



WHEREVER there's a Salvation Army Corps there's sooner or later a band, and the Greymouth Citadel Salvation Army Band, heard recently from 3YZ, has been in Greymouth almost as long as the Army—a long time as it happens, for the Band will be 70 next year. In the middle of the front row in this picture is Bandmaster M. Best, who took up his present post 21 years ago. He is recognised as one of the foremost Army Band trainers in the country—a man of exceptional patience with young people. Able soloists in the Band include Deputy-Bandmaster Will Tones, cornet (at left end of back row), Bandsman A. Tones, euphonium (second from right in front row), and Band Sergeant George Simon, trombone (at right end of back row). Captain G. Beale, Commanding Officer of the Corps, who plays E flat bass, is immediately behind Bandmaster Best. The Band owes much of its present strength to the arrival, about 30 years ago, of 10 members of one family and their children.

ORCHESTRAL CLOSE-UP—2

PRESENT-DAY angels are said to play trombones not harps, but there is still something about the harp that links it with other worldly beings. The National Orchestra's harpist, Leslie Comer, came to her present position in a roundabout way, as for many years she was an organist and piano teacher in Dunedin. She had for a long time admired the harp, and after playing on an instrument made by a friend—a harp that would play in only one key and had no pedals—she bought her first harp from Winifred Carter, then with the National Orchestra. In 1952, when she went to England to study piano, she surprised herself by buying a new harp, the one she now uses, and by having lessons from Gwendoline Mason, a celebrated teacher in London. In 1954 she played with the Orchestra for occasional concerts, and last year became a member.

To anyone who has never played the harp, her instrument looks extremely complicated with its seven pedals and three positions for each pedal. "You have to make the notes with your feet, and this is what makes it so difficult," explained Miss Comer. When a pedal is depressed the vibrating length of the corresponding strings can be shortened by fractions representing a semi-tone and a tone. This makes it possible to play in all keys. Driving an old-fashioned car would seem to be excellent prepara-

tion for manipulating these pedals, as the harp player has also to "keep his eyes on the road." "You can't look at your feet when playing," said Miss Comer, "so I usually manage to work out the pedal positions beforehand and pencil them into the music." It's a little easier to find one's way around in the strings, because these have a colour code of red, white and blue. The top strings are of nylon and the heavier ones at the bottom of wire. Although nylon is more reliable than gut, which was formerly used, occasionally a quick change is necessary when a string snaps.

Orchestral work fascinates Miss Comer. She is never bored, and when a

harp is not needed in a concert she usually listens to the Orchestra from the audience. "The first piece I ever played with the Orchestra was by Gustav Holst," she said. "Appropriately enough, it was the ballet suite, *The Perfect Fool*."



LESLIE COMER

N.P.S. photograph

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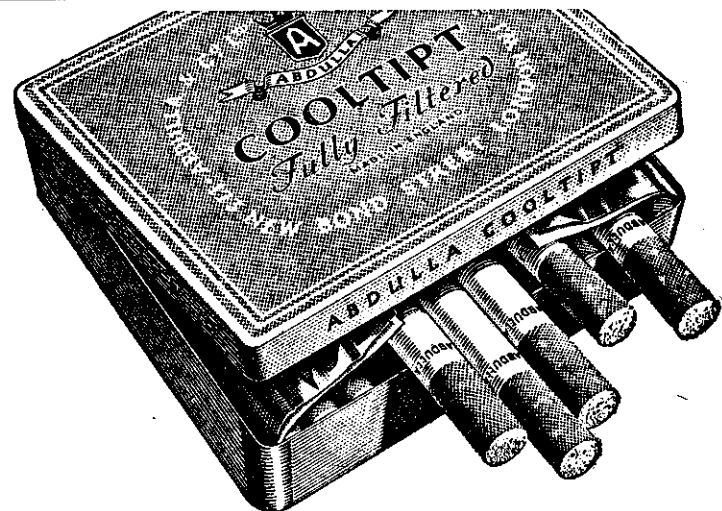
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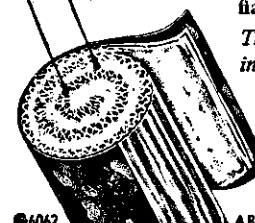
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