

# The Music is Playing

bands in this country is Mervyn Bree's at the Peter Pan Cabaret in Auckland. There are others, however, that run it pretty close—the Bailey-Marston at the Winter Garden Cabaret in Christchurch, the High-hatters' at the Mayfair in Wellington, the band at Auckland's Dixieland, and Tommy Stratton's Band at the Majestic Cabaret in Wellington. But these bands could not hope to remain in popular favour in the Dominion if they featured the Paul Whiteman type of jazz to the exclusion of the "gingery" music that New Zealanders seem to prefer. An example of a well-balanced modern orchestra is Frank Crowther's, which is heard over the air from 2YA each week.

Paul Whiteman's band consists of about 20 pieces, and he has artists with him like the Mills Brothers, famous radio stars. These four negroes brought themselves before the radio public through their amazing vocal imitation of a jazz band. They jumped almost overnight from porters and bootblacks to the 3000-dollar a week class, but they have a sound manager and have kept their heads. They were the first coloured entertainers to win recognition on the American national network. Their season with Paul Whiteman is being remarkably successful because of the air fame that preceded them. Latest of the race to win fame in America was the trio known as the Three Keys. A broadcasting official in New York was one night "browsing around the dials" when he tuned in to a small station in Pennsylvania which was broadcasting the playing of three coloured lads from a black-and-tan restaurant in Chester. He was interested and decided to give them a chance over the national network. It was not long before they had become popular broadcast stars from the big studio on New York's Fifth Avenue. Their next step was to Broadway, where they were such a huge success at the Capitol Theatre that they stopped the show. But their fame was brief. To-day they are forgotten—the old, old story of life on New York's Great White Way.

There's no doubt that the jazz band of the present moment is much better than the band that played the first jazz music. The outstanding rhythm of modern music is syncopation, and it is entirely wrong to say that musicians disapprove of this. Masters like Brahms included this rhythm with excellent effect. It was, however, an incident in their music and not the domi-

nating factor. The only unpardonable sin in modern music is dullness.

But the greatest show band in the world, Mr. Pearce said, was probably Waring's Pennsylvanians, with Jack Hylton's band a close second. Hylton is one of the greatest figures in the London dance world, and his stage shows are sights never to be forgotten. There is talk of him bringing his band to Australia and New Zealand shortly—he would certainly be a sensation.

Henry Hall's B.B.C. Dance Band is one of the finest radio combinations in the world, and is not unfamiliar to listeners in this part of the globe, for it has often been put on short wave from England. An air of quietness prevails at the B.B.C. studios, even in the dance music studio. But in the N.B.C. studios in New York the atmosphere is like the famous petrol advertisement—split-second starting. It is estimated that there is a continuous unseen audience of 39,000,000 to every programme put over by the corporation—something of a strain on the artist if he stops to consider the fact.

But jazz is definitely getting more tuneful—the boop-oop-a-doop type of thing has had its day, thank heaven—and the latest numbers are both appealing and interesting.

Dancing is as full of conventions as bridge, too. Any man who can dance always turns to the right, never to the left, particularly in the foxtrot; and this although he is going around the room anti-clockwise. The waltz and the foxtrot are the main dances nowadays. The tango is practically not danced. The chief reason is that the tango melody and rhythm are not understood or appreciated by the majority of New Zealand or Australian people. In Paris and Nice every second

dance is a tango, played always by a special band. Another characteristic is that the tango must be played slowly, and dancers need much more ability to dance slowly. Moreover, people think of it as essentially a flamboyant dance. They have seen, say, Rudolph Valentino dancing it in films; but, of course, their attitude is quite wrong. They would need special stage training to dance tangos like that.



**CECIL FRASER ON THE JOB.**—The well-known Australian conductor leading his Wireless Dance Orchestra. This popular combination is often heard in bright numbers from Melbourne's 3LO.