

(Tribune Color Studio photo.)

**Swingmaster**  
**Johnnie Davis**  
of the movies.

## WHAT IS SWING?

- Swing is old gin in new bottles.
- Swing is indubitably music.
- Swing addicts infect one another.
- . . . A swing fan all by himself is likely to be a rather tame phenomenon.
- Blood pressure and heart action are affected by musical experience. This is especially true of swing.
- Swing deals largely with eroticism . . . hence its restlessness, pain, and gloom, its mad excitements, its profound despairs.
- When you hear swing music you are touched, literally, physically touched by the impact of various types of sound waves on the cutaneous organs of the ear.
- Is swing here to stay? Probably not. Two years hence sweet little tunes once more may be tops in popularity.

# This Mad Thing Called Swing!

By EDWARD BARRY

**A** FEW YEARS AGO dance music went completely mad. Saxophones wailed dementedly, trumpets cut like knives through masses of sticky tone, frenzied drums built meter upon meter until the minds of listeners literally weakened with excitement.

- Here was old gin in new bottles. Here was the unfettered jaz of the first two decades of the century back with us under a new name—swing! Jaz had grown steadily less clamorous, had been all but buried under the vogue of "sweet" dance music. Now it burst forth again to continue its development—to add new tone colorings, new rhythmic wrinkles, new sophisticated twists of melody and harmony. The emphasis was again on improvisation, on that wildly imaginative ornamentation or development that might appear spontaneously during a rehearsal and be caught and frozen into permanent form by an arranger.
- All over the land swing bands sprang up. They pounded at listeners' brains, blasted away at ear drums which had become delicate with too much experience with the Wayne Kings of the world. The vogue of the new music has become all but universal. Daughter Swing, unlike Mother Jaz, enjoys surprising social standing. Not only in smoky dives and cross-roads dance halls, but at expensive parties and in gold-plated hotels, these saxophones are crying and these brasses shouting.

● The most interesting thing about swing always has been the behavior of listeners. The music has stirred shoulders and feet and whole bodies to madness. People have jigged and bounced, dashed into the aisles of theaters to sway and to dance. They have yelled great, open-mouthed yells full of a strange, junglelike menace. Swing-crazed youngsters at Manhattan Beach near New York once dug holes in the ocean sand and churned the waters of the Atlantic with their wild capering.

● At a Benny Goodman concert in staid Ravinia park evolution went smack into reverse when gibbering young fellows returned to the trees and scrambled madly skyward. However, scientific caution requires acknowledgment here of the possibility that this last phenomenon may have been due to the simple desire of the customers to get a better view of the proceedings.

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● Why? Why? Why? Why all this commotion and shouting and running amok? Are the effects of swing something beyond human understanding, something which must be tabled as unique and given no more thought?

● Not at all! The effects of swing should be examined in the light of present-day knowledge of the effects of music, for swing, despite all its eccentricities, is indubitably music. The frequent statements of its enemies that swing is *not* music are hardly to be taken literally. What these enemies mean is that swing is *not good* music, and that is a question (Continued on page five.)



(Tribune photo.)



(Acme photo.)



(Tribune photo.)

And here we see the effects of swing music on youth! The sight of a few giddy youngsters beginning to wiggle their shoulders (a sight never seen at symphony concerts) acts as a spark on the youthful tinder all about.