He Makes Money By Wrecking Music

By PETER RONALD

If you should happen to mention some evening that you're going to a performance by a musician named Lindley Armstrong Jones, very probably your listeners would stare at you in blank amazement, saying they'd never heard of the gentleman.

But just say that it's "Spike" Jones who's in town, chances are they'll want to come along with you — and find it utterly impossible to secure tickets.

* * *

Born at Long Beach, California, in 1911, Spike felt his initial urge along the musical path when, as a boy, he received a pair of drums as a Christmas gift — which might, or might not, be a warning to fond parents. In no time at all he was drum major in his High School Band; and shortly thereafter formed his own six-piece unit which sought engagements under the name of "Spike Jones and his Five Tacks."

Later on he played drums with various professional bands, and had a semi-permanent engagement as house drummer for a record-making concern. Here, after regular sessions of cutting records were over, he and a few of the other musicians used to get together and play as fancy dictated, introducing sundry weird and novel effects.

* * *

Records of some of these numbers were made, just for the players' own amusement, and the first of these to be offered to the public was a version of Red Wing. This was followed by items such as Behind Those Swinging Doors, Pass the Biscuits Mirandy and others — none of which attracted much attention or piled up any profits, although they are all now "collectors items."

The first real hit came more or less by chance. A number was wanted to go on the other side of a disc of I Wanna Go Back to West Virginia, so Spike and his bunch were hastily assigned to do Der Fuehrer's Face. They made not just one, but two, the second containing the now-famous "Bronx cheer" effect.

Somewhat to Jones' surprise this second version was the one selected by the record company—and that's how the whole thing started. The public went wild over the "razzberry" effect following each "Heil" and bought over a million copies of Der Fuehrer's Face.

Jones and his outfit were immediately offered juicy motion picture radio and recording contracts with the result that soon Jones was — as one writer put it—working 23 hours a day, making all the money in the world, and finding no time to spend any of it.

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Last year, thinking he could sense a souring of public taste toward straight "name" bands, he formed what he calls his "Musical Depreciation Revue." This is a travelling show that carries some forty people, only a dozen or so of whom are in any sense musicians. The show travels in two Pullman cars, and included in the outfit are, among other things, a couple of small pigs, a midget, a giant, a lady harpist who plays but one number and smokes a cigar while doing so, sick curtains including one which shows Beethoven sticking out his tongue at a criticism of what they are doing to his melodies and, last but by no means least, a collection of over 200 noisemaki gadgets of every description.

Just as an example of the strenuous life Jones leads, during just one week in Los Angeles his Revue played eight shows at the Philharmonic — and Spike also made a short moving picture, did his regular weekly broadcast, and found time to cut a few records on the side. It is said that his income runs as high as $165,000 gross per week — but it is also generally and freely admitted that he works hard for the money.

The whole show is built around the formula of taking a well known piece, such as Liebestraum or The Old Black Magic — then proceeding to wreck it by tossing in everything from old tin cans to police sirens. Anything can happen during a Spike Jones number, and usually does — like the one in which Spike suddenly fires a revolver shot into the air, and a flock of dead ducks falls to the stage, followed by a live specimen descending by means of a parachute.

It all sounds crazy, you say. Well it probably is. But anyway Spike Jones has already made over a million dollars out of it, with every prospect—unless the public should suddenly tire of the whole thing —of making a heap more. He owns a big limousine, which he never has a chance to drive — a costly house with swimming pool and all the accessories, which he never can find time to visit — and although he thinks more of his eight-year-old daughter than of anything else in the world, he only sees her about once every six months.

Operation "Mosquito" Is On at Camp Borden—Commander of this modified Wasp flame-thrower, Sgt. D. J. Read, fires a burst of insecticide into one of the mosquito breeding grounds on low-lying fringes of Camp Borden. It's part of a spring offensive to curb the winged terrors with a mixture of DDT, kerosene and waste oil. This prevents adult mosquitos emerging from their breeding grounds.

Three Minutes of Fiction Fun

SHORT SHORT STORY

That Smelly Old Pipe

By FRANCES DAVIDS

With the air of a deeply wounded man, Henry Little put on his coat and hat and stalked out of the house, slamming the door. He could take slurs on his person, but there was one thing on which he drew the line. He couldn't take insults to that faithful old companion, that sympathetic friend, that trusted comforter and unfailing cheerer-upper, his pipe.

Up to now Sarah's hints hadn't bothered him, but this morning she had ceased to hint. "How long," she had demanded tartly, "am I going to have to stand it?"

Henry's small, buttony brown eyes behind the pale plastic-rimmed spectacles noted the headlines with interest. "Bandit Holds Up Another Local Store." Well, well.

Sarah sniffed disapprovingly.

The police still hadn't caught the fellow, and this was the third holdup he had pulled.

". . . and when I saw that hole in the rug, I wanted to scream."

"What?" he asked guiltily, conscious that he had heard only part of Sarah's remarks.

"I said," she repeated exasperatedly, "I found a hole in the rug and ashes all over the sofa last night. Now, what are you going to do about it?"

"Me? Why, er—nothing, I guess," he said lamely.

"You certainly are," she cried angrily. She wagged a threatening finger. "I'm sick and tired of finding ashes all over the place. Now you get rid of that smelly old pipe, Henry Little, or I'll get rid of it for you!"

Reaching the store he unlocked the door and went in, put on his sweater and lit up his pipe. The brightly-labelled cans on the shelves, the fresh fruits and vegetables, the dairy products, the household items, all stood in their appointed places, like old friends. Today he would have to go through the stock and reprice some of the canned goods.

The door opened and a stocky young man came in, dressed in a dark coat with the collar up about his ears and a slouch hat down over his eyes. Dressed rather warmly for such a day, Henry thought. "Yes, sir, what can I do for you?" he asked pleasantly.

"Quiet in here today, isn't it?" the man said.

"Very," Henry agreed.

"Then put up your hands, bud, and open up that cash register," the man snarled, levelling a gun at Henry.

Henry almost fainted with surprise and shock. His knees rattled against each other, and he was powerless to move. "Come on, hurry up," the man said brusquely. The roof of Henry's mouth was so dry and parched he thought he would choke. What should he do? He couldn't fight with the man, who was younger and stronger—and besides, there was that ominous gun pointed at him.

With this terrible predicament facing him, he somehow noted that on the shelf a little beyond the bandit a can of pineapple juice was balanced precariously on another can and almost looked like it was going to fall. Henry watched it hopefully, and a wild, crazy idea formed in his mind.

Crash! The can fell to the floor, startling the thief so that he made an instinctive half-turn, and as he did so, Henry pulled out the pipe from his pocket and stuck it in the man's back. "Now put your hands up," he said hoarsely, and with as much menace as he could muster. The gun fell to the ground with a thud and Henry dragged it over with his foot and picked it up. "Go out the door and into the store next door," he ordered, his hand trembling. In the barber shop next door he told the astounded barber to call the police . . . .

It was on the front page of the Evening Clarion:

"LOCAL MERCHANT FOILS BANDIT. USES PIPE AS GUN."

All evening long people kept calling and telephoning to congratulate Henry, and late that night he sank gratefully onto the sofa and took out his pipe. Sarah, who had just come in, sniffed disapprovingly. "Henry, I—" She stopped short.

"Let me light it for you, dear," she said sweetly.

Rain To Order In 25 Minutes

Results from Australian experiments in "rainmaking" are generally regarded to be more significant than those achieved elsewhere in the world, according to chief of the radio physics division of the Australian Council for Scientific and Industrial Research, Dr. E. G. Brown.

Dr. Brown said that he was cautiously hopeful that rain-making would be successfully developed by artificial stimulation of clouds. Experiments had been made with eight different types of clouds. The most successful experiment occured almost 12 months ago when 300 pounds of dry ice, dropped from an aircraft into a cloud, produced a rain pillar covering 20 square miles in 45 minutes.

Latest experiments will involve the use of liquid substitute for dry ice. The plane, to be specially fitted, will carry several hundred gallons of the substitute which will be sprayed on selected clouds.

Output of Steel In Britain Soars

In the first quarter of this year the British steel industry has beaten the all-time output record set up in the Dunkirk period of the Battle of Britain in 1940.

From January to March, production ran at an annual rate of 14,933,000 tons. During March it was stepped up to 15,117,00 tons.

The news also has just come from the works of the steel company of Wales at Margam that the British and European pig iron production record was broken during the week of April 12-18. More than 5,400 tons of pig iron were produced from a single blast furnace—380 tons more than ever has previously been produced by any one blast furnace in Europe.

...THE GREEN THUMB...

By Gordon L. Smith

No Rush

A few days of warm sunshine seem to put a lot of people into a fever to get all their garden planted.

This is a mistake. Seed and plants are rushed in too hurriedly and there is liable to be neglect later on. In practically every section of the country both vegetables and flowers can be planted successfully at regular intervals right up to the end of June. It is far better to have things coming on periodically with a continuous supply of fresh vegetables and fresh flowers than to rush the whole garden in on a single afternoon. Go at the job gradually, advise those you know, get the soil properly prepared, and enjoy a succession of bloom and fresh vegetables.

Beets, carrots, beans, spinach, lettuce, radish, etc., can be planted every other week or so right up to late June. Flowers too, can be spread over several weeks. Bedding plants like petunias, zinnias, stocks, spider plants, tomatoes, cabbage, etc., should not be set out until all danger of frost is over. Tender things like gladioli, cannas, melons, squash, corn, etc., also come in this category.

Double Check

With certain things like potatoes, gladioli and other plants subject to soil carried disease, treatment just previous to planting is advisable. This kills spores of diseases, encourages quick growth and guards against rot and other diseases that may have wintered over in the soil.

For Autumn Salad

For autumn use, no salad green surpasses Pe-tsai, or Chinese cabbage as it is inaccurately called. It should not be sown until June or July, and then in the row. It is difficult to transplant. A lath or cheesecloth frame to shade it from intense sun may be advisable when the plants are still small.

Winter has a special salad, Witloof chicory. A real delicacy, it is well worth the space it occupies in the garden all season and in the house later. It is sown early, when the soil has been smoothly worked as if for carrots. After the seedlings have been thinned to stand about nine inches apart, they will require little attention until the season's end. They do need weeding though, until plants are big enough to shade these competitors.

In the fall the roots are dug up with a spading fork, trimmed of rootlets and cut back at the top to within an inch of the crown. Stored in the garden shed, a few at a time are taken into the cellar, replanted in soil and covered with light-excluding boxes or pots until they send up the compact little heads.

Diplomacy

Little Herman often visited his Uncle's store, where he had easy access to sweets, and, at times, innocently yielded to the temptation to help himself. Mother became aware of this, and remonstrated: "Now, you mustn't ask for anything, nor take anything, but wait till Uncle gives you something."

The next time Herman obeyed and waited a little and then said: "Uncle, I don't ask for anything, and I don't take anything, I just wait till you give me some." It worked.

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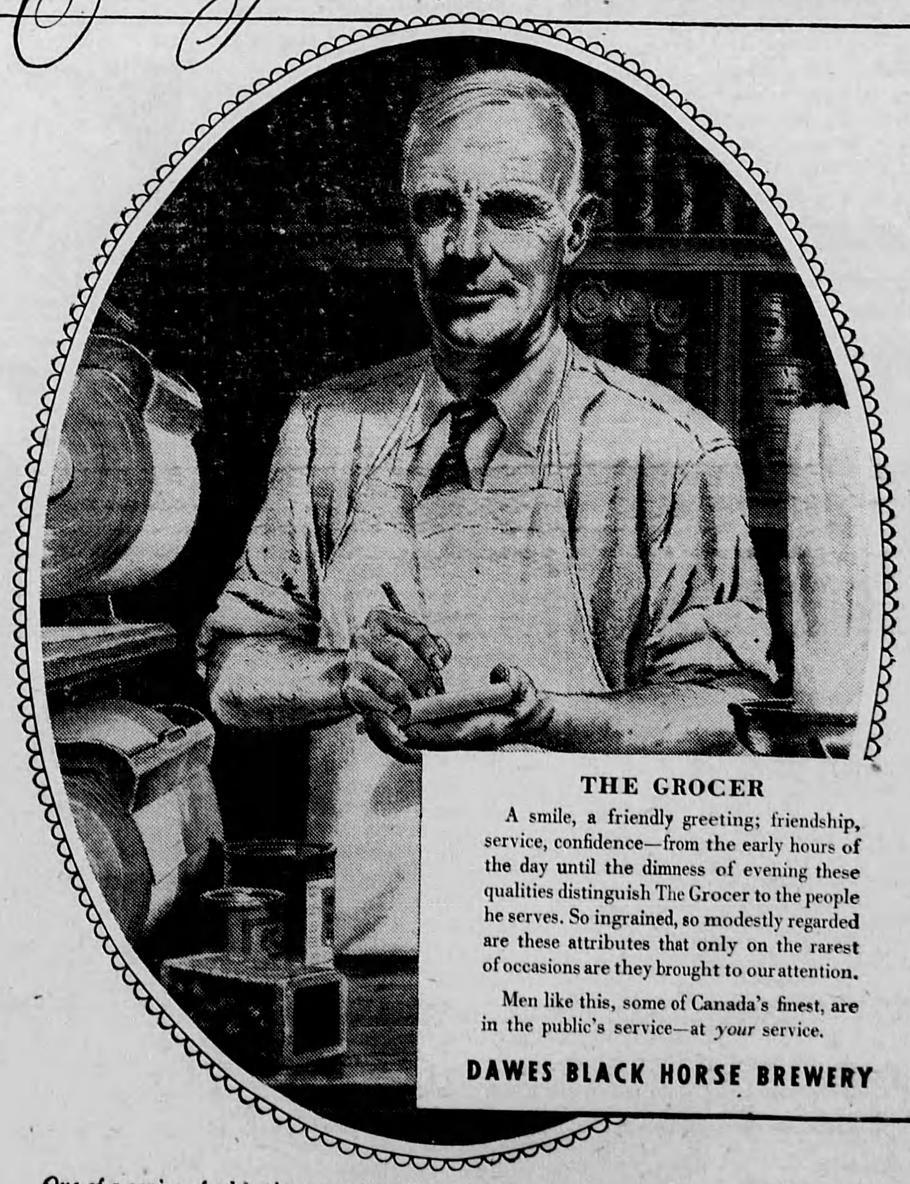

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