

Why Must They Pick On Jazz?

Correspondent Bobs Up With Defense of Kingdom of Syncopation

BY FRANK J. SULLIVAN.

YOU would die laughing if you could read the 563 newspaper clippings spread out before your correspondent on this desk, all over the ash tray on which no ashes may be dropped and right in front of the hand painted candle which under no circumstances may be lighted. Your correspondent lives at home.

The clippings all relate to jazz. They belong to the files of a certain newspaper and contain everything that has been said about jazz by everybody from Bee Palmer to Rabbi Wise. Yes, you would die laughing.

You may well ask: "With so many fresh (in the sense of new or recent) newspapers to be had for tuppence or thereabouts how comes he to be reading this ancient journalistic chow chow?"

The impulse derived originally from a pain in the neck.

Your correspondent lately took up, in the waiting room of a well known prescription specialist, a copy of a highbrow magazine. In it there was an article pooh poohing jazz. In words that never weakened to the extent of less than three syllables, save in the unavoidably monosyllabic consonants, conjunctions and articles, it endeavored to give the impression that jazz is absolutely and unutterably bla. Jass was not music, it was vulgar, it was sensual, it was discord, it was this, it was that.

If Sophie Tucker or Paul Whiteman had read that article they would have cried their four eyes out, and it was to avert just such a calamity that your correspondent went out immediately, without the prescription, and bought up and burned every copy of that periodical. No ophthalmia for Sophie Tucker if your correspondent can help it!

That article, then, was the straw that broke your correspondent's back and then gave him a neckal pain.

Why must they pick on jazz?

I mean jazz in its broader application, which might take in pretty nearly the entire modern movement, including the shimmy. You would have four or five general subheads, in Roman numerals. One of them, of course, would be the flapper. And then under her would be (a) bobbed hair, (b) cigarettes for women, (c) short skirts for ditto, and so on. Under the short skirts you would have a sub-head in small Arabic numerals, as (1) rolled down stockings. And so on. It gives you an idea of how you could go about it if you were writing a thesis. It also gives you an idea of how much the jazz movement really includes.

In the kingdom of jazz as it now exists elements like Ted Lewis and Glida Gray and the dance called Chicago are only drops in the bucket. Why, there are even jazz preachers today, whether they know it themselves or not.

Looking at it from all of the 872 sides which every question has, can you see how things could be any different today? Can you see that there is any more danger of jazz ruining the country than there is of a high (low?) tariff ruining it, or open face goloshes as worn by co-eds, or Ed Wynn's jokes or almost anything else you could think of and a lot of things you wouldn't? We will not speak of the war because of the fact that it is over. Some time ago the writer was sent to northern Labrador by the Society for Practical Research to investigate and report on the causes for discontent among the Crustaceans of Labrador. This was when he was at the age of 13 and he was gone two days and two nights, Labrador time, or seven years and four months, New York daylight saving time.

Knocking Jazz Is Popular.

Returning last night unexpected he found that jazz had arrived during his absence. You may well imagine his surprise.

The first thing the Pullman porter who took his valise and velocipede said was: "Ca' y' baggage sub? Jazz is ruin' de morals ob dis country, suh!"



If this was a slow age we'd be dancing minuets in our jazz palaces.

Your correspondent believes that is a fairly accurate transcription of the Afro-Harlem dialect.

The taxi chauffeur in front of the Grand Central station said:

"Taxi! Hiyooahsir! Jazz was invented by a demon!"

The hotel clerk said:

"Sorry. We have nothing left under \$19, but it might interest you to know that the Massachusetts Society of Chiropractors, at its last annual convention, denounced jazz as causing warts on the feet."

As a scientist there was nothing for the writer to do but find out about jazz on his own hook.

Hence it was that nightfall found him in what is commonly called a palace of jazz. The partitions separating three ex-saltions had been torn down, and then joined with the respective back rooms, or family entrances, until the ensemble presented quite a sizable palace for jazz. The whole was hung with heavy silk Arabian draperies, in blue and yellow stripes a foot and a half wide. The lights were dimmed in order to confuse federal agents. The waiters were dressed as sheiks, presumably also to confuse the agents. The entire effect was as immoral as a plate of pork and beans.

Then little Jessica came along. Before

leaving for Labrador your correspondent had known Jessica as a little girl who had dandled him on her toes when they were partners in dancing class.

It might be remarked here (and the whole situation may take from the remarkable a tinge of humor that is perhaps excusable and even desirable in a serious treatise like this) that your correspondent cannot dance. In fact, if he may say so, he has been decorated by his majesty the King of Siam with the order of the seaman, third class, because he is the only man in the world who cannot dance and does not harbor the delusion that he can.

Jessica seemed glad to see your correspondent. She is sufficiently comely. It was noticeable that she wore the conventional bobbed hair, the conventional knee length skirt which your correspondent now understands is doomed, and smoked the conventional fag.

"Anything on your hip?" she inquired, brusquely.

Your correspondent examined his hip.

"No," he replied. "Was there anything there?"

Jessica laughed. She howled.

"How's the old cake-eater anyway?" she asked.

"I should love a piece," your corre-

spondent retorted. Cake was not over plentiful in Labrador.

"Let's shake a leg," suggested Jessica. Girls used to call a leg a limb, but Jessica was always one to call a spade a shovel. It developed that she desired your correspondent to dance.

"Oh, you want me to trip the light, fantastic toe," your correspondent said, not unplayfully.

The music started and I suggested a gavotte.

"A gavotte?" Jessica asked.

"A gavotte," I repeated. "There is dignity and poise in a gavotte."

"Suit yourself," Jessica said, "but I'm going to do the Chicago if they don't stop me. Come on!"

I was about to grasp Jessica according to the method I had learned in dancing school when I was not a little startled to find she had grasped me. I placed my right arm about her waist. And then I knew why I had met so many former corset manufacturers begging in the subway.

We danced, as they term it.

"By all the rules of Miss Frothingham's dancing class, in which you and I gained our insight into the terpsichorean art," I told Jessica, "we ought to be a foot apart at this very minute, and here we are, making the Siamese twins look like distant relatives. How do you explain it?"

"I give up," said Jessica. "How do you?"

There I was with Jessica's extremely beautiful map so close to mine that I could hear her tonsils. A soft, blonde, perturbed curl brushed my cheek and got in my eyes. I thrilled.

"Get that hair out of my eye," I said.

Music Leads Sinful Life.

The music played jazz. It sounded as if a respectable tune had given itself up to a life of sin or had gone on an outing to a summer amusement park and was gazing at itself in one of those fantastic looking glasses that make your face look funnier than it is.

It was a familiar tune, and when I got time I recognized it. It was William Tell's overture, but he would never have recognized it, because it was so much improved. It was weird, haunting and entrancing, and I don't know what made me do it, but I seized Jessica even more firmly than I had been seizing her and said:

"I am going to marry you!"

"This, mark you, was on my first night back from Labrador."

Just then the first violin, who also acted as referee, shouted "Break!" and the gong rang. All the flappers and cake-eaters unclenched and untangled themselves, and Jessica and I retired to our corners, and the waiter came and

fanned me with the check. Then I passed out.

When I came to I married Jessica and paid the check with her dowry.

Was that immoral?

Yet they say jazz is ruining the morals of our youth. In my thesis, which I shall submit to the fellows of the Harvard and Yale corporations and the girls of the Bryn Mawr and Vassar corporations, I shall convince the world that jazz is justified, inevitable and harmless. I shall pepper the thesis with enough allusions in Latin to get it by as a thesis.

My argument will be along the following lines, and see if you don't think there is some sense to it: These are parlous times. They are the times in which every good man should come to the aid of his country. Life is not the placid thing it was when women wore crinolines. Life could not be anything but placid with a crinoline around.

(You understand this is all in outline, sort of.)

The same thing applies to any of those getups the girls of ancient times used to rig themselves out in, for what reason the stars alone know. Those 12th century effects with the stovepipe hats and nine or ten yards of gauze floating off them for no reason whatsoever. I refer to the headgear of the Sleeping Beauty period. Small wonder she went to sleep!

And those Elizabethan ruffs. No wonder history states that Queen Elizabeth was straight laced. How could Sir Walter Raleigh put his arm around her neck when it was already done up in enough material to keep the Troy collar factories going a month?

I shall go on to point out that modern life is essentially rapid and therefore essentially jazzy. I shall prove by actual statistics and charts that the slowest man in the United States today is seven and one-quarter times faster than the fastest man was when it took nine days to get from Boston to Philadelphia.

And what is more, I guarantee to do this without making a single joke about Philadelphia! Or Boston!

The music of a period is a reflection of the mood of the time. If a people feels jazzy they have jazz music and they live jazz lives, and the refined, moral people who are fortunately always in the minority, may denounce until they denounce themselves hoarse, but it will not do them any good. If a people feels minuetish; if circumstances are of a minuetish type, then you will find slow, stately music such as our ancestors of colonial times had, when the fastest thing out was Paul Revere.

We have the Twentieth Century Limited, Conan Doyle, airplane mails, Ford tractors, trans-oceanic non-stop flights, monkey glands, radio concerts, votes for women, subways and a 75:25 standard of morals.

I admit that we would be better off without the radio concert.

Nevertheless, under such circumstances, who is going to dance the minuet today? Anyone suggesting such a thing would be and should be laughed to scorn. Jessica would not even dance a gavotte, and everyone knows there is an element of risk, of thrill in the gavotte. Your correspondent has seen men and women, cold sober, trip themselves or each other during a gavotte movement, and serious injury has ensued.

If things ever slow down, and they never will, then jazz will go, but it never will. It is here to stay until we revert to type. That is why your correspondent feels sure that you would get a good laugh out of these clippings about jazz, wherein almost all of the dominies, lots of the dancing masters, and even Victor Herbert, attempt to take falls out of jazz. Their protests are futile and, incidentally, they are all wrong because as Whatchacant has so aptly said: "Whatever is, is right," and jazz certainly is, isn't it?

Your correspondent has proved his case for jazz, and he hasn't even said a word about the war!

the window sill, leaving a tiny pile of gray ash—his last cigar, they said: There are twin souls that, panting and distressed, Seek for each other through the desert dry.

Then meet and signal—and go on again Without a cry— Because some fate beyond their power has made

The soul of one too weak and too afraid To face a handlop—and clasp the hand Even of Love—out on the desert sand.

Savage Headgear Ornamental.

The sub-Arctic people from the frozen tundra wear a snugly fitting bonnet with earlaps, designed to exclude the cold as well as to conserve the heat. Although the utilitarian side is the essential feature, and each of the 20 or more little pieces used in the construction of the bonnet are necessary to make the shape, the people who wear this headgear have adapted ornamentation to its limitations. Fur is the basic material, but there are effective inserts of different colored strips of leather, some of which are woven with leather of a contrasting shade. In introducing bright colors they depend almost entirely on quill work, although occasionally bits of trade cloth are used.

Coin Largest Known.

Probably the largest coin in the world is one belonging to Farren Zerbe, internationally famous expert on rare coins. It is a piece of stamped copper plate 10 inches square, and weighs 6½ pounds. It has a value of "4 Daler" (the daler was a coin of varying value) stamped on it, and the date 1730.

Such coins were commonly used in Sweden for some time during and after the wars of Charles XII. It is part of a collection of more than 30,000 specimens, representing mediums of exchange of all countries and periods from the earliest to the present day.

The Hunchback by Grace E. Hall

TWO barefooted children, returning from an errand, forgetful of their mother's parting injunction to hurry, stopped, faces upturned to the window, mouths agape. One by one other passers-by, young and old, paused a moment, then slouched into positions of greater ease, and with faces upturned, were immediately oblivious to their surroundings. The group became a small crowd, but the first-comers did not observe the gradual increase in numbers. Their thoughts were above the street level—their eyes fixed upon the window. Suddenly an Alredale sent up a long, low, dismal howl. A shock went through the crowd like an electric current—a man boxed the dog's jaw—an audible sigh and a movement of rearrangement—and once again the unexpected audience outside the low rose-hedge gave itself up to listening.

To and fro, to and fro, a black figure passed and repassed the open casement—a queer, fantastic figure of a man, under-sized, and upon his shoulders a huge lump, like Atlas, but with his burden sadly disarranged. . . . He had returned but yesterday from years of wandering. . . . The crowd lost not a movement of that grotesque, pacing effigy in flesh—for tonight the hunchback played—great God in heaven, how he played! How he played!

The notes fell like showers of honey from a flower, lifted like droplets of sparks from a forge, drifted in high, sweet mel-

ody that mocked the age-old practiced notes of nightingale and starling, of oriole and thrush, of Irish linnnet and St. Andrews roller; now sobbingly they whispered through the gray softness of the early night. And one by one the uninvited guests gave evidence of the power the music held; each man in his own way portrayed his soul in look, in action or in silent, deep absorption more powerful than plaudits, cheers or words. On not a few enrapt and quiet faces tears slowly slipped unbidden down the cheeks.

The hunchback, too, forgetful for the hour of his own mortal curse, soared with a soul set free to heights beyond his reason and his usual skill, 'til turning suddenly he saw upon the wall the hideous shadow that followed mockingly his every step—a twisted, bent, unsightly phantom thing, outlining that more awful, concrete form that God forgot to straighten or to change before he placed it in the sight of men. Slowly he approached the grotesque wraith that mimicked every move, and suddenly gone mad with a resurgence of his life-long agony, he poured out upon this hideous shadow-thing a torrent of maledictions shocking to the ear.

Then came a sudden crash as, glancing from this monster on the wall and seeing the lingering crowd that waited for renewal of his charm, he jammed the window down, with fury half consumed, his pride outraged, thus to be caught unguarded and unmasked. While one by

one, as they had gathered there, those in the audience took their leisure way upon the silent street, with scarce a thought of pity in their hearts, though they had stolen glimpses of a soul that knew no voice save through a violin.

This was his trial night, the night to crown his life or make of him a greater mockery. The little man moved nervously with quick and hurried steps; his long thin hands were colder than their habit, and many times as he laced his fingers in a way he had, yet slower seemed the flow of blood, and slower still. He touched each string upon his old Cremona, lovingly; he rosined carefully the flawless silken bow, arranged the tie upon his all too prominent chest, and flung back from his brow the long black hair, so glossy, straight and thick.

And then, unknowing how it came about, he stood before his audience at last, gave one swift look into the impassive faces there, and laid his magic bow upon the strings.

No longer now was he a thing accursed, as often he had called himself so bitterly. The heartaches of a lifetime merged in thrilling tenderness, and from that twisted, broken figure came such melody as permeated every soul that had within it place for harmony. From mood to mood the music rose and fell; wave upon wave it carried those who listened, mute, enthralled, out upon an ocean of

molten gold, in sail-boats made of sandal wood, gem-set; or hurled them in maddened, storm-whipped breakers on the rocks, as in a wild, tremendous volume rose the splendid force of violin and man in one triumphant, crashing final chord.

They threw him money, flowers—and yet more flowers—the audience quite drunk from its reactions and response—while for the moment, he, too, tasted joy, and lifting up his head, he waved his long white hands, no longer cold, in graceful salutation, acknowledgement and thanks.

For fifteen years he had drawn upon his powers to win this one night's victory; to stand before his youth-time fellows here and sway them at his will as he had done; to dominate them by his super-soul as he had always known, somehow, he could. And underneath, in bitterness and agony at his own handicap, he had fought on and on, like a man who, mortally wounded, and blinded by the blood, yet fights, nor yields one moment to the pain until his breath is spent, his eyes too dim to see.

And greater than the wish to rule and win, he had done it all for HER and her alone—the woman whom his heart, unrecognizing barriers of flesh, had long ago ordained as his one mate and placed upon the altar of his soul. She should, sometime, looking at this crooked dwell in which he had been forced to dwell

against his will, see inside, and then, forgetting all its ugliness, should pause in adoration and surprise at its undoubted beauty and appeal—should love his soul, if but for one brief glance—

The usher pushed a basket of red carnations to the feet of the master-artist. Their fragrance rose to his nostrils as he bowed low and long above the offering—then lifting his grey, somber eyes to the box upon his right, he met for one full, long and perfect moment a look of wonder—joy—and startled love upon a woman's face that cleared slowly in the haze of his confused and blurring consciousness—the woman he had lived to stir like this—

It was his heart, the doctor said—the weeks of strenuous application—too little attention to the physical needs—the excitement of this great final triumph—success—such was the way of these temperamental persons.

They lifted the ugly shell from where it had fallen before the open window. The roses still were blooming in the hedge as the gray twilight fell, but no audience lingered there tonight to look upon a naked soul, unmasked. The old Cremona, with the E string snapped, lay within his bent arm where he fell, his stiffened fingers forming still a minor chord.

But what no eye beheld was a panted page he had found among the blood-red, sweet carnations, and had burned upon