



On this page to-day are some candid camera studies of well-known people snapped at the Wellington Travel Club's big reception to Lawrence Tibbett. They are the work of RICHARD ANDREW. The article published here is an exclusive interview with Mr. Tibbett by TREVOR LANE.

c'est cheap," she concluded in that delicious mixture of French and English that befits a girl who was born in Cannes.

The other evening when I met Lawrence Tibbett I asked him what he thought, and he was inclined to agree. But with reservations, for Tibbett has, perhaps, a greater sympathy with the great god Commerce which makes motion pictures, keeps hundreds of thousands of people in jobs and builds Box Office Appeal.

He had just finished his first New Zealand concert. The applause of a huge Wellington audience was still ringing in his ears—applause the like of which I haven't heard in Wellington since Dr. Malcolm Sargent gave his memorable performances in the same hall. Everyone would have gladly forgiven him if he had strutted a little for hadn't he conquered yet another country?

But Tibbett was just Tibbett, a charming fellow with the grace and good manners of the cosmopolitan artist. I suggested that perhaps he'd rather leave the interview till the next day.

"No," he said, "let me speak my piece right now. I'm not tired. To-morrow I've got all sorts of things to do—a reception and an appointment with your Lord Mayor. . . ."

"You honour Mr. Hislop," I said. "He's not the LORD Mayor. There ain't no such thing in New Zealand."

Lawrence Tibbett looked worried. "Well, I've been calling him the Lord Mayor all along. Do you think I've made a bad break?"

"Not at all. I think the Mayor should be rather flattered."

The conversation turned to musical talkies and their future.

"I think they've got a tremendous future," said Lawrence Tibbett. "The surface has only been scratched. I'm not suggesting that Hollywood should keep on turning out films about the poor struggling singer who strikes fame when the star falls over and sprains her ankle, but real musical films with perhaps an operatic theme and famous Metropolitan and Covent Garden stars.

"Opera isn't as formidable as people are inclined to think. You don't need to be a highbrow to appreciate it. The time is coming when movie producers will be sufficiently educated to believe in opera as a vehicle for films.



Everything merry and bright was the answer when this snapshot of Lawrence Tibbett and Wellington's Mayoress (Mrs. T. C. A. Hislop) was taken at the Travel Club's reception the other evening. Mr. Tibbett danced with the Mayoress during the party and the Mayor partnered Mrs. Tibbett.

"By that I don't mean one or two arias sandwiched in between a lot of boop-oop-a-doop crazy comedy, but the real thing, dignified and satisfying."

I asked him about his own plans for the future. After the New Zealand tour, he goes back to America for a concert tour, then a season at the Metropolitan Opera in New York, and, next spring, possibly, Europe and the famous Florence Festival. "There's something fine about singing in the famous opera houses of the old world—Vienna, Berlin, Rome, Paris. . . ."

"I heard Lily Pons singing at the Paris Opera a month or two ago," I said. "'Don Giovanni' was the opera—not a very good one—but the little prima donna was splendid."

"She's a great girl with a wonderful voice. I believe her European season has been a terrific success."

"Well, the Opera House in Paris was packed the night I was there. And she looked so at home among her own people. A day or two later I went in just at dusk to La Madeleine and there, beside the big altar, with its huge candles, was a little figure in a black costume, singing magnificently, and unaccompanied. Lily Pons—singing for the sheer joy of singing, and no one gaping or intruding. Men and women were devoutly kneeling beside the little side altars, the priests went to and fro on silent feet—it was something that I will remember for ever, that evening in the Paris dusk."

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