very best in trombonology, and most pleasant it is, too, for you don't have to be a student of this instrument to appreciate what is being done. The arrangements provide plenty of contrast within the group, and the tempos suit the tunes. The bass and drums drive the group tastefully, never getting in the way, but providing basic swing.

These New York jazzmen have incredible technique and a host of ideas to go with it, and their intense improvisation, lightning articulation and smooth tone create a fine impression.

Well worthy of careful listening is the excellent work of Dick Katz and Milt Hinton. Hinton is one of the finest jazz bassists and Katz is a much more convincing performer now than formerly.

Public reaction to this group exceeded all expectations and so the quintet remained together much longer than originally planned. I can understand its success for here is relaxed jazz without that feeling of urgency-about-getting-nowhere-in-a-hurry, which so often spoils contemporary jazz groups.

Lighthouse at Laguna

PERSONNEL: Howard Rumsey's All Stars, consisting of Rumsey (bass), Shank (alto flute), Cooper (tenor), Rosolino (trombone), Williamson (piano), Levey (drums), Kessel (guitar).

Hampton Hawes Trio, consisting of Hawes (piano), Mitchell (bass), Manne (drums).

FIRST PRESENTATION: 2YD, 9.0 p.m., October 4.

BY 1948 the centre of the recording jazz world was moving from the East Coast to the West Coast of the U.S.A. In Hollywood and Los Angeles, "after hours" clubs were formed, where young musicians were given the opportunity to present their music to the world as they developed and experimented with new sounds. Foremost among such clubs was "The Lighthouse" at Hermosa Beach, formed in 1948, and run by Howard Rumsey.

In June, 1955, Rumsey took a concert group to the Irvine Bowl, an out-

door amphitheatre at Laguna Beach, Los Angeles, where it was reviewed enthusiastically, but after hearing this recorded extract, I felt that little of musical worth was evident.

The opener is "Witch Doctor," a concert showpiece featuring Bud Shank and Stan Levey. Then follows "Round About Midnight," highlighting Barry Kessel's sensitive and tasteful guitar. In "Mood for Lighthouse," the musicians present their ideas clearly and effortlessly.

Music is a language, and as such must be spoken intelligibly. Hamp Hawes, however, is a pianist with an overpowering technique and little to say. "Walkin'," therefore, aroused little enthusiasm. Pianists of this type leave me quite cold.

"Blind Man's Buff" is of unusual structure, with the soloists blowing their progressions confidently, but with little warmth. "Lady Jean" features Frank Rosolino revealed as a facile and skilled musician. "The Champ" is a Hawes presentation. Hawes is technically and mentally agile, that is all. I'd like to hear him sometime when he has slowed down a little. The programme closes with "Casa de Luz."

Each of the musicians is a prominent recording artist (excepting, perhaps, Rumsey), and in other groups they have been shown to much better advantage. For that reason I found the session, apart from "Midnight," "Mood" and "Jean," disappointing.

Duke Ellington and his Orchestra

SELECTIONS include "Harlem Airshaft," "Clarinet Melodrama," "Gonna Tan Your Hide," "Don't Ever Say Goodbye," and "Big Drag." Recorded 1953/1955.

FIRST PRESENTATION: 2YA, 10.0 p.m., September 24.

FOR more than thirty years Ellington has conducted a band that has provided a constant source of swinging music, while as a composer he has written one popular song after another. News is that the most exciting band in America at the present moment belongs to Duke Ellington, and although it will be a few months before we hear this particular group on record, the programme under preview will give listeners a chance of hearing it in the making.

Ellington, as a leader, has shaped many smoothly performing organisations while developing the abilities of the men within them, and the bands featured here are no exception. Recorded over a period of almost three years, here is sophisticated, distinctive and skilled orchestration, limelighting the individuality of the many featured musicians.

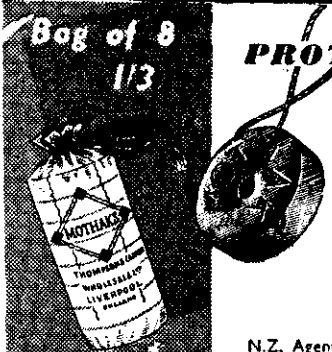
Listen to "Goodbye," a beautiful Ellington melody stated by a band which sounds bright and clear with each section alert and smart.

Apart from "Hide," an over-long and boring drum solo, the remainder of the programme shows off the band in similar vein. Special mention must be made of "Melodrama," which features Jimmy Hamilton sketching lightning figures with his beautifully-toned clarinet against a colourful backdrop painted by the band.

—Ray Harris

(First Hearings in Jazz will appear again in our issue of October 5.)

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