

Paris, Madly Jazzing, Sees Jazz as the Music of the Future

The New American Music Is Given Serious Consideration by Continental Composers

By R. A. Parker

FEW days ago, when the musical Mrs. Richard T. Wilson was so embarrassingly dragged into the West Side police court because of nocturnal musicales in her Fifty-seventh Street studio apartment, the great issue seemed to be whether the music with which she entertained her distinguished guests was classical or just ordinary "jazz." From a casual reading of the news columns one derives the impression that if, in truth, jazz had been perpetrated Mrs. Cornelius Vanderbilt's sister-in-law must have been adjudged guilty of disorderly conduct. On the other hand, if classical had been committed, the lady was to be declared innocent. Emphatically protesting her dislike of jazz—which the celebrated complainant, Mr. Child Hassam, characterized as "waterwailing cacophony"—the defendant walked, victorious, out of the police court. No one put in even a passing word in defense of jazz. Only the devil's advocate could do that.

But We Like It

Yet the worst of it is, we like it. Most of us are too cultured to admit it. Throughout our great land champions of culture without stint, culture to the utmost, tell us that jazz is an insidious toxin that eats into our moral and aesthetic fiber. But jazz is not without honor save in its own country. If this year you are joining the great trek to London and Paris, you may park your culture, if you are wise enough to arm yourself with a dozen or so of the jazziest records in captivity. Thus armed you may scale the dizzy heights of London and Paris society.

Last year, when I left this crude, jarring America of curs to taste the riper culture of the Old World, a shamelessly patriotic friend offered me as a sort of symbolical tribute from the New World to the Old a somewhat disreputable record entitled "Sweet and Pretty." In Henry Jamesian horror I spurned it. My aim was to get into contact, if possible, with the finest minds of Great Britain and the Continent. I was going prepared to talk of music, art, literature and the drama with whatever celebrities in these fields might be kind enough to receive me. They received me quickly enough, with that infallible scent of theirs for American publicity; but they preferred to talk of jazz. They wanted to learn how to do the "shimmy shake," as our characteristic folkdance is named in Bloomsbury and Hammersmith.

It was at a party in Gordon Square that I first realized my mistake. I should have armed myself with good jazz records. I offer this suggestion for prospective young visitors. Mrs. Vanessa Bell daughter of Sir Leslie Stephen and wife of Clive Bell, was our hostess.

Distinguished Company

I found myself completely surrounded by celebrities. There was, to me, a rather liberal seasoning of Strachey's though the great Lytton was busy in the country on his life of Queen Victoria; and of Meynell's a liberal number; and a large assortment of modern artists, novelists, editors poets and poetesses, the importance of whom, in my almost impenetrable provincialism, I quite failed to appreciate. Clive Bell himself was in most significant form. John Maynard Keynes seemed to be quite oblivious to the economic consequences of the peace. The blue-shirted Roger Fry struck me as a sort of Bunthorne of British matriculation. There were my celebrities; I could hardly see the trees for the forest, so many of them were there in Mrs. Bell's studio and drawing rooms.

I settled down to a stimulating, cultured conversation with the exquisite Mrs. Virginia Woolf on the art of fiction, with special reference to future developments and possibilities. But a hopelessly parietic gramophone was wheezing through "Wicky Wacky Woo" or some such Hawaiian horror and it was quite impossible to discuss the later method of Henry James while the doors of respectable London week-

lies were hoofing it through a fox-trot.

"Down on the Farm"

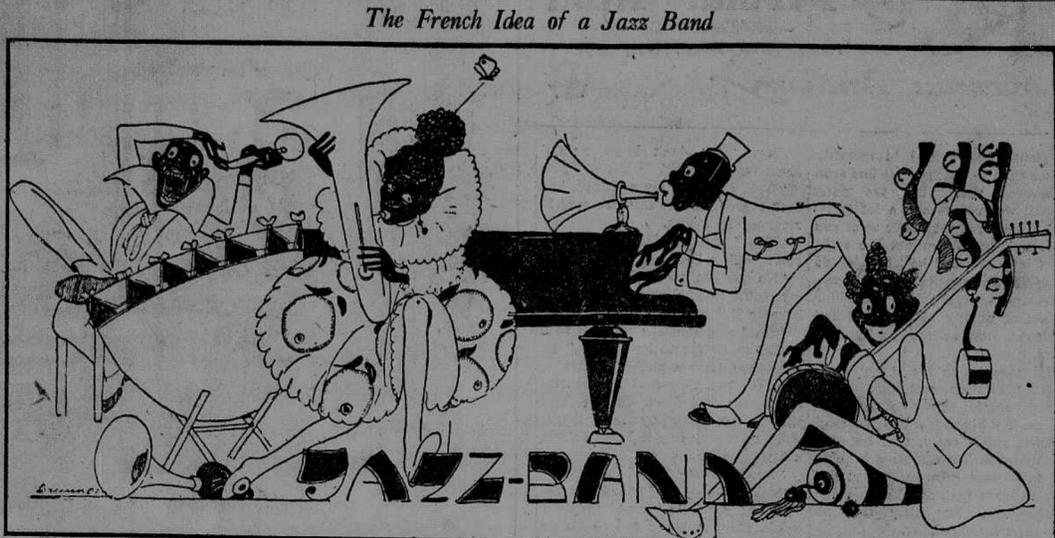
I finally gave up this attempt to exchange ideas with the most interesting woman writing novels in England to-day. Then suddenly I found myself being introduced to Bertie Russell, an insignificant enough looking man to be the foremost philosopher of England. How I had looked forward for years to meeting Bertrand Russell! Yet my introduction to the eminent author of "Our Knowledge of the External World as a Field for Scientific Method in Philosophy" was accomplished to the tune of

"Oh, how I wish again
That I was in Michigan,
Down on the farm!"

Could I question him concerning his impressions of Marxian Moscow to the accompaniment of "Alexander's Ragtime Band"? I could not. Patriotic resentment welled up in my bosom. All those stale records were not, after all, truly representative of our later accomplishments in neo-jazz. If I had only brought my "Yellow Dog Blues"! In the present assortment of worn-out disks there seemed to be nothing later than "The Robert E. Lee." I cried for madder music and stronger jazz. I appealed to a distinguished looking foreigner with a long, black spade beard, who was sitting at the piano. He was M. Ernest Ansermet, conductor of the orchestra of the Diaghileff Ballet at Covent Garden. He volunteered the information that he could play "blues." He had toured our country with the Russian Ballet and he returned to Europe a fanatic enthusiast for jazz.

Famous Converts

Picture, if you can, Svengali executing the "Beal Street Blues" and you can get my impression of M. Ansermet as he attacked the "Memphis." It was, visually, a thing of infinite bouncing. The effect was prodigious. I had, quite unconsciously, struck M. Ansermet's hobby. He told me of Igor Stravinsky's passion for this "American music." He expressed unqualified admiration for Will Marion Cook and his Southern Syncopated Orchestra. Stravinsky, the most



The French Idea of a Jazz Band

daring of living composers, had been inspired to compose in the same musical idiom. And I was to discover later that M. Ansermet had contributed to a serious Continental review an essay in praise of jazz. But I had not come to London to hear out-of-date American ragtime. Besides, it cannot be played with an English accent. Yet all that I heard in the music halls and theaters devoted to revue were warmed-over American tunes. I resolved to escape. After all, it is better to worship celebrities from a distance. So I flew over to Paris. There, perhaps, safely hidden in the Rue Bonaparte, I might avoid jazz. By sedulously avoiding contact with my countrymen I might get in touch with the newer and more original expressions of the Gallic spirit.

Graciously received by some of the most advanced artists and interpreters, I found that they were talking of one thing. The most interesting event, for the sophisticated, was the new "Fox Trot" by that brilliant young composer, Georges Auric. This, I learned, was not merely a French imitation of an American fox trot. It was rather "a musical portrait of a fox trot." It is not to be danced. It is to be listened to. It is as delicate, they told me, as an eighteenth century minuet. From the point of view of photography, explained Francis Poulenc, it might be blamed; but as a portrait it was a "perfect work of art." It ought to serve as an example to all of our composers who are satisfied merely



IGOR STRAVINSKY, most daring of European composers, has been inspired to try his hand at American jazz

to deform this modern dance. Auric, I learned, had made a great collection of these exotic American rhythms. Nor is he alone in his enthusiasm. The great Debussy himself composed a cakewalk. Ravel, it was rumored, was working on a fox trot. Stravinsky had been inspired by the Southern Syncopated Orchestra to several compositions which were performed in London last season under the direction of M. Anser-

of the external world, had evidently been recruited from the tropics of 135th Street. What homesick American in Paris could resist it? After listening to those feeble popular songs that seemed to suffer from a pernicious anemia in musical inventions, jazz is truly a barbaric yawn, but overpowering in its dynamic energy, its challenging vitality. Go to Paris to listen to it, if you are not convinced.

No; jazz was no more to be avoided in Paris than Charlie Chaplin, Mary Pickford or Bill Hart. You could not avoid the American influence, in music or in the movies.

"The Titanic Blues"

And there were other discoveries to be made after these initial recognitions. That statuesque young Amazon from Louisville, Ky., who had left her Southern home to study singing in Paris was much more often called upon of an evening to sing "The Titanic Blues" than she was to render any of Reynaldo Hahn's confections. "The Titanic Blues" was especially popular for these classic lines:

"How the men all screamed and cursed
When Captain Smith said,
"Ladies and children first!"
It's your last trip, Titanic,
Fare thee well!"

After a long and careful apprenticeship on the "Beach" in San Francisco that perfect gentleman named "Les" Copeland now entertains in his "drawing room" (ex-"Arizona bar") in a quiet side street near the Madeleine. "Les" confines himself to his own compositions, such as that exquisite morceau entitled "On the Erie Canal." Investigation proved that the clientele here is of the most exclusive Franco-American aristocracy. A list of Copeland's guests is occasionally printed in the society columns. Educated feet alone seem

It Is Pointed Out That Jazz May Supply European Music With the New Blood It Now Needs

essential now for American visitors to Paris. The true temple to jazz is undoubtedly the Clover Club, where syncope begins shortly after midnight, often to the tune of "Everything Is Peaches Down in Georgia." The innocently named Clover Club and its clientele deserts Paris for Deauville in the season, and it has ramifications on the Riviera. Thus the insidious influence of jazz has spread its network over the Continent.

Jazz Bands Everywhere

No music hall or dancing place is quite complete without its jazz band, which, pronounced in French, sounds something like jahzbah. Jazz has even invaded the drama. "Le Danseur de Madame," a comedy popular last season on the Boulevard, satirized the conflict between marital duties and devotion to jazz, with jazz phonograph records taking the place of illicit love letters. Sacha Guitry, shrewdest showman of the boulevards, introduced a jazz band into his comedy "Je t'aime." It consisted of three frightened negroes, who had evidently never come into contact with musical instruments before. Sacha's "band" was the very antithesis of jazz.

But despite this increasing popularity of jazz on the Continent serious and educated musicians approach it with interest and respect. In Paris I discovered that essay of M. Ansermet's to which I referred above. It is for the most part a tribute to the Southern Syncopated Orchestra, an organization that has been presenting our native negro music as well as the latest jazz and "blues" to cultivated European—especially British—music lovers.

Ernest Ansermet pays a warm tribute to "the astonishing perfection, the high taste, the spirited fervor" of this aggregation. This is significant, coming from the director of the symphony orchestra in Lausanne as well as of the Diaghileff ballet.

High Praise

These colored musicians, asserts the European conductor, may be lacking in those restrained and conventional manners which are so carefully insisted upon by the policemen of music, but, on the other hand, he claims they have a very precise sense of this music that they truly love "and a joy in playing it that is communicated with irresistible force to their audiences, a joy that incites them to try to surpass each other, to enrich and to refine the possibilities of their instruments. . . . They are so completely possessed by this music that they cannot help dancing it themselves, so that their performance becomes a spectacle for the eye as well, and when they give themselves up to one of their favorite effects, which is

that of taking up again the refrain of a dance with a movement twice as slow as before and with a doubled intensity and figuration, an extraordinarily thrilling thing happens: it seems as though a great wind were passing through a forest or that great doors had been brusquely opened upon some immense orgy."

M. Ansermet pays a remarkable tribute to Will Marion Cook, the colored composer and director who organized this ensemble. Cook is, the Frenchman asserts, a master in every respect.

"As such, there is no conductor who gives me as much pleasure to watch."

Beyond Conventional Musician

It is impossible, he continues, for the conventionally and academically trained musician to play or to appreciate the infinite variety and subtlety of ragtime and jazz. In the jazz band every instrument is transformed, every musical value is revalued. The total effect is the release of a formidable scale, which runs from a most refined sonority, recalling the orchestra of Ravel, to that terrifying tumult in which handclaps and cries mingle with the unleashed fury of the instruments. To this Continental authority the Cook orchestra represented a perfect type of what is known as "popular art"—art which is still in the stage of oral tradition. Even though some of the music may be actually written down, it is not thereby fixed, and can be fully realized, completely effective, only in the performance of it.

M. Ansermet is especially enthusiastic about the talent of the clarinetist of the organization, a talent, he thinks, that rises almost to genius. Sydney Becket is his name. He claims to be the first of his race to compose "blues" of a finished form directly upon his instrument. Becket's "blues," in the opinion of Ernest Ansermet, who studied them both during an orchestra rehearsal as well as during several public performances, were admirable in "their richness of invention, their strength of accent, their daring novelty and surprise. Even in their primitive form, already they suggested the idea of a new style. In form they were striking, abrupt, harsh, with the ending as sudden and pitiless as that of Bach's second concerto 'Brandenbourgeoisie.'"

May Be Future's Music

"When so often we have searched in the past history of music for one of those figures to whom we owe the advent of our art, to those musicians of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries who out of the popular airs created truly expressive works and thus paved the way in which Haydn and Mozart are not the innovators, but the first great milestones—what a strange experience to meet this negro boy with his white teeth and narrow forehead, who is so pleased that we like what he has done, and yet who cannot talk about his own compositions except to say that he works in his own way. When one stops to think that his own way may perhaps be the great way into which the music of tomorrow may plunge!"

This iconoclastic conclusion, coming with all the authority of a distinguished and thorough technician in modern music, suggests all sorts of interesting possibilities. It contradicts flatly the derogatory opinions of jazz expressed by some of our painfully cultured compatriots. It should be remembered that M. Ansermet holds no brief for any jazz but the genuine. He does not care, any more than the rest of us, for the standardized, commercial, second-rate commodity. But he suggests that our composers, instead of living on "the shadow of a shadow," musically speaking, might look around them at the vast and almost inexhaustible treasury of native "popular" music that has grown up all around us. Instead of deriving inspiration from second-hand European sources, they might study and analyze this as yet unexplained expression of great American cities.

Europe May Adopt It

If our serious composers, through excess of culture, refuse to race this task and continue to sneer at jazz, we may discover that jazz will furnish to European music that infusion of new blood and strength that is now so necessary to its very life. In that event it may return to us, disguised as "modern music," with the stamp of European approval which seems so necessary for acceptance by our cultured classes here. What we now despise and regard as vulgar, cheap and beneath contempt, when it is presented to us in the plebeian purlieu of Broadway, we may acclaim with bland equanimity when perhaps at no very distant date it reappears, as a European importation, at classic concerts,

Playing Hide and Seek With the Bolshevik Secret Police

(Continued from preceding page)

the Soviet government, but say straight out: Are you for us or against us?"

"In the course of Zinovieff's speech the Internationale was played three times. The last occasion was when he showered praises on the representatives of the Baltic fleet, 'the flower of the revolution.' The commissar of the dreadnought Petropavlovsk was presented with a Red banner. Zinovieff's excessive praise of the Baltic sailors was significant in view of the fact that during the strikes disaffection had shown itself among them also. The beginning of that disaffection has now matured into open revolt on the part of the entire Baltic fleet against the Soviet government.

"In the name of the Petrograd proletariat," exclaimed Zinovieff, "I express our thanks to the sailors of the Red Baltic fleet.

"Bourgeois Doomed"
"Comrades," he cried, "the tyrannous governments of the West are on the eve of their fall. The bourgeois despots are doomed. The workers are rising in their millions to sweep them away. They are looking to us, the Red proletariat, to lead them to victory. Long live the Communist Internationale."

"He ended amidst tremendous cheering. The orchestra played the Internationale twice.
"There were several other speakers, all of whom sang the praise of the Communist party and the good judgment of the electorate. The audience became very tired. The meeting dragged on until long after midnight. Periodically the Internationale was played. Toward the end many people were lolling over the desks with their heads on their arms. At last Zinovieff arose and declared that the presidium had decided to leave all other business till the following meeting.
"Once more the Internationale was sung while the men did up their belts and put their coats on. The au-

dience swarmed out into the cool summer air. My head ached violently. I walked along to the river. The night was superb. I leaned over the parapet, gazed across to the other side and gave myself up to thought.

"At the beginning of May, 1919," said Sir Paul, "I enlisted as a volunteer in a regiment of a friend of the manager of my works, who, although strongly opposed to the Bolsheviks, gained their favor by blowing up the wrong bridges when Yudenitch advanced on Petrograd. My commander intended to blow up the retreat of the Reds, but by an error blew up the retreat of their opponents. Thinking that he had done so purposely, the Communists extended to him an invitation to join the Communist party and gave him a command. As a private in this regiment, stationed close to the Polish lines, my commander delegated me to Moscow and Petrograd in various duties, such as purchase of books, motor tires, etc.

"When I traveled to Moscow as a Red soldier I traveled in state. Thus, in making frequent trips to Moscow and Petrograd—and my commander saw to it that they be as frequent as possible—I was able to obtain valuable information bearing on the army at the important official sources and to gather such information on conditions in general as I thought interesting and valuable.
"Once my commander sent me to Moscow to obtain a complete set of Bolshevik decrees for the year 1919 to be used for propaganda purposes in the army. The request was genuine enough, but I obtained two sets of the decrees, one for the army and another for the Foreign Office in London. When arriving in Moscow I always reported to the political division of the general staff, and was immediately assigned to good quarters. Usually, they would billet me in a room in the house or flat of some bourgeois family. The latter did not relish very much the presence of an unbidden stranger in their

house, and I certainly did not like to impose on them, but I had to play the game.

Studied the Army

"While in the Red army I made detailed observations of the organization. In 1918, the first so-called Red army was nothing more than a disorderly rebel, officered by such as incited the soldiers to the destruction of anything and everything that could be termed bourgeois and capitalist. But as soon as the counter-revolution of Krassnof, Denikin and others commenced, Trotsky realized immediately that an efficient army with trained officers was necessary. At the present a very large number of former and influential officers of the Czar are serving the Bolsheviks, the majority of them doing so under compulsion.

"The first means taken to enforce compulsory service by czarist officers was a declaration which every officer was compelled to sign, stating that he was aware that in case of his infidelity to the Soviet government his wife, child and other relatives would be deported to concentration camps. This threat was an exceedingly potent factor.

"Terror, however, was not the only means utilized. As the Soviet government realized the necessity of experts it changed its attitude toward that class. Despite the inclination of the lower Soviet officials to treat the officers and experts in the usual style, that is jail them, kill them and starve them, Lenin and Trotsky endeavored to conciliate this class and addressed them in a tone of consideration. These are the conditions which prompt officers to serve in the army:

1. Restoration of iron discipline and absolutist military authority.
2. Disappointment at the effects of Allied intervention.
3. Superior rations and pay.
4. Respect shown for officers by Lenin and Trotsky.
5. Protection of families and

relatives from Bolshevik terror.
"The lower ranks of the officers are composed largely of Red cadets. On the whole these are strong supporters of the Bolshevik régime, but are mostly ignorant.

"The rank and file of the army is kept in line by terroristic measures and constant propaganda. The necessity of conducting constant propaganda in the army is the best indication of how strongly the Red army really is. It is composed—80 per cent of it—of peasants, whose attitude to-day is very similar to the attitude of the Russian army on the eve of the Bolshevik revolution. They want to go home. That's all. They don't care what happens. They just want to go home and till the land. Only this time there is iron discipline and merciless terror to hold them back. Despite these, however, the number of deserters is growing enormously. Relatives of the deserters, however, whenever possible, are taken as hostages and held until the delinquents return. There are special Communist 'cells' in every military unit whose duty it is to spy on the rest of the soldiers and report all conversations. These cells also act as agents of propaganda. Russia is deluged with propaganda, and it certainly does not speak very much for the Bolshevik régime if despite this huge propaganda the Bolshevik party has been unable to rally more than 500,000 members out of a population of 130,000,000 under Soviet control.

Want a Free Russia

"Not much can be said for the efficiency of the Red army. It fought pretty well against internal counter-revolutionary movements, the failure of which, however, is not due so much to Bolshevik military prowess as to the lack of support commanded by these counter-revolutionary movements because of their own shortcomings and frequently openly reactionary character. The

number of outposts along the lakes. It was necessary to avoid them.

"Being close to the lakes we were obviously deserters. We, therefore, decided to travel in a peasant's cart. We told him we were 'Greens' and he gave us food and permitted us to sleep in his hut. After getting some rest we set out for one of the lakes. It was two miles distant. In the woods close by there was a patrol of forty men, and cavalry guards could be seen riding up and down along the shores every now and then. We ran along a straight piece of road, which was half under water, and slipped into the woods again. Five minutes later a patrol came dashing down through the mire in the opposite direction. Once near the shore we lay low until dark and then started to march around the lake.

"It was a long march, for the lake was sixteen miles long and ten miles wide. It being dark we could not walk in the woods, so we had to wade knee deep through the bogs on the shore. We were in desperate straits, and I began to feel that it would be best perhaps that I were dead.

"Suddenly we hit upon a piece of good luck, when to our great delight we found a castaway fishing boat in the marshes. It was a shabby old thing, and it leaked badly, but on examination it appeared that it could be used provided one man bailed all the time. We cut some oars out of branches and rowed across to Latvia.

"The day rose bright and glorious as we rowed out into the middle of the lake. We were weary but happy. My companions were singing, while I kept meditating upon the great, sad land I had left behind. I looked at and thought of Russia, the Russia I have learned to love second only to my own country, and I wondered sorrowfully on what is to be her fate. But, whatever her fate, I shall not fail to return to her and on her bosom pay her the homage of a friend."