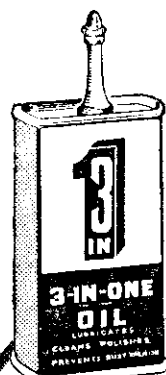


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Spencer Digby photograph

JAZZMEN hobnobbing in the classical camp and "serious" musicians playing in dance bands are no new thing in New Zealand—or elsewhere for that matter—but when we called on Bill Hoffmeister (who is seen above) to ask about a classical piece of his which had its first performance recently, we were interested to hear his opinion that a jazz training can be a

Open Microphone

useful short cut to an understanding of classical composition. Though very modest about his own talent, he was inclined to think that a man with some imagination and musical ability could go a long way on his own steam. "Either you're a musician or you aren't," was the way he summed it up.

Mr Hoffmeister, who is being heard with his jazz orchestra from 2YA on Wednesday nights, was himself brought up as a classical pianist, but turned to jazz when he found there was more work in that field. About four years ago he decided to attend the Cambridge Summer School of Music "to find out what makes the classical composer tick." That was when he first decided that his jazz training and experience were going to be very useful if he was to do any work in the classical field himself. Stimulated by the atmosphere of the school, he followed up his interest in classical composition by reading in libraries and elsewhere and started off with several small pieces—some fugues, a sonata and works of that sort.

A couple of years ago some of his work was played by the summer school orchestra under William Komlos, who asked Mr Hoffmeister if he would write a more ambitious piece for full orchestra. The outcome was *Forest Fire*, finished about a year ago and played by the New Plymouth Orchestra under Mr Komlos at the end of April. It was received with much enthusiasm. Mr Hoffmeister says that this descriptive work, strictly classical in style, was written in odd half-hours "just whenever I could find the time."

Fully occupied just now with jazz work—apart from his current broadcasts he is playing bass with the Majestic Cabaret dance band in Wellington—Mr Hoffmeister hopes to do more work in the classical field when he has the time. As a composer he is mainly interested in the string quartet and the full orchestra. Composers he admires include Delius, Walton and Hartmann. Though his orchestra is playing mainly standard jazz in its 2YA broadcasts, we thought he might have other interests in this field also. "Yes," he agreed, "progressive jazz is the only kind that really interests me,

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS ON AND OFF THE RECORD

and I regard Brubeck as the best exponent." Of course, he added, he enjoys other kinds of jazz—but not "mentally."

★

JACK DOBSON, best known to New Zealand listeners as a producer of such shows as *Time to Sing* and *Won't You Come In?* left the NZBS last year to return to England.

PRODUCER Now back in this part of the world as a variety producer for the ABC, he has recently been conducting auditions for an Australia-wide talent quest. On his recent visit to Britain, Jack did free-lance interviews for the BBC. Later, with



JACK DOBSON
Bombs were thrown

Cyprus as a base, he flew around the Middle East with Jimmy Edwards and Frankie Howerd, who were visiting army bases from Baghdad to Malta. "Wherever we went in Cyprus our bus had an armed escort of vehicles in convoy, and at least 10 men with tommy-guns," Jack says. "And once, when Jimmy Edwards was leaving to do a show, two small bombs were thrown."

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DISTRICT judges for the "Mobil Song Quest" this year will include a number of new people well known in musical circles. Three of them are seen above. Eileen Reed (left), one of the 1XN judges, has for the past five years been music specialist at the Girls' High School at Whangarei. She is a member of the executive of the Whangarei branch of the Community Arts Service. Grace Rutherford, a judge at 2XG, has been prominent in musical circles in Gisborne for many years as a soprano and a violinist and cellist. She has often been heard from 2XG. Last year she coached all the principals for the local production of "Rose Marie." Ernest Drake, one of the judges at 12B, studied in England, where he did concert work in the 1920s. Back in New Zealand, he taught singing in Dunedin for more than 30 years. Since he returned from another visit to Britain in 1951 he has lived in Auckland. He is the father of the well-known baritone Bryan Drake.

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