

Night Club Scene



More Poise, Less Noise In Ross Show

Vitality And Versatility Mark Group's Opening At Embers

By JAN COLCORD

YELLOW-HATTED, RED-VESTED, sharp-tongued Jack Ross blasted off the first of two weeks at the Embers last night, with an opening fanfare—all brass—and a closing jab—all brash—at an annoying ringsider.

The hat, vest and Ross played an Embers date this time last year. Don Lusiene on accordion was here, too, but the rest of the band has shifted, and the follow-through format seems less frenzied than the original '61 swinger.

Maybe it's the assurance of the gold record the group got for its version of "Cinderella," but there's not so much noise and a lot more poise in the Ross-led routines.

Silver-haired Shirley Claire with a healthy-looking tan she picked up the last play date in Florida has an intriguing lisp and a lot of vitality. "Hey, Look Me Over," then "I Get A Kick Out of You," were stand-outs, and Shirley also is a big plus for the backing harmony and terp bits for the rest of the show.

INTRODUCED BY ROSS as "a Salvation Army reject," D. J. Johnson turned out to be a band of his own. He's mellow on baritone horn with "Granada," as grist, then later, in the set, under hypnosis (fake) did admirable take-offs on Harry James, Artie Shaw, Glenn Miller, T. Dorsey and a wonky wind-up with all the instruments as Woody Herman with "Woodchoppers Ball."

Elmer Nemeth, bass-man, got into the beat of "Lonesome Road," then accelerated the tempo into a foot-patting vocal. He's also an agile Twister, still slapping that bass. Another versatile musician, drummer Clay Campbell lay down the sticks for a smooth vocal do of "Green Eyes." For the set's

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highlight, Ross sang the "Cinderella" hit platter—which he announced was on sale at the hat check stand, "along with our jams and jellies"—a dandy in double talk. As follow-up he polished off another potential, "Happy Jose," on the upgrade in curent record polls.

With the Embers' new policy of three shows a night—at 8:30, 10:30 and 12:30, it'll be busy evenings for the performers. But Ross doesn't mind. "Who wants to loaf," he said. "I get nervous unless I'm on."

Chuck Wagon

AT THE LUSHLY decorated Chuck Wagon's Lounge, Jimmy Bennett is on piano every evening, Tuesday through Saturday. He's dressed in a red vest and arm bands that go with the bartender's, old-fashioned stove and general decor of the place, but out of time with his up-tempo on the 88. Jimmy doesn't sing, and there's nothing to interrupt his freely flowing medley-style sets ranging from "Moonglow" to "War-



Jimmy Bennett



Shirley Claire



Jack Ross

saw Concerto," and any varied request in between. Exhibiting a nice touch, good style, and a wide repertory, Bennett's a good find.

Half Notes . . .

Phyllis Diller's passing up spring vacation to appear at the Bon Soir, New York City, to help the new management get the place swingin' again. Phyllis holds all records at the spot in the Village. . . . Note from John Craig (Joe Cline) says he's doing a revival of "Damn Yankees" in San Francisco at the Sheraton Palace. John's co-starring with Joe E. Brown and Julie Newmar. . . . Cathy Johnson and husband Bob Monti are entertaining at the B & B through Saturday. . . . Jonah Jones is set for opening at the Crown Room in the Meadows on Thursday.