

Julius Wechter "Tops" Again

PERSONNEL of the Julius Wechter Quartet: Wechter (vibes), Colley (alto), Bates (bass), Divito (drums).

Items: "Cy's Blues" (arranged by Colley), "I Remember You" (arranged by Colley), "I'll Close My Eyes" (arranged by Colley), "Sissy" (arranged by Wechter).

This is the second side of the record reviewed in *The Listener* of June 7. All I said about the quartet in that issue still applies, but I would add this: Vibraphonist Wechter really impresses on further hearing. He hasn't the technique of a Hampton or a Norvo, but his musical approach to his instrument more than compensates. It's this approach that gets his ideas across, and when he backs up or adds to Colley's alto, he does so because what he has to say is worth hearing.

"Cy's Blues" is the best track. A medium tempo blues, it interests the listener right from the start. The opening bars are familiar, but I can't quite place them. Listen to Jim Bates's thoughtful and melodic bass and also notice the beautiful inter-play between Colley and Wechter. Real musical sympathy exists amongst the members of this combo.

First Playing: Station 2YD, July 25, 9.42 p.m.

Billy Maxted and His Manhattan Jazz Band

Personnel: Maxted (piano), Pace (clarinet), Forsyth (trumpet), Gifford (trombone), Traeger (bass), Igoe (drums).

Items: "Washington and Lee Swing," "Black and Blue," "Just Hot," "Yankee Doodle Dixie," "Ja Da," "I've Found a New Baby," "Satanic Blues," "Basin Street Blues," "Panama," "Muskrat Ramble," "Battle Hymn of the Republic."

This is an extended version of the session reviewed last November 16. Straightforward, happy Dixieland with a forceful beat is Maxted's order of the day, and although these Dixielanders are not in the same class as Condon's All Stars, they are worth hearing.

I was particularly taken with "Battle Hymn." An organ introduction sets a serious mood, only to be broken by Igoe's sizzling drums. Forsyth's energetic trumpet leads the front line, while Igoe and Traeger provide a firm foundation for the other musicians to build

upon. Pace blows some attractive low and middle register clarinet, and the bars without piano or bass accompaniment sound fine. Forsyth takes over again, sounding very much like Yank Lawson, and the group runs through a couple of key changes before blowing out the last bars.

The other items which stood out were "Washington," "Black" and "Basin."

The musicians expound plenty of energy and enthusiasm on the arrangements, most of which are somewhat different from the usual approach to such jazz standards.

First Playing: Station 2YD, August 1, 9.0 p.m.

The Dave Pell Octet

Personnel: Pell (tenor sax, bass clarinet, English horn), Fagerquist (trumpet), Sims (trombone), Berman (baritone sax), Previn, Ross or Williamson (piano), Rizzi (guitar), Pollan or Bates (bass), Kluger (drums).

Items: To be chosen from two LPs, "Jazz Goes Dancing" and "Love Story."

I played five out of the 12 tracks on the first-mentioned disc and, quite frankly, I was bored. The music is smooth and well organised, but the musicians execute the arrangements so precisely and carefully (and there is no doubt that many of the arrangements call for a high standard of musicianship) that the vital feeling which must be ever present in jazz, is lost.

The enthusiasm existing in the Wechter group does not exist here, and it sounds as though Pell's musicians had to record this date, not because they had something to say, but because the record company demanded some sort of disc that day. If this is "Jazz Goes Dancing" no wonder teenagers scream for Rock 'n' Roll.

Pell's second LP, however, is better and, funnily enough, is recorded for a different company. Significant?

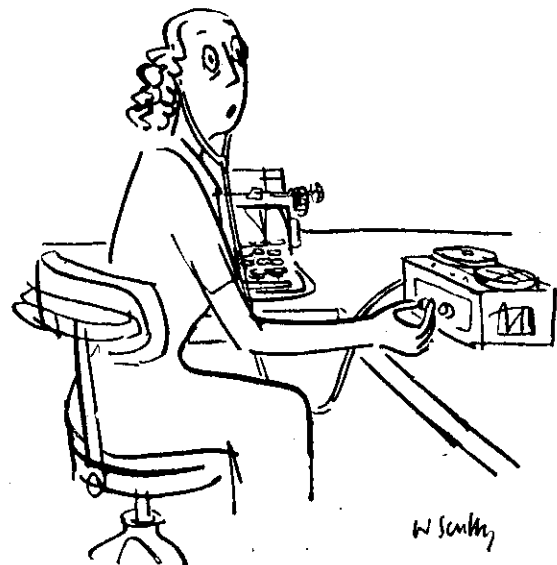
This is a story-in-songs type of album with a boy-meets-girl, they-split, and boy-gets-new-girl format. All the 12 tracks are quite pleasing, but offer nothing to get excited about.

I would like to mention these three, however. "Just One More Chance" (arranged by Marty Paich) gives the melody line full sway, and the group produces a big band sound in the closing bars. "Solitude" (arranged by Jimmy Giuffre) is the most interesting track on the disc. Pell opens solo-wise on English horn and is joined by Sims. Previn's piano and Rizzi's guitar provide the contrasting middle eight and the ensemble plays out the final eight bars. The second chorus is opened by Sims with tasteful accompaniment from the rhythm section. Again the middle eight is contrasting with Fagerquist to the fore and the item finishes with Pell and Sims resetting the opening mood.

"Let's Do It" (a jump arrangement by Wes Hensel) features in the third chorus, 16 bars from Pell on clarinet, and Fagerquist solos effectively in the middle eight of the second chorus.

First Playing: Station 2YA, July 29, 10.0 p.m.

—Ray Harris



(C) Punch

"Since there are no ladies present I would like to tell a story"

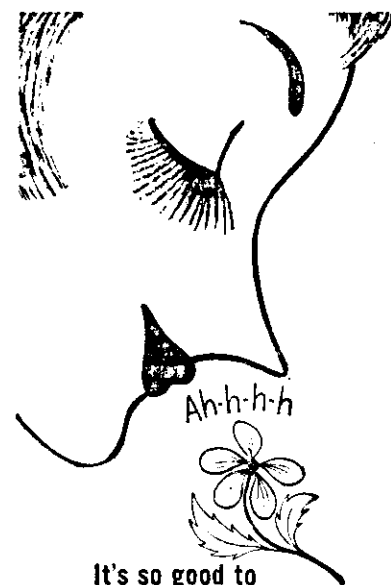
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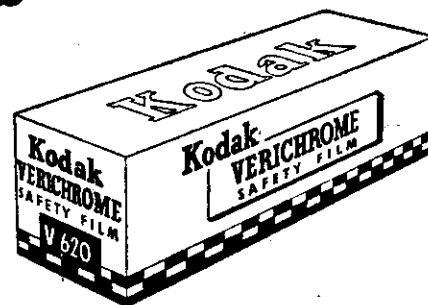
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