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Discompany's First Six Years Saw Rags-to-Riches Rise

By MICHAEL CALLAHAN

A bottle of the best California champagne is due to pop this month when two young men of music celebrate the sixth anniversary of the million dollar gamble that paid off.

The gamble was once a little studio tucked away in quite Hollywood suburb. Today it is the discompany of the year—Capitol. Its founders, who ran a shoestring into a fortune, are Johnny Mercer and Buddy de Sylva.

Even Capitol's own front office must still be a little dazed at the tremendous boom that shot them from the bottom to top spot in the popular releases field. Once the Cap label listed just two great names, Jo Stafford and Mercer himself. Now, according to the newly-released 9th annual poll of college favorites, conducted by Billboard magazine, the labels glitter with:

The favorite all-style band and top swing band of the nation (Stan Kenton), the top girl singer, with or without bands (Jo Stafford), and her three nearest rivals (Peggy Lee, June Christy, and Margaret Whiting), and the two most popular instrumental groups (King Cole Trio and the Benny Goodman sextet). In addition, Capitol has signed other top-rank stars like Paul Weston (most danceable background work), Andy Russell, the Pied Pipers (voted top paid-pipers by the poll), Hal Derwin, and occasionally Maestro Mercer himself.

The future of any record company under the current production ban is strictly a gamble. The Word has it, however, that Capitol's stockpiles are as large as any popular-release holdover catalogs in Decca, Columbia, or Victor. And we keep remembering that their first six years turned up the strongest "natural" in music history.

New Capitol listings: Paul Weston, whose orchestra now solos in its own albums, has just waxed his second collection in six months. Titled "Music for Dreaming," the album offers "I Only Have Eyes for You," "Rain," "Out of Nowhere," "I'm in the Mood for Love," and "My Blue Heaven."

Weston's phenomenal rise from background to spotlight is due to his "floating beat" arrangements, perfected from those of Glenn Miller, Andre Kostelanetz, and TD. Entire sections of his orchestra carry the melody a la Miller, but instead of Miller's brass background Weston uses strings. The even-tempered beat, with no instrumental takeoffs, provides a smooth, drifting treatment that we have not heard since the best days of Hal Kemp. . . .

"Songs of Sigmund Romberg," is one of Capitol's first bids for the semi-classical field, and to start their series Messrs. Mercer and deSylva have selected some of their newest classical talent. Louis Butler and Lee Sweetland are the song-spinners of these Romberg operettas, with Paul Weston's orchestra providing the melody.

Louis Butler's lyric soprano easily reaches the highest notes on her scale in a style of phrasing that is much like Jeanette McDonald's. Nelson Eddy is the nearest comparison that we can draw to Sweetland, baritone star of the Met. When he joins the soprano in the famous "Wanting You" duet it is difficult for us to remember that we are not listening to the soundtrack from M-G-M's "New Moon" film.

The gems of Sigmund Romberg's operettas are included in this Capitol offering, including "Romance," "The Desert Song," "Lover Come Back to Me," "One Kiss," "Will You Remember," "Riff Song," "Wanting You," and "Deep in My Heart Dear." We pick this collection to set a standard in the semi-classical field.

A BOOK REVIEW

Toward a Better Understanding Of the Life of Oriental Man

RICHER BY ASIA, BY EDMOND TAYLOR, HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY, BOSTON, 1947, \$3.75.

Edmond Taylor's story of the war years when he was on Louis Montbatten's staff in the Southeast Asia command and later commanding officer of all activities of OSS in that theatre is no mere log-book of events. It is about what he learned during his assignment, of ways of life and ways of thinking in that part of the world. The truth he finds in studying Asia is not a new truth. It is the core of the religious and philosophical thought of mankind throughout history. It is the simple fact that in the hearts and minds of men lies the solution of the world's disease, and not in pacts and armaments.

This is a book of curious travels and discoveries and adventure in the mind. The travels narrated in it took place in India and the countries of southeastern Asia during the war; but they are less an exploration of Asia—or of the war—than a use of them as catalysts of understanding. The discoveries and the mental adventures relate as much to the West as to the East, more to peace than to war. Primarily, they are discoveries and adventures in participation in the unity of mankind.

The Tribe of Man

As Mr. Taylor points out, many political solutions to the problem of One World have been proposed, all tending to the ultimate goal of world government, but the psychological and cultural aspects of the problem as they concern the individual have received little attention. This book involves highly personal exploration of this neglected field. It is the story of an attempt, during a wartime assignment which lasted 28 months, to understand some of the problems of Asia and of how this attempt gradually led to the realization that we are all members of the tribe of man, Indian as well as Sahib.

Because the adventures related in this book are adventures of the mind, they take the form that mental adventures always take—embarking upon quests after meaning, seeing new shores of thought, getting shipwrecked and discovering desert islands. Some of Edmond Taylor's desert islands may be cor-

rectly charted, and others may be mirages, or at best, speculations. The reader will have to decide for himself. He is less likely to be disappointed if he bears in mind that, because it is a personal narrative, this book cannot be the systematic development of an idea or the orderly exploration of a subject. It is a journey toward a goal, and that goal is the understanding of the Asiatic mind. Taylor reaches his goal and in so doing casts some light on the "paranoiac" institutionalism of the West.

Faith in Men

In spite of the darkness of India it was to him the school of doubt, in which he says, he learned faith in men. He learned their faith through what he calls cultural opposition: using the values he found in Indian culture to make clear to him his own values.

Some of the most challenging chapters are about the discipline and self-examination that are necessary in the hearts and minds of Western men if we are to help make international cooperation successful. After knowing India, Edmond Taylor become conscious of the absolutist ethics of Western civilization. "The delusion of rightness" which is one of the Western virtues seemed to him in international relations one of the great threats to world peace. In politics and religion we must be "Right." But a Hindu does not persecute heretics or unbelievers; he has always considered it a duty to listen respectfully to their arguments. As the author says, no Indian Mussolini would ever post "Mussolini is always right" on the walls of his cities. Not so much because he would not be believed, as because it would not matter. Their conflicts as a consequence do not generate the great hate which ours tend to produce. Negotiations can go on all the time they are fighting. Western man considers negotiation wrongful if he is fighting for what, in his paranoiac mind, is right.

New Standards

Sizing up the Eastern disposition in this matter and using it to reveal to him the attitudes of western men, Edmond Taylor puts great emphasis upon the necessity of Western man's self-examination of his own soul if he is really in earnest about world cooperation for peace. The one world we need

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Western Hospitality -- Phooey

From The Montana Kaimin

Our native pride in Montana was dealt a hard blow when we read the Sunday papers.

The governor of Minnesota has invited a number of governors to St. Paul to discuss the possibilities of admitting displaced persons to the United States.

In reply, Montana's Governor Sam C. Ford wrote, "I will not consciously add to our economic difficulties by inviting displaced persons to come to this state and I sincerely hope none of the 850,000 persons mentioned are permitted to come to the United States and certainly not to Montana."

Sparsely-populated Montana needs people, and it's our opinion that these persons, who have been shoved around, persecuted, and starved for years, would appreciate the chance to come to a relatively undeveloped state, and what's more, would become good citizens.

And to those who believe such a dismal background would cause these displaced persons to be "problem children" we ask, "Didn't many of our own ancestors leave their homes because of hunger, oppression, or persecution?"

Some of the finest minds in Europe are among these displaced Europeans. During and after the war we talked with many of these persons, and their patience, knowledge,

and understanding would have put many of us to shame.

But big, lonesome Montana, the land of wide open spaces and hospitality, has gone on record as saying that displaced Europeans will not be welcome in the state.

The Statue of Liberty, which has greeted and inspired millions of our ancestors and many of us, bears the following inscription:

"Give me your tired, your poor,
Your huddled masses yearning to
breathe free,
The wretched refuse of your teeming
shore,
Send these, the homeless, tempest-
tossed, to me:
I lift my lamp beside the golden
door."

We're ashamed of the abrupt action of Montana's governor in this matter. We hope persons with opinions on this matter relay them to the governor.

And we sincerely hope the governor, on behalf of the people of Montana, offers the cooperation of state agencies with other state or federal organizations concerned with this problem.

It's a long way from Missoula and Miles City to Dachau and Buchenwald—a very long way. Here in out-of-the-way Montana we can learn a lot, and do a bit for some needy persons, by opening our doors to the displaced persons.