

# Dizzy Gillespie and His Big Band

ABOUT 14 years ago I became interested in jazz, and when I purchased my first records I was told that jazz was jungle music and not for me. I hotly defended my discs and jazz in general, and as I grew older my ideas about music broadened and my tastes in jazz became more catholic. Perhaps these last 14 years have been in vain for I have just listened to the Gillespie big band and with the track labelled "Manteca." I am sure I was listening to jungle music. I console myself with the thought, however, that this was Gillespie and the music was that of the 1947-48 bop era when bop was anything but polished. A new harmonic pattern with a savage pounding beat was the order of the day and I, for one, am extremely thankful that that order has gone.

I have tried without success to enjoy the music of the Dizzy One because he is for ever winning popularity polls and awards all over the world, so he must be good. Or must he? Indeed, the record under review won a "Grand Prix" award from a French jazz magazine, and I doubt whether you have ever before heard a disc so badly engineered. Perhaps we should make exceptions because it was recorded at a concert in the Pasadena Civic Auditorium, but I fail to see why. No other concerts have sounded like this on record. The 16 or 17-piece band sounds as though it is playing in a huge wooden barrel, and seldom have I heard anything so lifeless and lacking in swing (e.g., "Good Bait").

The liner notes to the disc do not list the full personnel, so I am somewhat in the dark as to the musicians featured, but they do mention James Moody (tenor), Ernie Henry (alto), Cecil Payne (baritone), and Chano Pozo (bongo and conga). Apparently Pozo was killed shortly after this concert.

This record highlights everything about Gillespie which makes his music so distasteful to my ear. The screaming trumpets, incessant drumming and pointless jabbering in "Manteca"; the poor taste shown in "I Can't Get Started" with the "Jingle Bells" coda; the vocal in "Ool-ya-koo," which means what? And we complain about some of these rock-and-roll compositions!

The concert was presented by Gene Norman, who also wrote the liner notes which are usually intended to help sell a record. These are an exception, but they do help us to evaluate the Dizzy One, so I quote: "Decked in his famous symbols: the beret, horn-rimmed glasses and goatee, Gillespie mugged and danced. But most of all he blew. And the entire band seemed to suffer from that same strange new kind of lunacy, too. Adding to the bedlam, the stage was filled with beret, glasses and goatee addicts who were admitted free in return for their sartorial support. . . Shortly before this appearance, Diz's band attempted a European tour, and got stranded so badly they almost had to swim home from Sweden."

No doubt Gillespie fans will love this programme, but for me, I'll take Harry Edison, Joe Wilder or John Anderson.

First Playing: Station 2YD, October 17, 9.0 p.m.

## Trombone Panorama with the Kai Winding Septet

Personnel: Kai Winding, Carl Fontana, Wayne Andre, Dick Lieb (trom-



DIZZY GILLESPIE  
"Decked in his famous symbols"

bones), Roy Frazee (piano), Kenny O'Brien (bass), Tom Montgomery (drums).

Trombone panorama is a light and reasonably comprehensive history of jazz trombone with the narration by Kai Winding. The various excerpts which comprise this panorama are not intended to be "carbon copy" imitations but are Winding's concept of the individual stylists represented. Fontana, for instance, captures the essence of Teagarden; Andre plays a brief Tommy Dorsey "I'm Getting Sentimental Over You," and a very fine impression of Bill Harris in "Bijou." This is most enjoyable music by a new septet which has freshness and a personality all its own. The four trombones create mellow moods as in "Moonlight Serenade," and then give the impression of a full band shouting as in "Collaboration" and "Bijou." The rhythm section adds immensely to both the swing and the sense of fullness; with the beautifully engineered recording, the piano clearly states the chords upon which the harmonies are built, while the bass and drums give a wonderful thrust and drive.

The version of "It's All Right With Me," which is a swinging salute to the Kay and Kai partnership that made jazz history, is the fragment which appeals to me most.

In contrast to the Gillespie Band, this is fine swinging, melodious jazz. Kai's elocution is faultless and adds much to the enjoyment of this session. Don't miss this—you'll like it.

## Repeat Playings

Station	Date	Programme	Listener Review
1YA	Oct. 10	Brubeck at W. Ishlre	Sept. 13
	" 17	Almerico's All Stars	Aug. 16
	" 17	Erroll Garner	Sept. 27
3YA	" 11	Johnny Guarneri	Aug. 30
	" 14	Marvin Ash	Sept. 13
	" 14	Metronome All Stars	Sept. 13
	" 18	Max Albright	Aug. 30
	" 18	Jack Teagarden	Aug. 30
4YA	" 7	Jazz at Cal-Tech.	Aug. 16
	" 7	Ray Bryant	Aug. 16

—Ray Harris

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