

ALLEZ HOOP!

MRS. AMELIA JENKS BLOOMER was born May 27, 1818, at Homer, New York. In 1849 she took up the idea of reform in women's clothes and the wearing of a short dress with loose trousers gathered at the ankle. Gradually the name "bloomers" became attached to any divided skirt or knickerbocker dress for women. Mrs. Bloomer had a genius for dedication and besides bloomers she earnestly supported temperance, women's suffrage and a number of other moral and political reforms, all concerned with women's rights. In January, 1849, she published a newspaper, *The Lily*, which began with a circulation of 200 copies. It jumped to over 4000 in four years, an increase which circulation managers today well might envy, but would be hard put to emulate. You see, Mrs. Bloomer did it by appearing on lecture platforms wearing her scandalous garments. During this period, the name "Dolly" Bloomer was given first to Mrs. Bloomer, then to any girl sufficiently emancipated or game enough to copy her.

Not long ago, two bright Broadway showfolk, Harold Arlen, the composer, and E. Y. Harburg, the lyric writer (who wrote, among other hits, "We're Off to See the Wizard" for *The Wizard of Oz*), got together on the Bloomer story. They



CELESTE HOLM

decided to concentrate on the adventures of another member of the clan (probably mythical), Miss Evelina Applegate, niece to the redoubtable Mrs. Dolly. The Arlen-

Harburg show was called *The Bloomer Girl*, and starred Celeste Holm as Miss Evelina, with Harold Arlen himself also in the cast. Music from the show will be heard in *YA Theatre of Music* on Saturday, August 11.

Evelina is the youngest, prettiest and only unwed daughter of Horatio Applegate, the hoop-skirt magnate of the North. She is very much influenced by her aunt's determination to do away with the hoops women wore to make them look more feminine. Her father, very worried, arranges a match for her with Jeff (David Brooks), the scion of a wealthy Southern family. Though Evelina resents this, she nevertheless falls victim to the young man's charm and he, instead of heading her off from her liberal tendencies, helps her to arrange the escape of a slave—his own slave, Pompey, no less—via the underground "railroad."

At a garden party show which Horatio Applegate has arranged for his buyers to show off the "super-hoop" which Evelina is to model, she shows herself a worthy disciple of her aunt by abruptly dropping the "super-hoop" in a mid-career and appearing in bloomers. Worse still, Mrs. "Dolly" and Evelina are gaoled for organising slave escapes, but are finally freed in time to present a performance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Jeff leaves to join the Southern forces while all the Applegate men fight with the Unionists. Mrs. Dolly, vindicated in her ideas, happily announces that the Governor has taken over Applegate's hoop factory for the manufacture of army uniforms. She also tells Evelina that, on his way south, Jeff has heard Lincoln speak, and now feels that the way of equality and freedom for all is the right way. So all ends happily for the Bloomer girl.

Lloyd was. She does not merely impersonate a character, as so many of her colleagues so brilliantly do, or even act one. She creates one, and lives it." Mr. Greenwood says that off stage and in relaxation Beryl looks little more than a girl herself, with her full smiling face, roses - and-cream complexion, and the simple but attractive frocks she wears. She has a tremendous zest for life, and loves her friends.



BBC photo

Monica Reid

CONCERT-GOERS who noticed how intently Paul Badura-Skoda followed the conductor and listened to the National Orchestra in his concerts with them will be interested to hear that those who saw more of him remarked on the same thing. "He was very conscious of the orchestra, knew the score backwards, and brought a copy of it to rehearsals—he had a tremendous knowledge of the whole thing," we have been told. Members of the wind group who played the Mozart quintet with him were similarly impressed and said that at rehearsal as they corrected mistakes in the printed score he would ask them to try a phrase first of this version and then of the original. On his part, Mr. Badura-Skoda said after his last Wellington orchestral concert that he was very satisfied with the orchestra and wished he could have thanked every member personally.

HUTT VALLEY music lovers who remember the young pianist Nan Gibson, and many in the Wellington district and elsewhere who knew her at Chilton St. James as pupil or teacher,

have had a welcome chance recently to hear her in the third of the new series of programmes from the New Zealand Music Society in London. It will be broadcast next from 1XN on August 12. Nan was born in Hawera, but left there when she was three, and going later to Chilton St. James as a boarder has really spent a good part of her life there. Her most recent association with the school was as a member of the music staff. Nan won a Royal Schools of Music scholarship in 1954, and will be at the Royal College of Music for three years. Primarily a pianist, she is making the viola her second instrument. She is a member of the College orchestra and is on the committee of the New Zealand Music Society in London. The item she plays in the programme being heard in New Zealand was played first at one of the Society's concerts.



Spencer Digby photograph
NAN GIBSON.

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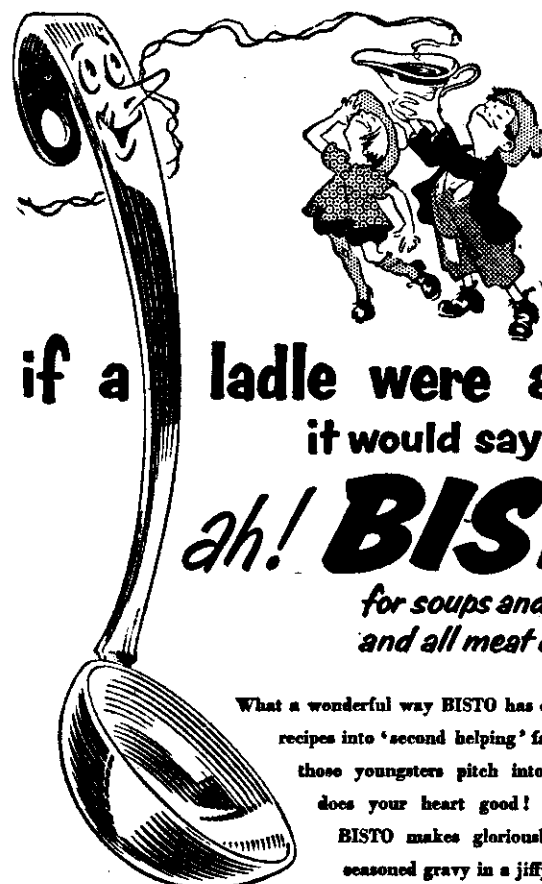
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