

Jazz Jewels

There May Be Gold Hidden In Your Old Record Cabinet

By BETTY PROSSER
CHICAGO, Oct. 14 (AP)—There may be a pot of gold hidden in the dusty phonograph records in your attic.

Jazz record collecting is big business, and collectors' items bring good prices. Some authorities estimate the attics, basements and garages of the nation hold more valuable wax rarities than all the record stores combined.

George Hoefler, writer for Down Beat magazine, jazz critic and long-time collector, lists two King Oliver records on the old Gennett label as among the most valuable items known. Either one, he estimates, would bring \$1000.

Safe Keeping
There is only one known copy of one of these 1923 discs—"Zulu's Ball" and "Workingman Blues," on Gennett 5275. The owner of this record keeps it locked in a safe deposit box. The other record, "If You Want My Heart," and "That Sweet Something Dear," on Gennett 5276, is known to exist, but has never turned up.

Any discussion of prices, Hoefler emphasizes, presupposes that the record is in "mint" condition. Prices decline in geometric ratio to the amount of surface wear to which a waxing has been subjected. But even a "poor" condition copy of either of the fabulous Oliver records would be valuable.

Those two records are about the most important rare items in collecting," Hoefler says. "If one has turned up, there must be others somewhere."

Valuable Discs
A disc is considered a collector's item when it contains good jazz "sometimes only a phrase or two by a well-known artist" and when there are not enough copies to satisfy demand.

This can be due to a small original pressing or to the fact that many musicians recorded under pseudonyms and their work was not recognized until after copies were lost, discarded or widely dispersed.

If you have some old records on the QRS label by Earl Hines, they will sell, Hoefler estimates, for \$50 each. They were Hines' first recorded piano solos. The company which made them stayed in the recording business only a few months.

Other rarities include two records made by a small band under the direction of a Chicago butcher whose hobby was music. His name was Charley Pierce, and when Paramount records asked him to "get some boys together" for a recording date, he showed up with a small band which included Muggsy Spanier and the late Frank Teschemacher on clarinet. The waxings from that session are worth \$40 to \$50 apiece.

Detective Work
The one-time prevalence of musical pseudonyms—a factor which requires every serious collector to have a little of the detective in him—is exemplified in the recording career of Cornetist Red Nichols.

Nichols appears with his band, as Red Nichols and his Five Pennies on the Brunswick label; the Arkansas Travelers on harmony; the Red Heads on Perfect; Red and Miff's stompers on Victor; the Six Hotentots on Cameo; the Charleston Chasers on Columbia, and the Golden Gate orchestra on Edison. Most of his old records will bring between \$5 and \$15 in mint—brand new—condition.

Trumpet King Louis Armstrong, signed to an exclusive contract with Okeh, played two beautiful choruses with "Johnny Dods" and his Black Bottom Stompers for Brunswick's "Wild Man Blues" and "Melancholy." A pressing from either of these "masters" commands \$15 to \$25.

\$1000 Discs
There are some long-lost Armstrong works which probably would be in the \$1000 class.

In 1927, Walter Melrose, a music publisher, wanted to put out a sheet music trumpet folio featuring Armstrong's tunes, but Armstrong could not write his music down. So he went to Melrose's office and made four recording machine cylinders, which were turned over to a musician to be transcribed on paper.

Somehow the cylinders disappeared. Only last year, one was reported found in a New Jersey antique shop, whose owner said he got it at a farm auction. The record collector who claims to have found the one cylinder is still searching farmhouses and barns in the vicinity in hopes of locating the other three. These cylinders comprise what Hoefler terms "one of the most de luxe collecting items in jazz."

Rare Item
Another rare record, on the Perfect label, stems from a session by some musicians from Frankie Trumbauer's orchestra. They made a jazz version of "Three Blind Mice" and backed it with a popular tune of the day, "I'm More Than Satisfied." It was issued under the name of the Chicago Loopers and one of the "boys" happened to be the immortal trumpeter, the late Bix Beiderbecke.

In general, Hoefler says, the best collector's items are to be found on white label Vocalion, red Okeh, Gennett, QRS, and Paramount.

There are a few Paul Whiteman Victor and Columbia records that command premiums ranging from \$3 to \$5 because Beiderbecke was in the band. Also, a dozen or so Ted Lewis sides are worth from \$5 to \$10 each because of such musicians as Muggsy Spanier on trumpet; George Brunis on trombone; Teschemacher, Jimmy Dorsey or Benny Goodman on clarinet; or the late Fats Waller on piano.

Jelly Roll Morton
Other Victors which may be rare are some by Duke Ellington and the late Jelly Roll Morton. A Beale Smith record on Columbia's black label will bring from \$10 to \$20. One thing you're apt to find in



CANADIAN BALLET—Members of the Winnipeg Ballet offer a tableau of "Visages," their presentation in the Canadian Ballet festival at Toronto given by dance groups from six cities.

your attic is a bunch of discs by the original Dixieland jazz band. Do not get excited. They're old, yes—and they're important to jazz lovers. But the sad fact is that they are as common as dandelions, and—Hoefler says—are worth around 15 cents each.

If you don't find any rare items in your ancient stack, don't be discouraged. There are a few collectors who concentrate on one jazz tune,

setting out to get every version of that tune ever made. Typical choices are "St. Louis Blues," "Tiger Rag," or "High Society."

So even your copy of "Webfoot Willie and his Chug-A-Rum Jug Blowers" may be valuable—if Willie happens to be playing the right piece.

During his active career he had been president of the First National bank in Tillamook and in Medford.

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Empty Boat Baffles BC Police

VANCOUVER, B. C., Oct. 14 (CP)—A deep-sea mystery as puzzling as the unsolved disappearance of the crew of the famed Flying Dutchman is baffling provincial police today.

They are searching for the crew of the little flame-swept trawler found listing heavily late yesterday in a two-mile channel near Reed Island, off Vancouver Island's east coast.

The trawler was found by Fishboat Captain H. Peterson, of nearby Cortez Island. Peterson and his crew of the fishboat Dido managed to subdue the flames sweeping up from the vessel's waterline.

No Sign
But Peterson found no sign of the ill-fated fishboat's crew.

Stranraer Aircraft Pilot W. Peters of Vancouver joined in the search, flying over deserted beaches and nearby islands, but reported no sign of the crew.

The name of the charred trawler had been burned out on the vessel's bows.

"It might have been an explosion which caught the crew unaware," was the only explanation offered by Peters.

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