

# "It Always Beats Me!"

## Dave Howard Played a "Sax" in Church

**D**ID you ever hold the opinion that comedy, the saxophone and serious music don't mix? Listen in to Dave Howard and admit your error. He's one of the world's leading saxophonists by virtue not only of his ability to select the right notes at the right time, but also because he has evolved his own method of securing a tone seldom produced from that maligned instrument.

"It always beats me, even now," said the English saxophonist-comedian to the "Radio Record." "You go out and get people roaring with laughter, then play some good music, and you can hear a pin drop—except for the music. They like the mixture every time. Mind you, I've gone out of my way to produce the sax as a musical instrument, and with months and months of practice in a lonely room—for safety's sake—I cultivated a tone which is foreign to most saxophonists. Eight hours a day for months on end. The foundation of cornet-playing helped me, but I never play jazz.

"I was the first in Australia to play the saxophone in church. It was in Adelaide, at the Methodist Central Mission, who hold a Sunday afternoon service. The broadcasting people sent me along in reply to a request for an artist to help the service along. When I took my saxophone out the parson and his helpers trembled a bit, and when I walked out in front of the congregation, you can imagine what their faces were like. But it didn't take long to convince them that they hadn't been the victims of a comedian's joke, because I played the usual serious music."

Dave Howard has run his own revue shows in Adelaide during the last few years. He has played before Royalty in England in vaudeville, has conducted orchestras and brass bands and played in both. He once had his own



dance band in London on the stage, but doesn't now play jazz on the saxophone. The sax, he says, had a bad name, so he set out to give it a fairer one if possible. Hence his intensive study.

"Tommy Lorne and myself are, I think, the only comedians ever to have performed in Afghanistan," he said. "The place is too remote for most troupers, and the whites gave our show a great reception. After a bit of active service in the war I was with the entertainment department in charge of shows.

"A fellow in Brisbane once asked me what my hobby was. I told him it was hard work. I was educated in the school of hard knocks, and as relaxation from ordinary work I do more work. Writing my own stuff, and practising the sax keep me busy. Lots of people think that comedians spend their time reading funny books and indulging in light entertainment. My favourite book, which I call for more than any other, is my bank book."

The English entertainer doesn't feel quite a stranger here, for he has had lots of letters from New Zealand listeners during his Australian broadcasts. There is something to interest him in "discovering" New Zealand, too, for this is one of the few countries he has never been in before. The "Radio Record" asked him if he had any hints for beginners with the saxophone, in the hope of improving the standing of the instrument among musical people. But that's another story.

# Wanted Some Snow and a Swim

## Vincent Ryan's Only Vice is Sport, But He Gave the "Radio Record" the Shivers

**"P**ERFECT silence; peace—er, no; please. Absurd. What's a broadcasting studio for, anyway?"

That was how the "Radio Record" representative knew that the tall, straight, breezy young man who had walked into 2YA's main studio was Vincent Ryan. Introducing himself, the "Radio Record" representative mentally pushed the Australian comedian into a chair the other side of the gas fire—it was one of Wellington's coldest days.

"NOBODY takes any notice of that notice up there, Mr. Ryan, so you may go ahead and talk."

"What d'you want me to talk about?" he asked. "You know about all there is to know about me already—young Australian comedian, who started off as a registered chemist. People said I was mad to give up a good job for stage work, but prescribing for babies in the shop didn't appeal so much as prescribing tonics for people over the air. I'd always had a leaning toward entertaining, ever since I was at school."

"And have you decided that you weren't so mad after all?"

"Never been less so. By the way, where are the good beaches here?"

"Er—beaches?" asked the "Radio Record," shivering faintly.

"Yes. Places to swim at, you know. I'm a non-smoker and non-drinker. My vice is sport, and particularly swimming. I'm an enthusiastic member of the Bondi Surf Club in Sydney," continued Vincent Ryan.

"Water's pretty cold this time of year here, Mr. Ryan. We're a bit short of comedy broadcasts, as it is."

But the Australian persisted, and eventually heard a little about the beaches handy to the cities he is to visit. But still he wasn't satisfied about getting cold. The next thing he got on to was snow!

"Where do I see snow?" he asked. "People over the other side said that