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First Hearings in Jazz

COAST CONCERT

—Bobby Hackett and his Jazz Band

PERSONNEL: Bobby Hackett (cornet), Matty Matlock (clarinet), Jack Teagarden and Abe Lincoln (trombones), Nappy Lamare (guitar), Don Owens (piano), Phil Stephens (bass and tuba), and Nick Fatool (drums).

Programme will be selected from: "I Want a Big Butter and Egg Man," "New Orleans," "That's a Plenty," "Basin Street Blues," "Muskrat Ramble," "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan," "Royal Garden Blues," "Struttin' with Some Barbecue," "Fidgety Feet."

First Playing: Station 2YA, October 15, 10.30 p.m.

A FEW weeks ago, I reviewed a recording from the Seventh Annual Dixieland Jubilee, which was held in Los Angeles in 1954. There was another such festival in 1955, and this time organisers Gene Norman and Frank Bull approached Bobby Hackett to get a band together. With free choice of musicians, Hackett formed the group as listed above, and played to an enthusiastic audience of 7000. While the musicians were in town, Capitol studios recorded some of their work and this disc is the result.

It's great to hear Hackett back again with jazz musicians, for it was around 1936 in New York that he thrilled audiences with his wonderful imitations of Bix Beiderbecke, the soft sound and the melodic imagination. On his first records, his commanding authority overshadowed his sidemen, who included such outstanding musicians as Bud Freeman, Jess Stacy and Jack Teagarden, and even after joining Horace Heidt and Glenn Miller between 1939 and 1942, his deft melodic variations influenced critics to label him "the musician's musician, one who plays all the pretty notes."

Over the years, from small jazz combos to string orchestras, Hackett's work has always been outstanding. Although a poor reader, Bobby puts emotion into his playing and his ideas and technical ease delight his listeners.

In the group under review Hackett is surrounded by musicians who have played with such leaders as Wingy Manone, Pete Daily, Louis Armstrong, Bob Crosby and Eddie Condon. What results is most successful, but I would make one criticism. Someone erred in getting Phil Stephens to double on bass and tuba, for although the tuba lends authenticity to such a group as this, it bogs down the rhythm section. Notice how much better the music flows when Stephens switches back to bass.

Jack Teagarden sings one of his typical choruses on "Basin Street Blues" (somehow I never tire of hearing Jack sing this one), but my favourites are the lesser known Hoagy Carmichael composition "New Orleans" and the

lovely ballad, "I Guess I'll Have to Change My Plan."

Dixieland, My Dixieland
(The Rampart Street Paraders)

PERSONNEL: Clyde Hurley (trumpet), Eddie Miller (tenor sax), Matty Matlock (clarinet), Joe Rushton Junior (bass sax), Abe Lincoln (trombone), Stan Wrightsman (piano), George van Eps (guitar), Phil Stephens (bass), and Nick Fatool (drums).

Programme will be selected from: "I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter," "Love's Got Me in a Lazy Mood," "Dixieland Shuffle," "After You've Gone," "Oh, Baby," "When It's Sleepy Time Down South," "My Monday Date," "Chinatown, My Chinatown."

First Playing: Station 2YA, October 22, 10.30 p.m.

DURING the past three years the Paraders, who are musicians steeped in the tradition of Dixieland, have built up a fine reputation for playing jazz in the New Orleans and Chicago manner. As the personnel of this group is very similar to that of Hackett's, comparison, although unfortunate, is inevitable. I felt some sort of restraint was exerted over the musicians on Hackett's disc, whereas with the Paraders the men were relaxed, swinging infectiously and easily. Only for this reason would my preference be shown for the Paraders.

"Sit right down" features all musicians in ensemble passages as well as in solo spots. This is fine swinging Dixieland music, with all parts weaving in and out to make a wonderful ensemble sound.

"Lazymood" showcases the composer, Eddie Miller, who first recorded this melody with Crosby's Bob Cats in 1938 under the title "Slow Mood." With sympathetic piano in the background we hear the smooth, unvibrating tenor saxophone lines which have been Miller's trademark for the last 25 years.

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N.Z. LISTENER, OCTOBER 5, 1956.