

TANGO BANDS IN WAR WITH JAZZ AT PARIS CAFES

Negroes' Gleanings Are Cut
as Argentines Enter
Challenge.

BY RALPH HEINZE
United Press Staff Correspondent

PARIS, Feb. 15.—It's a war to the death between American jazz and Argentine tango bands with Paris as the battlefield.

The present mortality rate is about one jazz band a week, but with the hundreds of American bands in service in Paris, and with hundreds of other French jazz bands in reserve, the war threatens to be a long and noisy one.

A few years ago, American jazz bands were supreme in Paris from the palatial restaurants around the Madeleine to the dance halls atop Montmartre.

In some theaters, the ordinary orchestras were given notice, the pit raised and Negro jazz bands put to work between acts. Paris became noisier than it had been at any time in history.

The stately French dances disappeared entirely. Jazz bands conquered the country and even on the greatest of French national fete, the anniversary of Bastille Day, July 14, such music replaced that of the accordion and clarinet for street corner dancing.

Naturally, the demand exceeded the supply and American Negro musicians were asking and getting unusually high salaries.

It was not unusual, for a band of five musically inclined Negroes to play in three or four theaters and restaurants in the course of the day and night, banking away each week total checks for 50,000 francs.

News of the earnings must have been carried to the Pampas, for last year saw the start of the war and this winter finds tango bands and jazz battling on even terms.

There is no hiding the fact that Paris is as tired of jazz as is America. Until America exports something new in music, Paris will continue to turn for its dance music towards the Argentine singing bands, which have capitalized the trend of favor by changing the tempo so that Charleston inclined dancers can strut their stuff to the modernized tango.

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THE "CANARY" MURDER CASE

by S. S. VAN DINE AUTHOR

THE STORY THUS FAR
The jewel case was opened with a steel knife after being battered with a poker. And this puzzles Vance when he heard the story of the killing of Margaret Odell. Finger-print lead to Skeel's arrest, and Vance indicates he has a theory of his own. The story continues in the "Canary's" apartment when the murder was committed. Markham, the police and Skeel give evidence. Skeel's theory and Vance's notion that the crime was committed by a man of means is given, and interesting time proceeds to explain how he arrived at his conclusion.

CHAPTER XXIV
"Y KNOW, Markham," Vance began, in his emotionless drawl, "every genuine work of art has a quality which the critics call elan—namely, enthusiasm and spontaneity.

"A copy, or imitation, lacks the distinguishing characteristic; it's too perfect, too carefully done, too exact.

"Even enlightened soi-disant of the law, I fancy, are aware that there is bad drawing in Botticelli and dispositions in Rubens, what?

"In an original, d' ye see, such flaws don't matter. But an imitator never puts 'em in; he doesn't dare—he's too intent on getting all the details correct.

"The imitator works with a self-consciousness and a meticulous care which the artist, in the throes of creative labor, never exhibits.

"And here's the point: there's no way of imitating that enthusiasm and spontaneity that elan—which an original painting possesses.

"However closely a copy may resemble an original, there's a vast psychological difference between them. The copy breathes an air of insincerity, of ultra-perfection, of conscious effort. . . . You follow me, eh?"

"Most instructive, my dear Ruskin."

Vance meekly bowed his appreciation, and proceeded pleasantly.

"Now, let us consider the Odell murder. You and Heath are agreed that it is a commonplace, brutal, sordid, unimaginative crime.

"But unlike you two bloodhounds on the trail, I have ignored its mere appearances, and have analyzed its various factors—

"I have looked at it psychologically so to speak. And I have discovered that it is not a genuine and sincere crime—that is to say, an original—but only a sophisticated, self-conscious and clever imitation, done by a skillful copyist."

"I grant you it is correct and typical in every detail. But there is where it fails, don't you know. Its technique is too good, its craftsmanship too perfect. The ensemble, as it were, is not convincing—it lacks elan.

"Esthetically speaking, it has all the earmarks of a tour de force. Vulgarly speaking, it's a fake."

He paused and gave Markham an engaging smile. "I trust this somewhat oracular pronouncement has not bored you."

"Pray continue," urged Markham, with exaggerated politeness. His manner was jocular, but something in his tone led me to believe that he was seriously interested.

"What is true of art is true of life," Vance resumed placidly.

"Every human action, d' ye see, conveys unconsciously an impression either of genuineness or of spuriousness—of sincerity or calculation.

"For example two men at table eat in similar way, handle their knives and forks in the same fashion, and apparently do the identical things.

"Although the sensitive spectator cannot put his finger on the points of difference, he none the less senses at once which man's breeding is genuine and instinctive and which man's is imitative and self-conscious."

He blew a wreath of smoke to

ward the ceiling, and settled more deeply into his chair.

"Now, Markham, just what are the universally recognized features of a sordid crime of robbery and murder? . . .

"Brutality, disorder, haste, ransacked drawers, cluttered desks, broken jewel-cases, rings stripped from the victim's fingers, severed pendant chains, torn clothing, tipped-over chairs, upset lamps, broken vases, twisted draperies, strewn floors, and so forth.

"Such are the accepted immemorial indications—eh, what?

"But—consider a moment, old chap. Outside of fiction and the drama, in how many crimes do they all appear—all in perfect ordination, and without a single element to contradict the general effect?

"That is to say, how many actual crimes are technically perfect in their settings? . . . None! And why? Simply because nothing actual in this life—nothing that spontaneous and genuine—runs to accepted form in every detail.

"The law of chance and fallibility invariably steps in."

He made a slight indicative gesture.

"But regards this particular crime: look at it closely. What do you find?

"You will perceive that its mis-en-scene has been staged, and its drama enacted, down to every minute detail—like a Zola novel.

"It is almost mathematically perfect. And therein, d' ye see, lies the irresistible inference of its having been carefully premeditated and planned.

"To use an art term, it is a tickled-up crime. Therefore, its conception was not spontaneous. . . . And yet, don't you know, I can't point out any specific flaw; but for its great flaw lies in its being flawless. And nothing flawless, my dear fellow, is natural or genuine."

Markham was silent for awhile.

"You deny even the remote possibility of a common thief having murdered the girl?" he asked at length; and now there was no hint of sarcasm in his voice.

"If a common thief did it," continued Vance, "then there's no science of psychology, there are no philosophical truths, and there are no laws of art."

"If it was a genuine crime of robbery, then, by the same token, there is no difference whatever between an old master and a clever technician's copy."

"You'd entirely eliminate robbery as the motive, I take it."

"The robbery," Vance affirmed, "was only a manufactured detail."

"The fact that the crime was committed by a highly astute person indicates unquestionably that it was a common thief."

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there was a far more potent motive behind it.

"Any man capable of so ingenious and clever a piece of deception is obviously a person of education and imagination; and he most certainly would not have run the stupendous risk of killing a woman unless he had feared some overwhelming disaster—unless, indeed, he continuing to live would have caused him greater mental anguish, and would have put him in greater jeopardy, even than the crime itself."

"Between two colossal dangers, he chose the murder as the lesser." Markham did not speak at once; he seemed lost in reflection.

But presently he turned and, fixing Vance with a dubious stare, said:

"What about that chiseled jewel-case? A professional burglar's Jimmy, wielded by an experienced hand, doesn't fit into your esthetic hypothesis—it is, in fact, diametrically opposed to such a theory."

"I know it only too well," Vance nodded slowly.

"And I've been harried and hectored by that steel chisel ever since I beheld the evidence of its work that first morning...."

"Markham, that chisel is the one genuine note in an otherwise spurious performance. It's as if the real artist had come along at the moment the copyist had finished his faked picture, and painted in a single small object with the hand of a master."

"But doesn't that bring us back inevitably to Skeel?"

"Skeel—ah yes. That's the explanation, no doubt; but not the way you conceive it."

"Skeel ripped the box open—I don't question that; but deuce take it—it's the only thing he did do: it's the only thing that was left for him to do."

"That's why he got only a ring which La Bella Marguerite was not wearing that night. All her other baubles—to-wit, those that adorned her—had been stripped from her and were gone."

"Why are you so positive on this point?"

"I'd grant you it is correct and typical in every detail. But there is where it fails, don't you know. Its technique is too good, its craftsmanship too perfect. The ensemble, as it were, is not convincing—it lacks elan."

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"The poker, man—the poker! . . . Don't you see? That amateurish assault upon the jewel-case with a cast-iron coal-prodder couldn't have been made after the case had been pried open—it would have had to be made before."

"And that seemingly insane attempt to break steel with cast iron was part of the stage-setting."

"The real culprit didn't care if he got the case open or not. He merely wanted it to look as if he had tried to get it open; so he used the poker and then left it lying beside the dented box."

"I see what you mean." This point, I think, impressed Markham more strongly than any other Vance had raised; for the presence of the poker on the dressing table had not been explained away either by Heath or Inspector Brenner.

"Is that the reason you questioned Skeel as if he might have been present when your other visitor was there?"

"Exactly. By the evidence of the jewel-case I knew he either was in the apartment when the bogus crime of robbery was being staged, or else had come upon the scene when it was over and the stage director had cleared out."

"From his reaction to my questions I rather fancy he was present."

"Yes. That would account for the closest not having been disturbed."

"As I see it, it wasn't ransacked, for the simple and rather grotesque reason that the elegant Skeel was locked within."

"How else could that one clothespress have escaped the rifling activities of the pseudo-burglar?"

"He wouldn't have omitted it deliberately, and he was far too thoroughgoing to have overlooked it accidentally—Then there are the finger-prints on the knob...."

Vance lightly tapped on the arm of his chair.

"I tell you, Markham, old dear, you simply must build your conception of the crime on this hypothesis, and proceed accordingly."

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