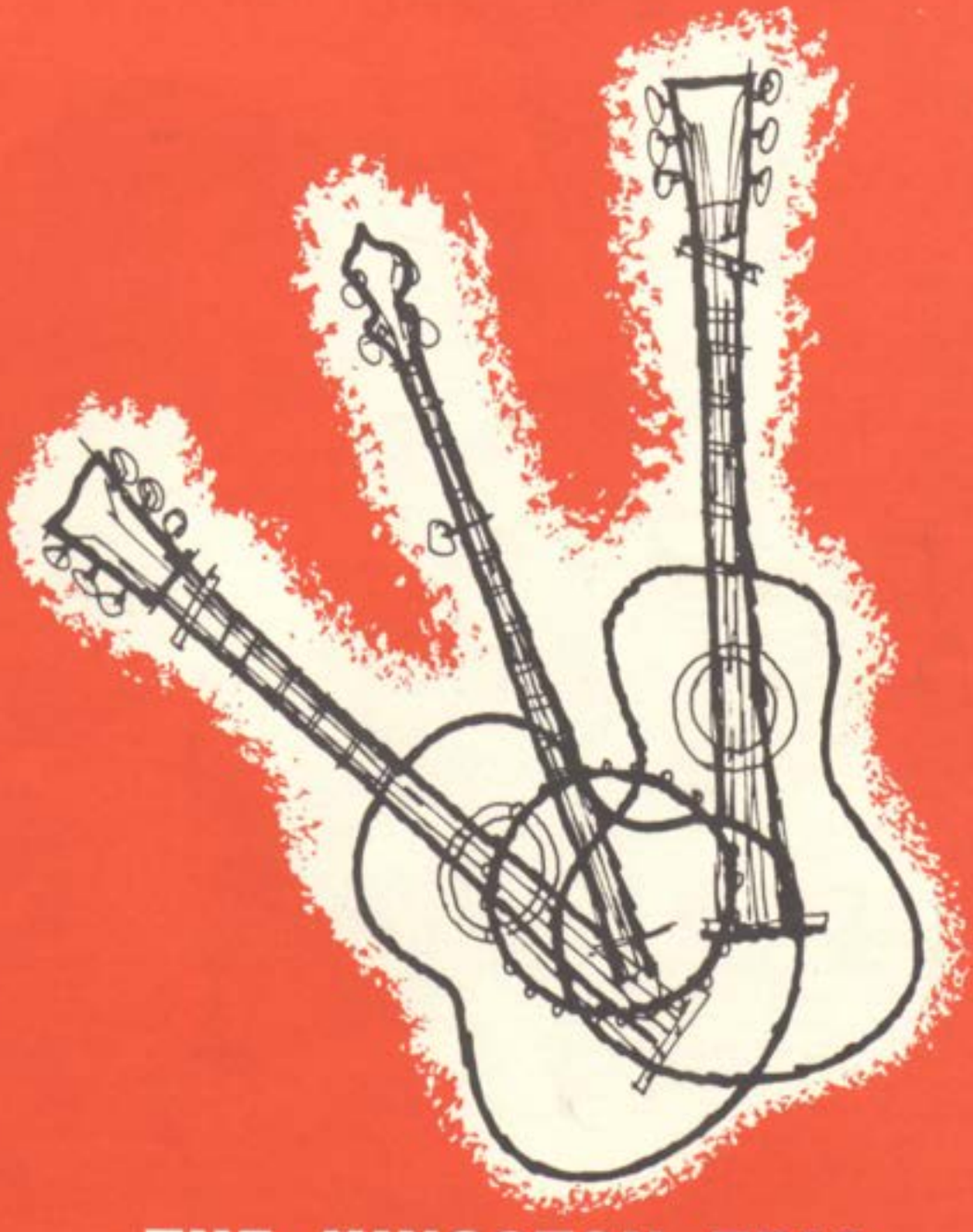
HAROLD DAVISON & NORMAN GRANZ

present



THE KINGSTON TRIO

AND

KENNY BALL'S JAZZMEN

THE KINGSTON TRIO

TO follow through the story of the Kingston Trio it is necessary to go back as far as the spring of 1957 and the campus of Stamford University in California. Near the University was a popular hangout called the Cracked Pot, and it was here that two young graduates from nearby Menlo College were singing and playing for a microscopic fee. Their names were Nick Reynolds and Bob Shane, and they had hit off a musical partnership with a Stamford student called Dave Guard. The Cracked Pot stays open till one o'clock in the morning, and one night at that bewitching hour the three young entertainers had a visitor in their dressing room. His name was Frank Werber, a San Francisco publicist. Werber had liked what he had heard and told the three boys so. A few hours later Werber had signed the unknown trio to a personal management contract. At this time the group had no identifying name, and a four-sided conference finally hit on the Kingston Trio, " because it sounded collegiate ", and also because at that time there was a considerable vogue for Calypso rhythms.

Werber immediately embarked on a grooming process. First he bought the three boys a tape recorder so that they could hear for themselves how bad they were as well as how good they were, and started sending them to regular sessions with one of San Francisco's most respected vocal coaches. Werber's aim was to get the act to develop three hours of continuous vocal material, which is a tall order even for a long-established group, never mind a brand new untried one. Slowly the three entertainers began to work out a method of presentation. Werber groomed them in stage deportment, and all four men spent long hours searching for the type of material that would best suit the talents of the act.

The Trio would meet every day in the storage loft of a building in the North Beach area of San Francisco. Here they practised their instrumental techniques, tried out vocal arrangements, discussed the possibilities of various material. This kind of meeting continued for several months, until at last Werber was convinced the time had come for a trial run. He arranged that the Trio should make its debut in a new San Francisco club called the Purple Onion. The idea was for the Trio to play an engagement there lasting one week. What followed is what usually follows in the early days of an unknown group which is destined for success.

At the end of the first week at the Purple Onion the proprietors extended the Kingston Trio's contract to cover another week, then another, then another. Eventually the Kingston Trio became virtually a resident attraction at the Purple Onion, staying there for seven consecutive months.

This initial success, though modest enough, was invaluable for many reasons. It earned the group publicity, and scored them their first favourable reviews. That meant that people in the profession were beginning to become aware for the first time of the existence of the group. During and just after the run at the Purple Onion, the Kingston Trio learned what it felt like to be approached by bookers and concert promoters all over the United States. But most important of all, the seven-month sustained success built up the confidence of the three boys. They had needed the reassurance that what they were doing they were doing well. Until the run at the Purple Onion they believed in themselves but could never be really sure that audiences would react in the same way.

If the proprietors of the Purple Onion had had their way, possibly the Kingston Trio might still be the resident attraction there. It is certainly true that the seven months might have been spread into a much longer run had the Kingston Trio desired it. But the boys, after talking it over with Werber, felt the time had come for something a little more ambitious. Werber agreed and began to set up a national tour for the group.

The Kingston Trio hit the road in the winter of 1957 and headed steadily East, right through to the summer of 1958. Their act appeared on concert stages and in night clubs, including the Blue Angel in New York and Mr. Kelly's in Chicago. It was during 1958 that the Trio also made its first TV. appearance, starting at the top on the highly successful series " Playhouse 90 ". This was on May 1st, 1958, when the play was

" Rumors of Evening ". The boys played World War II pilots as well as singing.

Later that summer the Kingston Trio turned round and headed back home again, and played a four-month engagement in San Francisco's " Hungry i " club. The whole time they were there the " Standing Room Only " sign became a permanent fixture of the club. It was while they were singing and playing for the Hungry i audiences that their first LP album was released. They had cut it some months before, and although it now sold well with people who had been lucky enough to catch the act during its long tour during the previous winter and spring, the general public was still pretty unaware of the existence of the Kingston Trio. The album sold moderately well, but there were no sales records being broken. At the end of the four months in San Francisco, the Trio accepted an offer to play at the Royal Hawaiian in Honolulu. To the three boys this was a kind of working vacation.

It was while they were away that the action began which was to transform them from a group with a purely local fame into a national and even an international act. In Salt Lake City there is a radio station known as KLUB. It was there that two disc jockeys called Bill Terry and Paul Colburn began playing one of the songs from the Kingston Trio's first long-playing album. This one song got repeated plays on the KLUB station's turntables, and Terry and Colburn soon discovered that listeners wanted more of the group. It was not much longer before other disc jockeys in other parts of America noticed what Terry and Colburn were doing. Soon the song of the Trio began to get played all over the place. Then one of the executives of Capitol Records phoned Werber in Hawaii and told him to get the group back to the States as soon as possible. " It looks like you're going to have the record of the year," said the executive, and the prediction proved perfectly correct. The single song which Terry and Colburn had spotted in the first Kingston Trio LP was called *Tom Dooley*.

By the time the Trio had returned from Hawaii *Tom Dooley* was at Number One in the Hit Parade. Success breeds success, and Milton Berle, Perry Como, Dinah Shore, Patti Page and Garry Moore had all signed the Kingston Trio for appearances on their television shows. In addition, all the most famous night clubs were bidding for personal appearances.

It would have been easy for the Kingstons to have ridden the wave of success they had created, but they had decided long before this that the kind of material they were singing and the style in which they tried to put it across would be best appreciated by the kind of audiences who might be able to give a little more thought to the matter than most popular audiences do. The Kingston Trio remembered how they began in the Cracked Pot, playing to people who were almost exclusively the same as they were, college students and graduates. For these reasons Werber now began booking the boys into as many college and university concerts as he possibly could. The new policy gave the itinerary a look of college sandwiched with night club, of university sandwiched with television studios. During the winter of 1958-59 the Kingston Trio averaged one college concert every two days.

The success of the group eventually demanded wider attention, and *Life* magazine ran three stories on the Kingston Trio in one twelve-month period. *Tom Dooley* earned the group its first Gold Record, the trophy which means that a recording has passed the one million sales mark, and soon there were other hits almost as sensational, particularly *Tijuana Jail* and *M.T.A.* Other trophies followed in quick succession. They were elected by disc jockeys as " Best Group of the Year " in both *Billboard* and *Cash Box*. They were chosen by the Ballroom Operators of America as " Best Show Attraction of the Year ". They won two " Grammys ", which are the record business's equivalent of Hollywood's " Oscar " awards, and perhaps most remarkable of all, they have five plaques, each one acknowledging that one of their albums has sold more than a million copies.

While the Kingston Trio was rising so rapidly up the Show Business Scale they met a young singer and songwriter named John Stewart. He soon became a vital part of the organisation, writing songs like *Molly Dee* and *Green Grasses*, and doing many vocal arrangements. Stewart became close friends with all three members of the Trio, who followed his career with anxious interest when he joined a new folk-singing group called the Cumberland Three.

In 1961, the Kingston Trio went on a tour of Australia, New Zealand, Japan and the South Seas, and it was on their return that they had their first change of personnel. Dave Guard decided to strike out on his own, and the replacement was obvious. Within a few days Stewart

had been drafted into the Kingston Trio. The feelings of the two remaining members of the group over this change is best summed up by quoting what they said about it at the time. "John was a natural," said Nick Reynolds. "He's not only a talented performer and swinging musician, but he has that great personal quality of contagious enthusiasm that means so much to your performance." Bob Shane added, "And he gives us that extra solid sound we've been looking for for a long time. We've known John for so long and worked so closely with him that we know there's no problem of tension or temperament. That's a rare quality in this business."

One aspect of the Kingston Trio's activities is perhaps less well known than their public appearances and recordings. They have several other business interests. For instance, they take a personal part in the running of their music publishing company, and follow very closely their interests in their land development business and their real estate holdings. They also own the Trident, a restaurant just across the Golden Gate Bridge from San Francisco, and have also been involved in merchandising men's clothing, shirts, slacks, belts and raincoats.

But despite these wise investments, the main interest of the Kingston Trio remains the music they sing and play for audiences. They continue to devote the same intense study to their work as they did when they sat in that San Francisco storage loft trying to work out the most effective way of blending their talents into a single entity. That was only five years ago, but in that comparatively short time the Kingston Trio has come further than many similar acts travel in their entire lives.

BOB SHANE

Born Hilo, Hawaii, son of a wholesale distributor of toys and sporting goods. Sang in School Glee Club and appeared in several school plays, learning the ukelele and picking up various Polynesian songs. Graduated from Punahou School in Honolulu in 1952, and came to the mainland to study Business Administration at the Menlo Park School in California. Graduated there in 1956 and returned to Hawaii. Began working in Honolulu night clubs, singing and doing impersonations. Then returned to California where he joined forces with Nick to form the nucleus of the Kingston Trio.

Favourite singers, Frank Sinatra and Harry Belafonte. Hobbies include shooting, at which he has won several trophies.

Lives in Tiburon, California, married, one daughter aged nearly three.

NICK REYNOLDS

Born San Diego, California, son of a captain in the U.S. Navy who is now retired, but who still plays some guitar now and then. Educated at Coronado High School, where he graduated in 1951. Continued studies at San Diego State College and University of Arizona. Later transferred to Menlo College, where he met Bob Shane. Took his degree in Business Administration, 1957.

Hobbies include sports cars, photography and business affairs. Like Bob Shane, holds several medals and trophies for shooting, including the Hawaii State Skeet Shooting Championship, and also tied for the California State Skeet Shooting Championship.

Married, with one son aged three.

JOHN STEWART

Born San Diego, California, son of a well-known racehorse trainer. Attended Mt. San Antonio College in California. Began as a rock and roll singer, but after hearing the Kingstons at the Los Angeles County Fair started writing material for them and finally joined them in 1961, taking Dave Guard's place. Before that had toured with the Cumberland Three, sharing the bill with comedian Shelley Burman.

Hobbies include ski-ing, skin-diving and tennis. Has a younger brother who plays guitar.

Married, with one son aged one year.

THE KINGSTON TRIO
SANG & PLAYED

Wagon Man.
Charlie.
Chilly Winds.
Green Backed Dollar.
Tom Dooley.
Winoruch.
Where have all the flowers gone.
Saints.

KENNY BALL'S JAZZMEN
PLAYED

Panama Rag.
West End Blues.
Casablanca.
Waterloo.
Frankie & Johnny.
Finger Buster.
Riverboat Shuffle.
Wabash Cannonball.
Tiger Rag

A SALLE PRODUCTIONS PRESENTATION

KENNY BALL'S JAZZMEN

THE habits of audiences are wondrous to behold. There is no known law by which anybody can anticipate their preferences, and no way of explaining how they change their minds. Thirty years ago the style of jazz known as Chicago was something appreciated only by the musicians themselves. In Britain it would have been quite unheard of for anybody to attempt to present this type of jazz to a mass audience. Ten years later the same was true, and ten years after that it was still true. Why this should have been nobody can say, except there seems to be some obscure process by which the lay ear catches up with musical developments about a generation after those developments have taken place. Possibly in 1984 the teenagers of the day will go about happily whistling flattened fifth chords and flocking in their thousands to hear English pop groups whose style is based on what Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie were doing in the late 1940s.

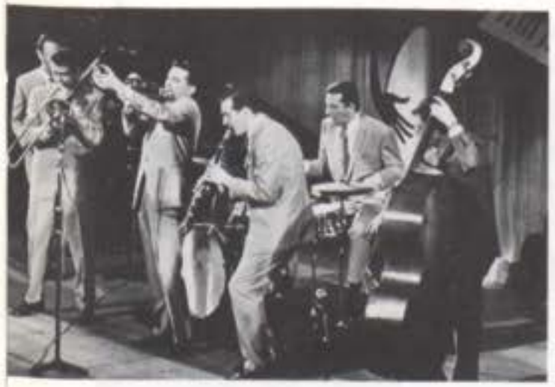
In Britain in the last few years the Trad fad has been one of the most surprising phenomena of the world of music. Indeed, so popular has the older type of jazz become that it has led to certain confusions in relation to the music itself. When people use the word Trad in connection with the invasion of variety halls by musicians attempting to play jazz, they are usually referring to an approach which may loosely—very loosely—be termed New Orleans style. But the latest of these jazz-orientated groups to become widely popular, the Kenny Ball band, does not seem to me to fit into this category very comfortably. There is a world of difference between the early primitives and the Chicagoans, in feeling, in intent, in technique, and in overall atmosphere. The Chicago style is tighter, tenser, more brash, more violent, and characterised by more concentration on the individual solo abilities of the musicians involved. Although these differences sound vague enough when put into words, there is no mistaking the contrast between, say, Kenny Ball's band and those of the other leaders associated with the Trad craze.

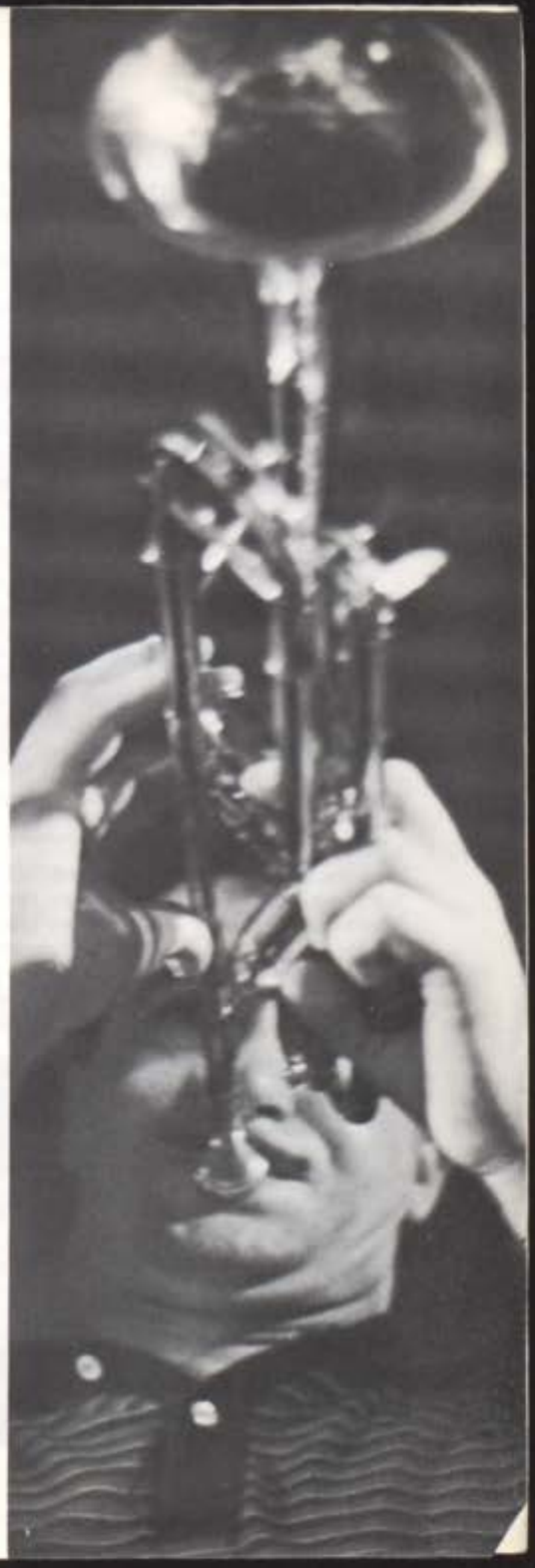
For one thing, Ball lies nearer to the heart of jazz than his rivals on the Hit Parade. He does not dress his men up to look like oafish clowns, and the general standard of musical ability in the band is rather higher. But it is this question of style which really marks the difference. Ball's band is a reflection of the playing of veterans like Condon, Kaminsky, Spanier and the rest of that amazing team which has proved to have so long an active life. Never having met Kenny Ball, I have not the faintest idea whether he knows the great Chicago jazz recordings by heart, but it is very clear that he has steeped himself the music of the bootleg era, with, of course, the one necessary qualification that Louis Armstrong has dominated much of his thought and even tempted him to sing.

I remember one day about four years ago I met a musician friend of mine who was dabbling in the agency game. I asked him how he was doing and who he had on his books, apart from jugglers, fire-eaters and impressionists (mimics, not painters). He said things were OK, and that he had a Trad band which didn't earn big fees but was in its unobtrusive way bringing in a good turnover. "They work twenty-five, twenty-eight time a month," my friend said. "And with the style they play, who knows, they may be big before you can look round."

The band he was referring to was Kenny Ball's. Indeed, that was the first time I ever remember hearing the name. I think it must have been soon after this conversation that the Ball band began to move out of the minor jazz club circuits and start to do the more lucrative kind of work. I remain unconvinced by the theories that are supposed to make show business fortunes. I do not believe that a few men can sit in a back room and plan a successful assault on the public ear. There are public relations men and advertising touts who will tell you that this has been done, but as they are only public relations men and advertising touts, their word need not be taken seriously. The ascent of Ball was an accident, as all musical ascents are. It just happened. The interesting thing was, how it happened and what the ingredients were that made it happen.

Ball's actual musical performance remained undiluted after he started to succeed. It was still





an attempt to duplicate the sounds first produced in the days of the Chicagoans. When he signed to record for the Pye company, there was only one change of tactics, but that change and the success it caused has a moral for many people. All Ball did was to change the repertoire. The style remained the same. Instead of playing *Milenberg Joys* or *Riverboat Shuffle*, the group recorded *The Teddy Bear's Picnic*. As there is no such thing as exclusively jazz or non-jazz material, this in itself was a point of no artistic importance. But it hit the public right between the eyes because it had heard of *The Teddy Bear's Picnic* and could identify itself with the Ball recording.

The rest was plain sailing, if riding a torrent can ever be called plain sailing. *Teddy Bear's Picnic* was followed by *Samantha*, which, after all, was first played by Armstrong himself. The sales figures began to rise so high that they passed out of the jazz orbit altogether and entered the Drivel Stakes. Then came another recasting of alien material in the Chicago mould. *March Of The Siamese Children* became the best-selling British record. Since then there have been numerous other pieces of the same type, including Dmitri Tiomkin's *Green Leaves Of Summer*. Presumably this succession of Chicago-style recordings of popular material has some way to run.

Having been made aware at an early age of Bud Freeman's Chicagoans, the Muggsy Spanier Ragtimers, the Condon and Teagarden groups, and the rest of the vintage Chicago performances, it is simply not feasible that I would ever rate the Ball band as of true significance in the context of world jazz. But in this obvious opinion, I am no doubt supported by Ball himself who, like all British jazzmen, could not have done so much had he harboured any illusions about himself. But what the Ball band does suggest is that there is nothing terrifying about jazz, and that if only the listening public would spare it a little time and thought, many of its complexities would resolve themselves without any trouble at all. Admittedly to use the phrase "a little time", when it has been thirty-odd years from the death of Bix to the birth of the Ball cult, but better late than never.

The last observation of mine concerns the tendency of people who know nothing about jazz to lump all the commercial successes together in one heap. Even the official Ball publicity handouts describe this band as a "Trad" group. No doubt this misuse of words is entirely necessary from the sales exploitation point of view, but it is inaccurate for all that. It is hard to see what "tradition" most so-called Trad bands are following, unless it is the tradition by which a man stops at nothing to get himself noticed. The Ball band is linked with Chicago rather than New Orleans. For that reason its style is different from that of most of its so-called rivals. It is further along the road of jazz evolution than you-know-who. As a matter of fact it is only thirty years behind the times, which accounts at least partly for its amazing success over the last three or four years. And in case readers may take that remark as a stricture, let me remind them that being thirty years behind the times is no crime. It is a question of styles, and Ball has chosen a style to reproduce that is one of the most exciting in all jazz history.

programme notes by **BENNY GREEN**

FOR HAROLD DAVISON LTD.
Tour Manager . . . DOUGIE TOBUTT
Press & Publicity Arrangements JACK HIGGINS

In accordance with the requirements of the London County Council and the Watch Committees of the various towns and cities of the tour, the following conditions must be observed:—

1. The public may leave at the end of the performance by all exit and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be open.
2. All gangways, corridors, staircases and external passageways intended for exit shall be kept entirely free from obstruction whether permanent or temporary.
3. Persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any of the other gangways or any unseated space in the Auditorium, unless standing in such space has been specially allowed by the L.C.C. or the Watch Committee, as applicable. If standing be permitted in the gangways at the sides and the rear of the seating it shall be limited to the numbers indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.
4. The safety curtain must be lowered and raised once immediately before the commencement of each performance, so as to ensure it being in proper working order.

The Management reserve the right to change the programme without notice and are not held responsible for the non-appearance of any artist.

Programme designed by Jack Higgins.
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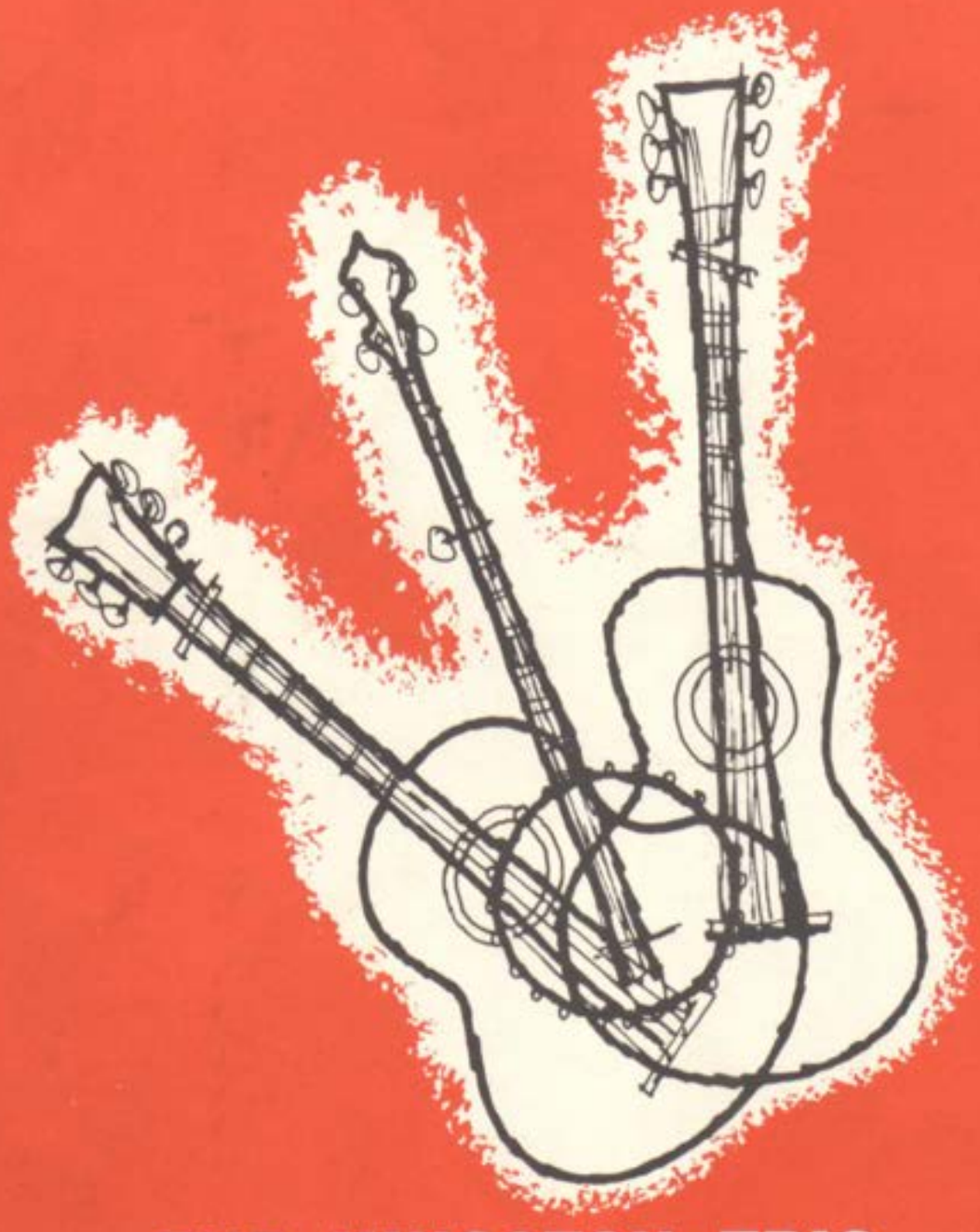
HAROLD DAVISON & NORMAN GRANZ

present



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