

THE MUSEUM OF MODERN ART  
11 WEST 53RD STREET, NEW YORK

TELEPHONE: CIRCLE 5-8900

FOR RELEASE SATURDAY AFTERNOON or  
SUNDAY MORNING, APRIL 26 or 27, 1941.

MUSEUM OF MODERN ART TO PRESENT SERIES OF NON-CONCERT MUSIC  
INCLUDING SWING, FOLK SONGS, GOSPEL SINGERS, SPANISH DANCERS  
AND VODOO DRUMMERS

Music ordinarily heard only in night clubs and other music of a non-concert nature is to be presented in the auditorium of the Museum of Modern Art, 11 West 53 Street, in a series of six Coffee Concerts on consecutive Wednesday nights at nine, beginning April 30. The series will include a swing orchestra, pianist and quintet; gospel singers; Spanish bagpipe players; a group of South American Indian musicians and dancers; and modern opera in oratorio form. The group will also contain such diverse artists as Elsie Houston, Utah Smith, a singing Negro evangelist, members of the original cast of Four Saints in Three Acts, former Hall Johnson singers and others.

The series has been arranged by Louise Crane, a member of the Museum's Music Committee. Miss Crane is interested in having presented to a wider and perhaps more appreciative audience fine musicians who are often famous in night clubs but who have no opportunity to appear on concert stages. This is the case with many of the artists who will be heard in the Coffee Concert series. The rich variety of their music, much of it unsuited to night clubs, will at the Museum be provided with a suitable background and a responsive audience. The music is modern and expert and, in some cases, experimental in presentation. The concerts will be informal. Coffee will be served during intermissions.

The first concert of the series, Salon Swing, will be given by The Sophistichords, John Kirby and his orchestra and Herman Chittison, pianist. It will mark the debut of The Sophistichords, a quintet of Negro singers who have long been known individually as soloists in radio, choir work and stage musicals such as Porgy and Bess. For their debut at the Museum April 30 they will give modern swing versions of German, French, Italian, Spanish and English songs. They will also present for the first time anywhere two special swing

versions of Ravel's Bolero and a selection from Pagliacci. The members of The Sophistichords are Mae Harrison, Altonell Hines, Carrington Lewis, Henry May and David Lawton.

Although unknown in this country, the Negro pianist Herman Chittison has played in Paris and on the Continent with his orchestra. He gave a command performance at the wedding of the King of Egypt's sister and has appeared on the concert stage in Belgium, Spain and Italy. While in Europe Mr. Chittison was engaged as pianist with a band of French and Martinique musicians to play the background music for the motion picture Papa Le Moko. Since Mr. Chittison's return to this country he has played in a small night club in Harlem and he is now intermission pianist at the Ruban Bleu. Mr. Chittison is known for his distinguished and unusual swing versions of Chopin and Schubert.

John Kirby and his orchestra, now at Cafe Society Uptown, will, among other numbers, play some special swing arrangements of Debussy. The program of the Salon Swing concert is as follows:

1. John Kirby's Orchestra:
  - Rehearsing for a Nervous Breakdown . . . Charles Shavers
  - Effervescent Blues . . . Charles Shavers
  - Double Talk . . . Lou Singer
2. The Sophistichords
  - Parlez-Moi
  - Dark Town Strutters Ball
  - Bolero
3. Herman Chittison, solo pianist
  - Chopin's Minute Waltz
  - Blue Danube
  - The Man I Love
4. John Kirby's Orchestra
  - Clair de Lune . . . Debussy, arranged by Kirby
  - Golliwog's Cakewalk. . . Debussy, " " "
  - Nocturne. . . Griselle, " " "
  - Serenade. . . F. Schubert, " " "
5. The Sophistichords
  - Wien Wien
  - Old Man River
  - Pagliacci
6. Herman Chittison
  - How High the Moon
  - Tea for Two
7. John Kirby's Orchestra
  - Blue Skies. . . Irving Berlin, arranged by Kirby
  - Ebony Rhapsody. . . Ellington, " " "
  - Message from Mars . . . Sidney Phillips, " " "

The rest of the programs will be extremely varied. A special preview presentation in oratorio form of the celebrated Four Saints

66

in Three Acts with the original cast and under the direction of its composer, Virgil Thomson, will be heard as the second of the series on May 7. The third program, Review Iberica, will consist of Spanish bagpipers, Spanish dancers, a flamenco singer-guitarist and Spanish folk singers. This will be on Wednesday, May 14.

On May 21 a concert of Negro harmony and gospel singing will be given under the general title Jubilee by the Reverend Utah Smith, singing Negro evangelist, together with the Pentecostal Five, the Little Unknown Four, the Silver Bell Quartet, the Rolling Stones, the Royal Light Quartet and other quartets.

The fifth program, South American Panorama, on May 28, will have as its soloist Elsie Houston, noted Brazilian soprano, supported by Haitian Voodoo dancers, Incan musicians and dancers, and other artists. South American Panorama will be heard May 28. Artists will be announced later for the final program June 4 of Concert Swing.