

is supposed to sound mysterious and exotic, but it doesn't go anywhere; it's merely boring.

Scott's playing has neither an authoritative jazz or Indian feeling; he doesn't do much more than fool around as if he weren't sure of what to do. He uses the lower register a lot, employing a breathy tone which probably reflects the influence of tenor saxophonist Ben Webster. (Webster is one of Scott's favorite musicians.)

It is understandable that an American record company should want to take advantage of the widespread interest in Indian music by making an LP such as this. I hope that those involved realize that esthetically it leaves much to be desired.

—Pekar

Sol Yaged

ONE MORE TIME—Lane LP154: *Winchester Cathedral*; *Wolverine Blues*; *Autumn Leaves*; *St. James Infirmary*; *Ain't Misbehavin'*; *Nagasaki*; *Crazy Rhythm*; *St. Louis Blues*; *Hindustan*.

Personnel: Ray Nance, cornet, violin, vocals; Yaged, clarinet; Dave Martin, piano; Sam Ulano, drums.

Rating: ★★ ★

This album of happy, good-time jazz, recorded live at New York's Gaslight Club, has as its chief claim to attention the presence of Ray Nance, a musician of genius.

The Gaslight Clubs is where Playboy got the idea from, but the decor and musical outlook stress nostalgia rather than the pseudo-contemporary. Yaged, who has been active on the New York scene for more than 20 years as a leader—always working, always picking good sidemen—knows how to get to an audience. No crusader, he plays for the people, but he always gives them jazz.

Sol has been in charge at the Gaslight for some three years, with stable personnel. Much of what the band serves up is obviously routine; the climaxes are built in. But while much is predictable, it's done with flair, and there are surprises, such as Nance's violin and Yaged's clarinet duetting on *Autumn Leaves*—unexpectedly sophisticated fare for such a menu.

Crazy Rhythm, which features the violin, is also a departure from the norm, which is a roisterous, extroverted mainstream-Dixieland format with frequent Nance vocals. The absence of a bassist demands hard work from Martin and Ulano. The pianist, a vastly experienced veteran, comps expertly and contributes jaunty solo work. The drummer, best known as a teacher, is a bit on the busy side, but he keeps firm time, which is the main thing.

Yaged has always emulated Benny Goodman, but not to the point of following B.G.'s changes in style and embouchure. Thus, he keeps alive a stage of Goodman that the originator has largely abandoned. He projects well and has a very nice sound, and his enthusiasm communicates, though his employment of cliché riffs and phrases sometimes jars. His work on *Wolverine* and *Hindustan* shows him at his best.

Nance is a marvel. A born entertainer, he does not shy away from a little show-biz here and there, but it's done with charm and taste. His fat, mellow cornet sound, varied with skilful use of mutes and natural dynamics, is a joy to hear,

and he had good chops on this session.

He even manages to make a piece of music of *Winchester*, with a disarming vocal. His ensemble leads are exceptional. On *St. James*, with plunger mute, he recaptures the spirit of Hot Lips Page, who owned this piece. His driving solo on *St. Louis* is a high point of the album, and his violin on the two aforementioned titles is lovely.

The loud applause and cheering after each number becomes irritating after a few hearings, but attests to the group's communicative powers. Records like this, showing a working group in its workaday surroundings, are currently rare. There are groups and clubs like this throughout the country, but none of the others have Ray Nance. His fans will want this record, available from Sam Ulano, 101 West 42nd St., New York N.Y. 10036.

—Morgenstern



RECORD BRIEFS

BY PETE WELDING

The effusions of several self-righteous rock writers to the effect that Los Angeles singer-composer-orchestrator Randy Newman is a genius are given the lie by his first album (Reprise 6286).

At best, Newman is the composer of a number of mildly interesting pieces of some sardonic charm. But even so, the determined diffidence of his approach to lyrics soon wears thin over a whole LP, and the impression with which one is left is that it is merely a stance or pose.

Newman's singing takes some getting used to; his attempts to vocalize with the same kind of laconic obliquity his lyrics possess has him sounding like Buddy Hackett. His orchestrations reveal solid craftsmanship but veer uncomfortably close to routine Hollywood—overelaborate, obvious, heavy-handed.

Like Van Dyke Parks, Newman seems a talented young artist who has run amok in the studio. Hopefully, he'll settle down. I'm sure I'll be branded obsolete by Newman's champions, but if this is the direction in which "art rock" is expected to go, I'd like to register a protest right now. There's little worse than deliberately underplayed pretentiousness.

Though considerably less talented (but much less pretentious) than Newman, the writing-performing team of Tommy Boyce and Bobby Hart seems almost refreshing

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