

ORCHESTRAL CLOSE-UP-4

JAMES HOPKINSON, first flute of the National Orchestra, began his professional career at the age of 14, when, dressed in an enormous bus conductor's uniform, he played on the bandstand at an English seaside resort. Undeterred by this experience he went on to the Royal College to study flute under Robert Murchie, and orchestral playing under Malcolm Sargent. His first permanent engagements were with regional orchestras of the BBC. Eventually he joined the BBC Symphony under Sir Adrian Boult, but before this, while still in his middle teens, he had played for a while with the original London Philharmonic under Thomas Beecham. At this time two Hopkinsons could be found in the flute section—father and son. His stay with the BBC Symphony, which lasted for 13 years, ended in 1947 when Andersen Tyrer invited him to New Zealand to join the National Orchestra.

Since he has been in New Zealand, James Hopkinson has played many of the major works for flute. There have been performances of the Mozart G Major Concerto and Concerto for Flute and Harp; the Ibert; and in the field of chamber music the massive Prokofiev Flute Sonata and the Schubert Variations. He has done his best to establish a school of players out here; he is a member of the New Zealand Wind Ensemble and a keen protagonist for wind music generally. "Why don't composers write more wind music?"

is a remark you hear him make, especially when talking to composers. For woodwind players, who are enjoying a revival of interest in their instruments, find that their demand for new works is still unsatisfied, despite the efforts of such composers as Vaughan Williams and Malcolm Arnold. Another friend of wind players was the Danish composer Carl Nielsen, and his flute concerto will be given its first New Zealand performance by James Hopkinson in a studio concert by the National Orchestra next week (see page 9).

James Hopkinson is a Londoner who can tell many entertaining stories about his home city as listeners to the monthly music talks in *Women's Sessions* will know. In these talks his topics range from opera to the London Cockney. When not playing the flute or being involved in musical activity of some other kind, he can sometimes be seen looking after one of the vintage cars he has always had a fondness for—peering into the bonnet or, on occasions, pushing from behind.



JAMES HOPKINSON

N.P.S. photograph

James Hopkinson's wife—they were married in England and have two daughters—is also a musician who plays the violin in the Alex Lindsay String Orchestra.

(continued from previous page)

(2YA, May 14, 4YA, 4YZ, May 15) covers in down-to-earth fashion some of his experiences catching opossums and goats—especially opossums. "Opossum catching is hard work, whichever way you go about it," Frank says. "Skinning and stretching the skins is done at night, so it's usually midnight or early morning before you get to bed. The real trappers run up to 200 traps on a line, so they go short on sleep and can lose around two stone in weight in a three-month season."

VERA LYNN, a slim, long-faced Cockney girl, became famous when she broadcast to servicemen during the war years and completely won their hearts with a series of programmes entitled *Sincerely Yours*. Born in London's

poor East Ham district, Vera began singing when she was seven, mainly at Masonic dinners and charity benefits. At 11 she sang with a juvenile dancing troupe called the Kracker Kids' Kabaret. Then about three years later her voice broke during an attack of laryngitis, and it came out, says Vera, "slightly lower and not so noisy." This must have been an improvement, for by the time she was 15 she had her own troupe. She broadcast for the first time in the mid-1930s with Joe



VERA LYNN
New poise, the same appeal

ELC photo

N.Z. LISTENER, MAY 10, 1957.

Loss. Later she sang for 18 months with the Charlie Kunz Orchestra, and then for a spell with Ambrose. While with Ambrose she met the clarinettist Harry Lewis, who is now her husband and manager. But it was through her wartime broadcasts that Vera really won fame. Her clear boyish voice singing about the white cliffs of Dover made servicemen far from home feel that things could not be as bad as they seemed, and brought her a thousand letters a week from all over the world.

When Vera's daughter, Virginia, was born just over 11 years ago, she dropped singing for two years, and her career seemed to have ended. But she came back with a new poise and assurance and the same appeal of warm sincerity. She was particularly successful in 1952 when she visited the United States and appeared seven times with Tullulah Bankhead in *The Big Show*. Her record "Auf Wiedersehen" not only made her the first British singer to top the "Hit Parade of America," but sent her to the top of hit parades in six other countries as well.

Back in Britain, Vera went into the stage show *London Laughs*, which ran for over two years, and sang again for the BBC in *Let's Meet Again*. Recently she signed a contract with the BBC to appear in their television and sound programmes.

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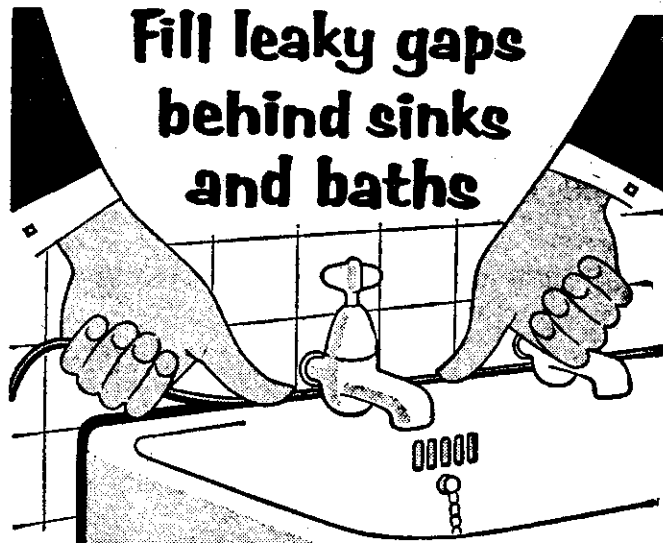
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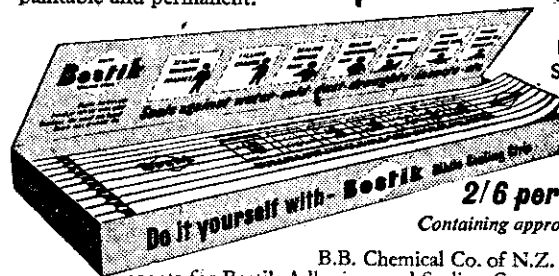


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