

Go Western . . .

By ROY WRIGHT

"Get along there, you flea-bitten, lop-eared knock-kneed sons of questionable ancestry." See anything familiar in those words? Almost every day you hear the rollicking raucous, robust rhythm of "Mule Train" galloping its way to fame. "Mule Train" is only one of the many "western" songs that indicate a definite trend in popular music. In the past few months popular music has been dominated by songs of the people.

This trend started away back. Remember the sugar-sweet words and music of "Silver-Haired Daddy of Mine?" It was written and sung by Gene Autry, a one-time telegraph operator for the St. Louis to San Francisco railroad. It sold over 5,000,000 copies—a record equalled by only four other songs. Burl Ives has been a singer of true folk-songs of America for many years, and is an acknowledged master in his field. The simplicity and sincerity of the folk-songs sung by Ives is evident in the so-called "western" songs which are reaching the Hit Parade today. Ives' Canadian counterpart is our own Ed McCurdy.

To follow this trend a little further, there's a doleful hill-billy troubadour down in Tennessee who has been bringing tears to people's eyes with amazing regularity for the past ten years. He recently candidate for the governorship of the state, using his guitar and so-called voice as his biggest drawing card. His name? Roy Acuff. He sings with such sincerity that he often sheds tears while singing. Maybe you think nobody would pay to hear him. Well, Mr. Acuff twangs out his shrill notes to the tune of \$100,000 a year.

Jimmy Wakely is another man who looked good in a cowboy suit and could SING besides. In past years he has sung in western movies, but it is only recently that Wakely has come into popularity.

At Christmas-time he went to Alaska, as did Bob Hope, to entertain the troops. On January 3rd this year he appeared as a guest on Bob Hope's program. He and the popular Margaret Whiting have teamed up on "Slipping Around" and "I'll Never Slip Around Again."

For nearly twenty years a Nova Scotian "cowboy" has been selling thousands of songs on the Bluebird label. Wilf Carter's record sales have always been steady, but they took a jump recently when his little daughter persuaded him to record "Bluebird on Your Window-sill." Here is a song that has risen steadily on the popularity lists in both Canada, where it was written, and the United States. It has been recorded by at least twelve different groups.

The "Sons of the Pioneers," under the direction of New Brunswick-born Bob Nolan, have been regular producers of high calibre western music for many years. Remember "Tumbling Tumbleweeds?" His sheet music and record sales compare more than favorably with the popular songs written before or since. "My Best To You" was very successful last year.

Now we come to a singer who towers above all the others in the western type of songs and rivals the best in the popular field. His successful songs cannot be counted on the fingers of both hands. His name? Eddie Arnold. These songs of Eddie Arnold, like all the other songs mentioned so far, have been successful in the western realm of music, but have also become best-sellers in competition with all the best popular songs and artists of the day. His record sales in the past five years number in the millions. Eddie and his guitar appeared as a musical milestone of the recording industry presented by the "March of Time". A short while before Christmas, he appeared as guest star on Perry Como's radio show.

Among the singers who have laid the foundation for the trend in popular music, we must include Roy Rogers, Ernest Tubb, Elton Britt, Jimmie Rogers, and, of course, Jimmy Davis, the singing governor of Texas.

There are several versatile and beloved popular artists who have in past years reached into the cactus and chaparral and picked off a few choice morsels. Ever hear Bing Crosby sing "Mexicali Rose?" Along the Navajo Trail was pretty good, too.

Nineteen Hundred Forty-Nine has been the big year in which "western music" really swept America. One of the trail-blazing combinations was Dinah Shore and the bouncing "Buttons and Bows." It was presented in the best western style, complete with "git-tar" and accordion.

The Sons of the Pioneers introduced "Cool Water." Vaughn Munroe saw its dramatic musical possibilities and he and the Sons of the Pioneers disc'd it together. It caught on immediately.

Sammy Kaye realized the possibilities of "Roomful of Roses." It

first became popular in the western style, but when the "name" bands played it, up it rose on the Hit Parade. Another western winner that Sammy Kaye recorded was the melodious "Careless Hands."

More recently, Al Morgan hit the jackpot with "Jealous Heart." It rose rapidly on the Hit Parade, and now has fallen again.

Then there was a tune which created great controversy in its time. Either you liked it or you hated it. Stan Jones wrote it, Vaughn Munroe recorded it, and it was called "Riders in the Sky." Many adjectives have been applied to it: dynamic, spectacular, horrible, just to mention a few. In going along with his natural liking for songs of the sod, Munroe next gave out with a song first recorded years ago by Elton Britt. It immediately rose to third place on the Hit Parade. The title was "Some-day."

Very recently Frankie Lane brought out the most dynamic little ditty in the world. It came from the motion picture, "Singing Guns," in which it was sung by Vaughn Munroe. Just about everybody took a whack at this one, notably Frankie Lane, Vaughn Munroe, Buzz Butler, Bing Crosby, and even Nelson Eddy. "Mule Train" was No. 1 song on the Hit Parade for weeks. At the time of writing it has slipped to fifth spot.

"Slipping Around" and "I'll Never Slip Around Again" are two more songs of the sod that have won a place on the Hit Parade. They have been recorded notably by the teams of Jimmy Wakely with Margaret Whiting, and Doris Day and the Country Cousins. At the time of writing the latter song is in second place on the Hit Parade.

"Dear Hearts and Gentle People" was written for and first sung by Dinah Shore. Bing Crosby has recorded it, using a prominent cowboy "git-tar" in the background. The song at time of writing is in third place on the Hit Parade.

The list of western or folk songs that have recently become favorites in America seems to be endless, and a whole flock of new ones are on the way. Doris Day and the Country Cousins have recorded two future headliners, "Quicksilver" and "Crocodile Tears." They will both probably reach the Hit Parade.

I wouldn't be surprised if Sir Ernest MacMillan should drive into Massey Hall in a buckboard and give out with his own rendition of "Riding Down the Canyon in My Old Recking Chair."

WANTED—The worm who scotched Hay's telephone.

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CATWALK . . .

Submerged in fur coats and fumes (from the wicked weeds, not to mention the air-wick) I sadly contemplate the situation of the feminine world. In the background I hear the incessant chatter of female voices.

"Where are Joan and Betty-Lou?"
"Guess."
"25?"
"You're so right."

'Tis the eve of Co-ed Week . . . the Community Chest will be drained of every change of costume it ever possessed during the next seven days.

Ah, me, how is it possible for anyone to concentrate in this atmosphere? Slowly rising, I cut my way to the door, sliding down the bannister, I cast a glance at the hat rack in the hall, trying vainly to identify the forgotten bits of masculine apparel hanging there. Opening the door, taking a deep breath, I try to clobber around the bodies with my eyes shut . . . whoops . . . right into that little car. Really, Audrey, you shouldn't be out so late. Why, when I was your age . . . but then, it's sort of hard to remember.

There go a bunch of girls on their way home from basketball practice. I'll bet there are some still in the Reading Room rehearsing the Chorus Lines. I wonder if it's something lacking in the diet that keeps us out of so many of the ordinary co-ed activities.

Look at Virginia Bliss—it must be great to do as good a job of anything as she does of I.S.S. work. But then, she seems to have some support from the Classics Department. There's Joene and Jeanette too . . . they have time to take an interest in hockey as well as playing basketball. Thinking of basketball—it'll probably be a lousy team, but they all seem to have fun in their own silly (archais use of the word) way. Eleanor Barker seems to have taken time out from swimming to do some geological excavating in the way of diamond mines. Even Peterson, since she had her tonsils out, has been chucking everything.

That looks like Jack across the street. H-u-m-m, it's a good thing Faith isn't ill this term and the organization for the Con can be in capable hands—not like last term.

Wonder who that new Sophomore S.R.C. Rep is, that one time or another was seen with practically every co-ed on the campus? Oh, well, we all make mistakes, and sooner or later have to pay for them. Appears to be a nice guy he boards with. . . wonder if Noreen is interested in getting up her courage to take him out this week.

Some girls spend so much time writing letters . . . wonder where Maxine is tonight? . . . Jean too, but she and Clare are probably still in lab. That sort of cuts down on the social life.

That looks like Bud White . . . funny, he keeps showing up in the most surprising places for a person who can't even afford to buy himself a coke. In spite of what he says he must have a few friends.

I better go home and get some sleep—before I start thinking and get myself confused . . . I hope that Kay has run down for the night.

