

NEW RECORD from page 1.

That Hindu Rag

SIDE ONE (27:53)

- Muslin Rag (1918),
Mel B. Kaufman
Melancholy Baby (1912),
Burnett & Bennett
That Hindu Rag (1910),
George L. Cobb
A Cakewalk Contest (1899),
Arthur Pryor
The Favorite (1904),
Scott Joplin
Shadow Time (1913),
Charles L. Johnson
Ragtime Travesty on Verdi's
"Il Trovatore" (1914),
Carleton L. Colby
Ghost Dance (1911),
Cora Salisbury
Bullfrog Blues (1916),
Shrigley & Brown
Bombs & Bullets: An
Explosion in Ragtime (1915),
Elmer G. Ruth

SIDE TWO (26:41)

- Smiles & Chuckles (1917),
F. Henri Klickmann
The Dallas Blues (1912),
Hart Wand
That Demon Rag! (1912),
Russell Smith
Chevy Chase (1914),
Eubie Blake
Great Scott Rag (1910),
James Scott
The Booster: An American
Absurdity (1913),
M. L. Lake
Palm Leaf Rag (1903),
Scott Joplin
Spirit of Independence (1912),
Abe Holzmann
They Didn't Believe Me (1916),
Jerome Kern

WORLD'S FAIR from page 1.

showcasing American history and achievement to visitors from every continent. In fact, some *forty million people* are expected to attend this, the largest and most spectacular world's fair ever undertaken! Millions will have the chance to hear "America's original music," as played by the Paragon Ragtime Orchestra during its tenure at the fair. Says U.S. Commissioner General Frederick M. Bush, "I am sure you will make America proud, as you represent the diversity that makes our nation so unique."

SPOTLIGHT ON...

JIMMY MUSTO: DR. OF DRUMOLOGY

by Leslie Cullen

The Paragon Ragtime Orchestra recreates the standard theatre orchestra of the early 1900's, and its relatively small size (twelve players) means that each part is important to the whole. But one of the most vital contributions to the ensemble comes from the percussion section. Aside from providing the steady beat and reinforcement of rhythms, this collection of instruments is the source of a wide variety of colorful sounds: the ping of the triangle, the crack of the pistol, the whoop of the slide whistle, and the clatter of the ratchet, to name but a few. For the PRO, one man, and one man alone, commands this arsenal of sound effects - Jimmy Musto, himself an appropriately unique and colorful character.

James Musto III grew up in the Jersey Shore town of West Long Branch, and is one of four sons (his brother Billy is the leader

see DRUMOLOGY page 3.

HARRY L. ALFORD: AN ARRANGER'S STORY

by Rick Benjamin

Without question the most under-appreciated link in the musical chain between the composer's brain and the listener's ear is that elusive musician called "the arranger." Most people have heard the term, yet few have more than a vague idea what it means. Basically, an arranger's job is to take an unfinished musical idea--usually a simple melody line--and create from it an artistically satisfying and commercially valuable finished product. It is a highly skilled line of work, requiring a thorough knowledge of harmony, counterpoint, and the technical possibilities (and limitations) of whatever instruments are needed. And since an arranger must add a considerable number of his own creative ideas to an arrangement, he should by necessity also be an excellent composer. All this must be done while preserving and *enhancing* the spirit or intent of the original musical idea. Arranging then, is a very demanding activity. Yet, historically, there has been little limelight for these practitioners.

Harry LaForrest Alford (1875-1939) was for many years one of America's best and busiest arrangers. Based in Chicago, Alford was the first to create his own large scale free-lance "Arranging Bureau," a revolutionary idea, since at that time (1904) arranging was considered to be, at best, a sideline for bandmasters or

WORTH NOTING...

"Where purity and morals are stressed, ragtime should find no resting place...let us purge America and the Divine Art of Music from this polluting nuisance!"



-Musical Observer Magazine
September, 1914

see ALFORD page 3.

ALFORD from page 2.

theater orchestra conductors. He was actually laughed at when, arriving in Chicago, he told musicians there that he intended to be a full time arranger. But this ridicule quickly subsided when Alford landed jobs scoring the pit-orchestra music for the famous Vaudeville comedienne Eva Tanguay (the "I Don't Care Girl"), and balladeer Carrie Jacobs-Bond (whose song *I Love You Truly* is still a standard). His ingenious and quirky arrangements made a sensation: soon just about everyone in the entertainment business wanted their music scored by Harry L. Alford. Between 1904 and 1924, the Alford Studios turned out some *thirty-four thousand* (34,000) separate arrangements!

Alford was as versatile as he was prolific. He arranged with equal skill music for theatre and dance orchestra, concert band, jazz groups, the vaudeville stage, and even for drum and bugle corps. Unfortunately most of his work, created as ephemera, is lost today, but what survives is a testimonial to his tremendous musicianship. He was noted for his use of unusual harmonies, as well as for his innovative style of orchestration. His work did much to expand the technique and "vocabulary" of several instruments, including the slide trombone (Alford's own instrument) and the percussion sec-

tion (his favorite). Alford could take even a simple melody and turn out a million-dollar hit, as he did in scoring *Melancholy Baby* (1912), *Let Me Call You Sweetheart* (1910), *I Ain't Got Nobody* (1916), *It Had to Be You* (1924), *Sweetheart of Sigma Chi* (1912), and *Down By the Old Mill Stream* (1910), to mention but a few. And his regular clients were the who's who of music and show biz: bandmasters John Philip Sousa, Arthur Pryor, Patrick Conway; ragtime composers Scott Joplin, Charles L. Johnson, and W.C. Handy; jazz figures such as Earl Fuller, and Isham Jones; and of course, innumerable vaudeville artists, among them young George Burns, who went on to fame and fortune upon heeding Alford's advice to "let Gracie do the funny stuff."

The peak of Harry L. Alford's career also marked the high point of the ragtime craze (1908-1918); his work in this musical style certainly did much to assure its success. Surprisingly, Alford claimed he did not really like ragtime--he much preferred the standard military march!

An enthusiast of the *avant garde*, Alford through the years stayed abreast of emerging trends in all fields. He revelled in the new: arranging the earliest "jass" and blues tunes, hiring architect

see ALFORD page 4.

DRUMOLOGY from page 2.

of the rock band *Billy and the Kids*.) His uncles were musicians, and when Jimmy was about eight years old, he got hold of a set of his cousin's drumsticks and taught himself to play a drum solo called *Wipeout*. His uncles were amazed, and convinced his parents that he should have music lessons. "My

parents begged me to play anything but the drums," Jimmy says, "but I just wasn't interested in anything else." Most of his serious studies were during the summers he spent with his uncle, George Tanous, who saw to it that he had private lessons - AND practised for them. Jimmy went on to earn degrees from Rhode Island College and The Juilliard School; today his performance credits are indeed diverse. He began playing with PRO in 1988, but in addition to his expertise in the ragtime style, his work ranges from classical to Middle Eastern to pop. He is currently the principal timpanist for several symphony orchestras; formerly he held the position of principal percussionist in the Mexico City Philharmonic. He also has done extensive work in opera and musical theater.

PRO uses many instruments that date back to the early 1900's, always searching for the greatest possible authenticity, and this meshes well with one of Jimmy's passions: the quest for vintage drum equipment. On tour, he seeks out antique and junk shops, and makes friends with the locals, hoping to hear tales of old drums sitting in attics. He feels strongly about salvaging these from dusty neglect. "I am inspired by collecting drums," Jimmy says, "I restore them to their original condition and give them new life." PRO provides a perfect setting for this purveyor of arcane sounds. And whether playing sound effects for a Charlie Chaplin movie, or cutting loose in a zany solo, Maestro Musto truly is the Doctor of Drumology!

THE OLD TYME MUSIC SCENE

Here's a store devoted entirely to antique records, sheet music, orchestrations, books, and ephemera. Highly recommended. R.B.

The Old Tyme Music Scene,
915 Main St., Boonton, N.J. 07005.
Telephone (201) 335-5040

CHANGE OF ADDRESS?
If you're moving and want to
continue receiving the
PARAGON
RAGTIME
NEWS,
drop us a postcard with your
new address. The Post Office
won't forward bulk rate mail!

ARLINGTON VA 22207-1003
2619 N POCOMOKE ST
MRS RUTH BOTTOMS

OCEAN GROVE, N.J. 07756
36 EMBURY AVENUE, SUITE 2
PAACON PACKAGE OFFICE
BUICK RATE US POSTAGE PAID
PERMIT # 11 OCEAN GROVE, NJ
07756

OCEAN GROVE, N.J. 07756
36 EMBURY AVENUE, SUITE 2
PAACON PACKAGE OFFICE

B U L L E T I N



Vol. 1

CHICAGO, ILLINOIS, APRIL, 1923

No. 2

(Courtesy Vince Giordano Collection)

ALFORD from page 3.

Frank Lloyd Wright to build for him an ultra-modern house, and composing his own numbers, one of which included a part for electric drill! In the 1920's Alford did a considerable amount of arranging for jazz bands, phonograph records, and the emerging medium of radio. Even during the Depression, when the commercial music trade was at a standstill, Alford stayed busy fostering America's emerging high school and college band movement.

Inspired by years of experience with the musical stage, Alford even went on to help invent the ubiquitous football half-time show! During the 1930's, he really came into his own as a composer and publisher, creating the beloved band marches *Purple Carnival* (for Northwestern University), and *Glory of the Gridiron* (for the University of Illinois).

A devoted family man, member of the Masonic order, and a musician known and admired throughout the nation, Alford worked vigorously until

the end. He suffered a fatal heart attack in his sleep on March 4, 1939, at the age of 64. He had just completed his last work, a march entitled *A Step Ahead*. Today, his name is still fondly remembered by those "in the business." He was an inspiration to a generation of young arrangers, many taking to heart his motto, "Anything you have a real desire to do, you have the capacity to do. Believe that, act upon your belief, and there is nothing you aspire to within your individual talents that you cannot become."