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REFERRING to a recent paragraph in *Open Microphone* about Benny Goodman's change of clarinet technique, I. R. Maxwell-Stewart, Wellington, writes: "I think I could successfully support the contention, against all comers, that the advent of jazz has revolutionised the instrumental technique of brass and reed instruments, with a consequent considerable enhancement of the work of the new generation of legitimate players, opening up new possibilities to the composer. It is ironic that Goodman should have decided it was necessary to make a complete change of playing technique to put his legitimate playing on a par with that of Kell, and, to do so, take lessons from, or exchange lessons, with him. The embouchure used by Kell was developed by a famous jazz reed player, Ross Gorman, and the first notable occasion of his using it was in the original rendition of Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue*. The glissando in the opening cadenza caused speculation in its day as to the instrument used, for at that date all the professors in all the conservatoires of the world declared a glissando or portamento impossible on the clarinet. It remains impossible for players using the legitimate clarinet player's embouchure with teeth holding the mouthpiece at the top and the lip or teeth pressing on the reed at bottom. The Gorman technique of lips only means that the sphincter muscle of the mouth must be considerably developed before sound can be produced, and six months of daily development are necessary before 10 minutes' consecutive playing can be tackled. The technique is today practically universal among jazz reed players, and it is puzzling that Goodman should have been an exception. The explanation lies, apparently, in Goodman's musical beginnings. Given a clarinet at 14 and being a natural musician, he played professionally almost immediately. It seems that he adopted the easiest method of producing sound, i.e., the old legitimate technique, and once having done so it would involve a cessation of playing to drop it. For a good example of the complete difference of tone produced by the two methods, compare Kell's recording of Weber's Concertino with that of, say, Draper or Thurston. It is possible that this revolutionising of technique in reeds and brass... may prove to be jazz's most noteworthy and permanent contribution to music as a whole..."

★
REX HARRISON, Christchurch baritone, who has just completed a series of broadcasts of Negro Spirituals from 3YC, has been a singer for 50 years. There was always music in the

Harrison home, for his mother was a singer and pianist and his father an organist. FIFTY YEARS OF SONG
choirmaster and band conductor. Before he reached 20 he spent a few years on the West Coast of the South Island. Contemporaries will remember him as the lead in some of Greymouth's musical productions. Rex Harrison then went through the competition stage (which has drawn public attention to virtues of many a young performer). He won several New Zealand Championships, and in 1928 was winner of the Sydney Sun Aria Contest. Mr. Harrison recalls an interesting experience in Perth. When no theatre was available for a public

Open Microphone.

recital, the Governor-General allowed him to give it in the ballroom at Government House—a large oval room with the best acoustics he has ever encountered. He has now been broadcasting regularly at 3YA for 23 years. Gardening is his hobby and his show piece is a grape vine which astonishes visitors to his home.

★
MOST New Zealand listeners have heard the imaginary life of Ted Ray as portrayed in the BBC show *Ray's a Laugh*. The facts are that the real Ray gets up at 7.30 a.m. and takes a cup of tea to his wife, Sybil.

IN REALITY He is often helped in the kitchen by his young son Andrew; there is an elder boy, Robin. Following the family breakfast Ray, just like any other man, attends to his mail; but unlike many other men, he has to open more than 200 letters a week. If he finds it necessary to use the telephone he goes to a near-by public call-box. He had his personal telephone cut off some time ago—not because he

couldn't pay for it, but because incoming calls got too much for him. A script of *Ray's a Laugh* means about two days' work, and rehearsals and the actual broadcast take up another day. Ted gets back home well after 11 p.m., to find supper waiting for him in the kitchen and a note from Sybil referring to the major happenings of the day and ending with the letter "Q and Q." They mean quickly and quietly—an order, says Ted, which he always obeys. An odd visit to a football match and invariably golf on Sunday mornings are his recreation.

★
VICTORIA KINGSLEY, guitarist and singer, intends to return to New Zealand in September of this year. After her New Zealand visit last year, she went to India. Writing to Keith M. Bennett, Community GUITARIST Arts Service tutor for TO RETURN the Regional Council of Adult Education in Wellington, she says that she worked extremely hard at Tagore University

On Stage in Korea and Japan

"SOLDIER audiences don't like vulgar jokes fired at them from the stage. They may laugh at the time, out of politeness, but you should hear what they say about it after the show. They regard vulgarity as an insult to their intelligence. I think that one of the reasons for our success was that the show was clean throughout." Ulic Williams told me on his return from a visit to Korea with the New Zealand Concert Party. He was leader, comper and comedian, and the other artists were Pat McMinn and Pauline Ashby (vocalists) and Des. Begg, all-round entertainer. Begg contracted jaundice half-way through the tour and became a patient in the British Commonwealth Hospital at Kure, where he had been entertaining only a fortnight previously. His place was taken by a young Maori soldier, Marlie Stirling, pianist.

"We had great receptions from the troops wherever we went, and the Maori items particularly caused vast interest."

said Mr. Williams. "We played 50 shows—to Kiwis, British Tommies, Australians, Canadians and Americans, and in some of the audiences there were Dutch, Ethiopians and Siamese. The Kiwi troops were wildly enthusiastic, probably because we were straight from their homeland."

The party was struck by the warm comradeship between New Zealand and Australian troops, who never lost the opportunity of abusing each other heartily—the soldier's way of expressing friendship. Ulic Williams said that there was a big gap in the ranks when Des. Begg had to leave, for he was pianist, ventriloquist, juggler, player of five instruments and a performer on musical bottles. All arrangements for the tour were carried out with the greatest efficiency, and half-way through the party was given a brand new piano, imported direct from England. During the tour, which lasted for two months, the party spent four and a half weeks in Korea and two and a half weeks in Japan.



PAT McMINN AND DES. BEGG entertaining troops in the British Commonwealth Hospital, Kure

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 10, 1953.