

"NO NEED TO MAKE IT CHEAP"

Producer In Kiwi Concert Party Tells Us About It

INTERVIEWING 2nd Lt. Terry Vaughan is unlike interviewing any other soldier. Two-thirds of what passes could not be written down without staves and barlines and the choreographic shorthand or whatever it is that music-hall artists might use to record the gestures they make. With quick description, noises to represent a 12-piece orchestra, occasional snatches of song, and gestures in every direction, Terry Vaughan can evoke the whole picture of the shows he has been directing with the Kiwi Concert Party in the Middle East. He seems to have acted as composer, arranger, conductor, producer, stage manager and anything else there was time for, in stage musicals, plays, and variety shows.

From the stage shows of the Timaru Boys' High School, through student revues at Canterbury College, the Royal Academy of Music, London, to a portable stage somewhere in the North African Desert, Terry Vaughan's career has been an interesting one.

He went to the Academy on a piano scholarship, and while studying technique and composition, made himself acquainted with modern music, and undertook the composition of items for aspirants to music-hall fame. For the students of the Joan Davis School of Production, who needed signature tunes for their acts, or original songs to go with dance turns, he would be commissioned to knock up words and music, with a few words given him to start on, perhaps a tag such as *We're not the Quods, we're not the Quins We are the Heavenly Twins.*

"Straight Music"

At the same time, he was engaged with serious music. He was the conductor for a period of the Choir of the London School of Economics, and with them he performed early English music, madrigals, and modern works from such composers as Vaughan Williams and E. J. Moeran. A composition for piano and orchestra in *concertante* style was played at the Royal Academy, with Sir Henry Wood conducting, and with the composer as pianist. Another work for 'cello and piano was played at a concert of modern music in London.

When war broke out, Terry Vaughan joined the New Zealand anti-tank brigade in England, and later found himself in a concert party in the Middle East, to which eventually he became producer and musical director. In Crete he had taken part in two shows that were put on in an old derelict theatre.

"Not that it was damaged, it was just old. And we couldn't find any owner for it, so we just took over and used it to entertain the boys."

It was when we asked him to describe the sort of entertainment that was put



2nd LT. TERRY VAUGHAN
"They just lapped it up"



THE "LEADING LADY"
"Never a word of distaste"



The comedians, J. Reidy (Hamilton), and J. Millins (Auckland), in a bright interlude

on that 2nd Lt. Vaughan became really enthusiastic. He had mentioned the Royal Academy and his "straight" music without great enthusiasm, but at the mention of a parody-show called "Low-Gang," his eyes brightened.

"Low Gang" and Schubert

"We had two marvellous female impersonators, Wally Pricor and Phil. Jay. I used to think female impersonators were the last thing in unpleasantness, but these two could put it across so well that I never heard a word of distaste from the men in the audience.

"Our Low-Gang was a parody of the Bebe Daniels-Ben Lyon 'Hi-Gang' that everyone knew from the BBC, and Wally Pricor had the audience in fits taking off Bebe. He sings soprano with the greatest of ease, too, and I used him in a presentation of Schubert's 'Ave Maria' that went over well. No, it wasn't like the *Fantasia* one—I just had Wally dressed as a novice, standing at one side, singing across the chorus — eight men in evening dress, sitting diagonally across the stage; changing light-schemes completed the setting.

"That was a thing that I found out. I never needed to cheapen anything. I could put good music on in this way and they just lapped it up. And I never at any time put on those pseudo-patriotic marching songs, that people seem to think soldiers like; the sort of thing the BBC has branded as 'insincere.' And it's been a gratifying thing to me to find that I can be as fastidious as I like and refuse to make any concessions at all to bad taste, and the men approve a hundred per cent.

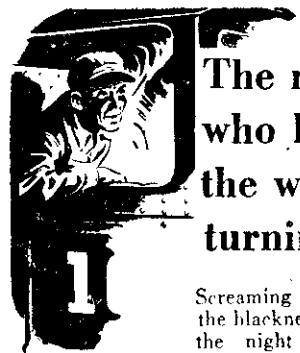
"Another point I made in all our shows was the exclusion of any reference to military life, or its inconveniences; we had no 'longing-for-home' sentiments, all the same, and no nonsense about 'New Zealand, the little Pacific Paradise.'"

Twelve-Piece Orchestra

The concert party had a 12-piece orchestra, consisting of three clarinets, three violins, three brass, piano, bass and drums, and with these resources, 2nd Lt. Vaughan rang the changes on as many different combinations as he could think up, in items that were so arranged that one change would follow

another without a moment's delay. There would be musical productions with orchestra, chorus and soloists in songs from *Rio Rita*, *Showboat*, and recent films, selections of shanties, or Scottish songs, interspersed with comedy sketches, or special musical items, such as "Whistling Rufus," arranged for three clarinets.

Some of these things may be heard in New Zealand when the concert party makes a short tour, for which the National Patriotic Fund Board is at present making the arrangements.

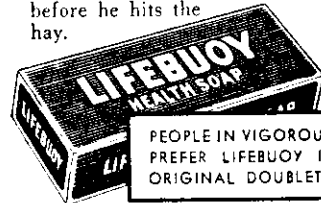


The man who keeps the wheels turning

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Jim at the controls. His face, seamed with sweat and coal dust, is anxious. Yes, war has given Jim extra responsibilities. To-night, in addition to H.M. Mail, he's carrying important members of H.M. forces.

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