

ANOTHER TWIST TO VIC OLIVER

Comedian Conducts Symphony Orchestra

VIC OLIVER, the famous comedian, and former son-in-law of Mr. Churchill, satisfied an old ambition a few weeks ago—he conducted an orchestra of 100 players in the Albert Hall, London, and according to the *News Chronicle* he held an audience of 8,000 spellbound. It was not the first time he had held a baton—he was conducting small orchestras in Austria many years ago. And although he said he was not forsaking comedy, he didn't want it to be thought of as a stunt.

"For a chance to conduct an orchestra like the London Philharmonic I would gladly sacrifice four-fifths of what I earn as a music-hall comedian," he said. "I never intended to be a comic; after all I started as a musician."

Vic Oliver was born in Vienna and educated at the University of Vienna. He went to America after the last war and began his career as a pianist in a New York beer-garden. His first appearance as a comedian was in vaude-

ville in Indianapolis in 1926. In the 'thirties he went to England and played in C. B. Cochran productions, and he has been the star of many productions at the London Hippodrome.

Vic of All Trades

The *News Chronicle* described him as "Viennese ex-baron, cavalryman in the 1914-18 war, concert-pianist in America, comedian with the violin, player in first-class tennis, scratch golfer, Shakespearean actor, farmer, racehorse owner and trainer."

The first announcements of the concert promised "introductory comments by Vic Oliver," but there were no comments. The programme was as follows:

"Mastersingers" Overture Wagner
 "L'Arlésienne" Suite Bizet
 Intermezzo ("Cavalleria Rusticana") Mascagni
 Dances by Dvorak, Grieg, Strauss, Brahms, German, Chopin, Saint-Saens
 "Unfinished" Symphony Schubert
 Air ("Samson and Delilah") Saint-Saens
 Marche Slav Tchaikovsky

And this is what the *News Chronicle's* regular music critic, Scott Goddard, said about it next morning:

Quite Efficient

"As a conductor, Oliver has a clean, sober beat, a little inclined to be martial and lifeless, but nevertheless quite efficient. Also, he used few temperamental mannerisms. Only in a Strauss polka did he insert a hint of showmanship. He secured capable performances in a set of seven dances, the intermezzo from *Cavalleria Rusticana* and the second *Arlésienne* suite by Bizet. The very capability that had served these pieces well did harm to Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony*. There was too little poetry and too much loud emphasis."

Oliver made it plain that he was not giving up his comedy for this kind of thing. "That would be foolish. The British public has made me a comedian," he said. "But I would like to give this sort of music to the million. I have always believed in the opinion of the masses rather than that of the chosen few. I believe they like this better than swing—which I don't understand anyway. I've had so many letters asking why I didn't give people this kind of thing that I decided I would."



VIC OLIVER
He decided he would

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reads *Plato's Republic* (10/6 new) and has already absorbed 35 pages of culture.

WHAT will become of Martin? We may safely conclude that at the end of a number of years he will be either (a) a married man, or (b) a bachelor. Will he one day sit down and calculate the total cost of his various courtships? Probably not. He's such an open-handed man that the idea would not even occur to him.

In Eastern countries they buy their wives outright at the market place—cash down, of course, but once you've paid she's yours. We Westerners, however, are born gamblers, and we seem to find something infinitely fascinating about the instalment system.

Radio Laid On

CLAIMED as the first of its type in the world, a new system of radio relay is to be tested by means of an experimental system to be set up in Rugby, England. It is stated that the method which it is proposed to instal has many advantages over existing systems, one of which is that any number of programmes can be sent down the same pair of wires. The G.P.O. has granted a licence to a Rugby firm to operate the system. It is proposed to pick up programmes at some central point, without technical limitation of price or control, and the G.P.O. has agreed to allow programmes to be picked up direct from lines taking them from studio to transmitter. Subscribers will have a small "box of tricks" with probably two controls, and this will, in effect, constitute the consumer's radio.

FOR YOUR THROAT'S SAKE

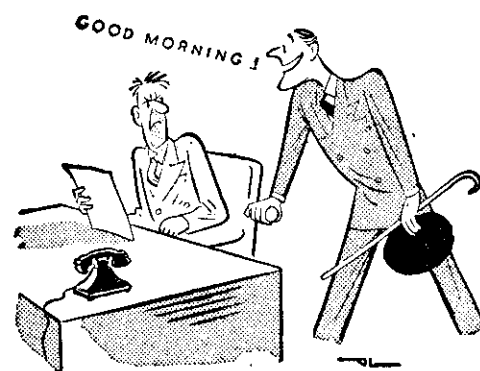


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