

Why Do They Fall For the Leader of the Band?

IS the leader of a dance band a super-personality or a mere musician? Does he "wag his arms" at his band or use the book-maker's system of remote control while he has a drink with a titled guest? Why is he there at all—unless it is to collect £300 a week?

These were some of the questions asked in the Queen's Bench Division of the High Court in London during five days when Paul Adam, a dance band leader, was claiming £5234 damages. He alleged loss of reputation and prestige and breach of his year's contract by the Astor Club, Berkeley Square.

Paul Adam said that he relied on his personality to influence the musicians and if he left them, they played on without him. However, Mr. Justice Jones compared him with "a certain distinguished character who led his regiment from behind."

Paul Adam went into the witness box and described his technique thus: "I call the names of the tune, give two beats, and the band starts playing automatically by itself."

Cross-examined by Mr. Gilbert Beyfus, Q.C., for Astor Enterprises Ltd., he added that a symphonic orchestra depended on its conductor, but a dance band did not.

Mr. Beyfus: Does Mr. Ambrose conduct his band?—No.

Do you mean to say he stands there like a tailor's dummy?—I would not like to say that.

What do you do?—I stand up and sing...

Forget your singing. Do you just stand up and do nothing?—I don't just

J. W. GOODWIN tells how the High Court in London settled this problem

stand up and wag my arms around like this. (Here Adam demonstrated.)

Mr. Beyfus: Otherwise you do nothing at all?—I rely on my personality.

What is your importance?—According to the remuneration, people seem to think a leader is important.

Adam added that his demeanour was an influence over the band, but there was no influence over their playing because that had been rehearsed. The expressions were written on the music which did not change and was the same tempo all through.

Mr. J. Nahum, Q.C., for Adam, said that the band leader felt it part of his duty to act as host, but he denied a suggestion that his only function was as a drinking companion. Out of his £300 a week, he paid £157/19/- to the other nine in the band.

That Personality

The question whether a band leader is more than a personality occupied most of the second day of the hearing. Others were in court to hear themselves classified as instrumentalists who were "usually insignificant people," personalities, or figureheads and business men.

The deputy-leader of Adam's band said: "I could conduct the band, but I could not be Paul Adam. His personality is projected to the people." He added that Billy Cotton was in the "figurehead" class—"he is not a musician."

Mr. Beyfus: We are not talking about musicians, but about band leaders. Ac-

cording to you, he need not be a musician to be a band leader?—That is so.

Adam told counsel he was an artist. "There is only one side to your profession, but there are many to mine. I play the violin and the piano and have studied music."

Mr. Beyfus: And croon?—I croak a little.

Perhaps I put it rather high when I said croon, a rather intermediate term?—I would never call myself a crooner.

So it was because of your playing and conducting that you got something like £140 a week?—Don't forget my personality. There are plenty of better musicians than I am who do not get £140 a week.

When counsel for the night club suggested that band leaders got swollen-headed and acted like prima donnas, there was laughter as Adam retorted: "I could reverse that and say it applies to any profession."

"Tea for Two"

By the third day the court had heard much night club slang. It understood about customers being "put in Siberia" or the worst part of the room, it knew what a club promoter meant when he said "Paul is my china"—as one lawyer remarked, it was a fragile relationship—



"The life of the party, in a rather blasé sort of way"

it had been told a lot about music, but it had heard none.

When the music did go round and round and come out in the High Court, it was not from a musician, a music critic, or from a Musicians' Union official, all of whom gave evidence, but from a Queen's Counsel.

Adam's counsel, Mr. J. Nahum, questioned a professional dance music critic who said that a band leader had no time to correct a wrong note during a performance.

Mr. Nahum: Suppose the band were playing "Tea for Two"... He hummed a few bars, then broke off, saying, "I can't sing."

Mr. Justice Jones, who had sat unmoved the previous day when Adam asked rather tersely: "How can one compare a court with a night club?" thought it wise to interrupt here, saying that he appreciated the point.

The music critic added that, once rehearsals were over, a leader's job was to "look pretty" and greet patrons. Most "personality leaders" came on the bandstand late and left early. "A leader's no use without prestige; it's all he's got."

Tall and Dark

The Musicians' Union official said that there were only six or seven band leaders who "set the stamp" in London night clubs. He cited Ambrose, Jack Harris, Harry Roy, Lew Stone, Maurice Winnick, Sidney Lipton, Roy Fox and Frank Weir.

Asked how he would define this type of band leader, he replied that a club might want a man of great personal charm like Ambrose or someone tall, dark, and handsome like Paul Adam.

Did band leaders feel themselves important? he was asked. "Yes, because they are paid such high wages. They must be important," said the union official. "Band leaders are considered the life and soul of the party in a subdued, rather blasé, sort of way."

Some of the clients also had their say. One from Belgrave Mews declared that "it was a definite asset with one's lady friends" if Adam came to one's table for a drink.

Another remarked that Adam produced an air of gaiety and appeared to be enjoying himself. "The band also seemed to be enjoying themselves, and I think that's a rare thing in night clubs," he added amidst laughter.

Evidence from three dance band leaders enlivened the fourth day of the

(continued on next page)

(Solution to No. 686)

L	A	C	E	S		M	A	G	N	A	T	E
A	O	A		A		E		B		A		
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Clues Across

- Melon sap turns to redundancy.
- Six-legged creature within religious denomination?
- So near to sense?
- Mixture of what remains if you take the ache out of avalanche, but it suggests the sea rather than the mountains.
- Bore.
- The highest point in a cheap excursion.
- The wife of Ulysses obviously didn't elope.
- Found in a cracked ewer?
- Uncertainty.
- Take a bit away from this bird and you are left with another.

"THE LISTENER" CROSSWORD

- He is mixed up with the front of the army but apparently in shelter.
- This tree sounds like an animal.
- The first house-boat?
- Enclosed in a rabbits' hutch.
- Sporting attempt.
- Smarten oneself up.
- Garret (anag.).
- Slag.
- Riddled.
- Torn to shreds.
- Liquor in the barracks.
- We hint in order to bleach.
- Polonius met his death behind one.
- Small cask.
- It is given to you before you are old enough to use it.
- Distorted.

No. 687 (Constructed by R.W.H.)

Clues down

- In a Western Australian city Ian offers part of a flower.
- Red Sea (anag.).
- "From morn to — he fell, from — to dewy eve" (Milton, "Paradise Lost").
- Italian city.
- Request.
- The mark of an old wound on a seaman in the shape of an ancient gem.
- Forty winks.
- Even rut (anag.).
- Craft used by Mediterranean pirates.
- Notes out of order.
- "Nothing 11 down, nothing —"
- For this, remove the ban from brandy.

