

THE CHANCE OF A LIFETIME

WHEN Ken Jonnart and I parted company one night last autumn at Liverpool where he was starring in club cabaret, neither of us had the remotest idea that the next news of the songster-compère's progress would come from the world's top variety theatre. However, such is the case. True, for Ken's sake, I felt some satisfaction when weeks later I heard that he had landed a London Palladium contract to understudy Frankie Vaughan during the long pantomime season there. But, while the responsibility of standing in for an important principal often carries prestige and infers potential, generally that's all—in only exceptional circumstances does it amount to more.

This is the story of the exception—and, of course, a

MINES FROM LANCS BY JAMES HARTLEY

sounded authentic and several similar reports on Ken's rescue operation at the Palladium have since reached me.

Repercussions were instantaneous and startlingly pleasant. It now seems that Ken Jonnart has well and truly arrived—and he is consequently a very happy man. He has been a slogger since he joined the business with strange ideas of what's musically what in variety, about six years ago. Experience is beginning to pay off.

Summer will see him a principal in the new Sunday Night at the North Pier series, top line Blackpool Sunday attraction—and after that Paul Cave (with whom he has just signed up for three years) has other good things lined up for him. Everything comes to him who tries—and can wait.

TO BE—OR...?

GERRY WEST waited 10 years for promotion from the local field of concerts and amateur operatics to the professional world. For six years he trained intensively, journeying 20 miles for regular lessons to befit himself for the break he hoped would come. In Derbyshire musical comedy circles with whom he is a favoured principal, it has been said time and time again that Gerry's starring qualities must eventually be recognised and nationally acclaimed.

A few days ago he acted as escort for his leading lady—Vivien Carman who has the titular rôle of Mallock society's "The Quaker Girl" production—when she went for her audition with the D'Oyly Carte Opera Company. Gerry had a go too—and Mr. Oyley, Carte musical director, Isidore Godfrey, promptly offered Gerry a long-term contract.

Would you believe it—Gerry West declined that offer and went back home.

I believe Mr. West showed good sense and acted in his best interests. In the first place, he is 34 years old and age is a very important modern standard; the professional artist should be established—not embarking on a career.

Furthermore, Gerry, very properly, had declined to consider his wife and two young sons at home. Unfortunately, domestic bliss is seldom compatible with a star entertainer's life which the artist shall court his/her public rather than a normal partner.

FOR MORECAMBE?

I HEAR Oldham's Margaret Kennedy is in great favour on the Continent where she has been touring for six months past, singing with the Paul Gold Orchestra.

For his fifth year Paul will be returning as musical director to Middleton Towers Holiday Camp, Morecambe, opening this month with his 15-piece orchestra, playing in the theatre and ballroom. Miss Kennedy, who sang at the camp two years ago, will be special guest artist with the band.

CALLING OLD

PALS

FRANK KESBY—the comedy-entertainer now living at 79 Bankdale Road, Birmingham, 8—has lost track of old friends Ted Dwyer, Frank Maddox, Ronnie Brandon, Dickie Pounds and Reginald Wooley, and for business reasons would like to get in touch with them.

Are they around?

POPS IN THE PARKS

STRETFORD municipal authorities have "seen the light". In addition to the traditional brass band concerts staged in the local parks there will be presentations of agers, during the summer months.

WELSH 1834



Ken Jonnart

very exceptional chicken bone. Probably Frankie Vaughan has devoured hundreds of chickens in his lifetime without ill effects—but never before, until that momentous occasion during his recent Palladium run, had a chicken bone lodged so inconsiderately, so obstinately, in the region of his tonsils—with such inconvenient results too.

Frank's disabled throat paved the way to the biggest chance of Ken's career—he was ordered to take over his principal's part during the latter's indisposition.

No-one better than the artist concerned can tell whether or not he has worked well—unless it's the back-stage staff. But it was not Mr. Jonnart who reported his success to me—it was Norman Vaughan when I met him recently in Manchester.

SUCCESS AT LAST

"I DIDN'T see young Jonnart deputising for Frank myself," he admitted, "but next night I found the boys endorsing over his work and they told me he had put up a wonderful show". That



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Lee Paris and the LP's, who appeared at the Nuffield Centre on May 1.

CLUB CORNER FROM COAL MINES TO SKYSCRAPERS

THE young man who graduated from the coal mine to building skyscrapers, Ken Vincent, the singing Doncaster collier who recently had mention in the top people's Sunday paper, "The Observer," is on the look-out for a summer season.

Ken resigned from the mines when he felt the coal dust was damaging his naturally strong lungs—and reports that the open-air building job, erecting skyscrapers Sheffield-way, to which he transferred, has done wonders for his vocal chords. His rich, well-rounded voice which has been likened to that of Mario Lanza, is now more vigorous than ever and he feels he could use it with advantage in a seaside season show.

SHEFFIELD STAR-BUILDER

FOR 15 years Mr. E. Farrell has been holding aloft the torch of variety in Sheffield, one of the busiest club areas in the country. He has been responsible for putting on some of the most ambitious cabaret presentations in the North and many stars have emerged from his promotions.

He can be reached at 47 Chatsworth Road, Totley, Sheffield.

TOP TURN

ALTHOUGH possessed of an established reputation in vaudville Ronnon Collins is comparatively a newcomer to Northern clubland—and he is now making his mark there.

A superb tap dancer, he is also an impersonator of great talent and versatility. His portrayal of Charlie Chaplin is phenomenal. It may prove worth while to prospective bookers to look in on him—he is well above ordinary standards.

GOOD INFLUENCE

ALTHOUGH it has been in existence only six weeks, Preston Federation of Concert Secretaries is already stirring up a keener than before interest for club concert arrangements in the area.

Regular auditions are proving a tonic to business from both viewpoints—artist and club. A little judicious newspaper advertising is attracting concert goers, and artists from a wide area—both mutual benefits. Artists have been known to walk out of these auditions with so many as six and more unexpected dates in the book.

Interested parties who wish to be present at forthcoming Preston auditions should get in touch with Tom Slater, Fishwick Ramblers Club, Preston.

BLACKPOOL CHANGE

THE rock trade (lettered-through Blackpool) is booming month-thinks. Pressure at his famous seaside factory has increased so much lately, to cope Eddie Loynds has had to part with his Blackpool Asot Club and concentrate attention on producing more and more

AT YOUR SERVICE

A MANCHESTER musician, Arnold Briggs and his following group, the Border Folk Four, who first came to notice in the TV series, "Focus," are now winning favour for their regular contributions to Border TV's "Make Mine Country Style" which, I am told, is hitting Top Ten TAM rating.

Arnold was once a member of the Lighthouse aggregation and played trumpet for several Lanes outfits. Now he is playing bass-fiddle—with Jean Brown, George Brocklebank and Norman McDonald, who work with guitars, banjo and mandolin, and sing, of course.

Now that their current TV series has ended these Border favourites will be on the look-out for one-night-stands, a camp or seaside season, to fill in until their recall to the television studios.



Ken Vincent

miles of the pineapple and mint varieties.
New Asot owner is Cliff Wrigley, former Oldham licensee. Oldham, noted for its pubs and clubs, is rich in entertainment talent—Eric Sykes and Dora Bryan may bear me out—and no doubt Blackpool will profit from Cliff's first-hand knowledge of it. First import from Oldham is keyboard-wizard Ken Jones with his hand—a versatile quartet. Song-dance team Nina and Johnny Daves (chip off the old block, comic Sandy Daves) were principals in the cabaret I saw. Watch out for them in "Scene at 6.30," "6.25," and "Old Time Music Hall" on your TV.

SHORTS AND SWEETS

RESIDENT - ORGANIST David Brown came of new boom at St. Annes Hotel, St. Annes-on-Sea. Regular concerts here recently featured Carl Comiff, Bill Lennox, Jean Coyle, Margaret Lawrence, etc. I hear Blackpool's Helena Harmes is booking... Bobby Day, Stalybridge's personable pop-stylist has taken over managerially at Shoulder of Mutton in South Norhampton... Droydsden singer Tony Murphy married... Heaton - Park guitar-man John Anthony making good recovery from tonsils operation will be back in circulation next week... Chic Murray and Maidie were a riot at Manchester Cromford last week—come back soon... N. East's Dick Ward who ran a successful solo agency has teamed with Social Club Services of Salford... Jerry Harris, ex comedy-compe Manchester Revue Bar is successfully touring N-West night spots prior to opening his own club in heart of Manchester... Salford Fusiliers' resident vocalist Juan Vitti opens for third summer season at Rhyll Coliseum June 10... Organ favourite Alan Haven has left Manchester and returned to London for sessioning, recording, and broadcasting... Yana du Bester-hed's New Came next Sunday... Liverpool's biggest beat binge—over 80 groups—staged tomorrow and Saturday.

Impressing Charlotte
The Two Bells recently presented their famous "Muscles Maketh Man" act in B.B.C.'s "Points North" magazine.
It happened that Charlotte Bingham, "Coroner" amongst "Weeds" was being interviewed in Manchester and it occurred to the programme director that it would be a pity to let the young actress go without for the young actresses to meet a northern man.

The Bells got a lovely plug out of it and Miss Bingham was duly impressed.
Liverpool man/wife team with their blindfold and other novel equilibristic routines are keeping busy and seem likely to continue so until the autumn when their stylish coming summer tour of the Pontin's holiday camps comes to an end.

HOT from SCOTLAND

Gordon Irving reports

NOW IT'S 'FIVE-PAST-EIGHT'—minus that Scottish flavour

IS the Scottish flavour that once gave "Five-Past Eight" its native and intimate character likely to be missed in the spectacular, glittering new production that now graces the stage of the Glasgow Alhambra?

It's a point to argue over for days, especially as there isn't a Scot in the show, but the first-night gals audience that welcomed talented Max Bygraves to its Saturday night heart didn't seem to miss the kill and the Auld Lang Syne trimmings. They showed their appreciation in no uncertain way, not only for the 30-minute song-and-patter act of Max, but also for the colour, the lighting, the sets—and, particularly, the dancing Tiller Girls.

This eye-catching show, aimed at a more sophisticated audience each summer could, virtually, be titled "An Evening with Max Bygraves and the Tiller Girls". Max has a dash of Danny Kaye, Maurice Chevalier and Jimmy Logan, all rolled into one relaxed entertainer.

I'd like him to include at least one Scottish number in his act, however. "I Belong to Glasgow", which he does so well on disc, would be ideal.

Make no mistake, though, this is exactly the same talented Max Bygraves we saw a couple of years ago at Glasgow Empire, and many years ago in a second-after-opening spot at the same vaudeville. The plushy Alhambra audience enjoys him in nifty-style intimacy, but I couldn't help wondering why so many seemed to have missed him at the old Empire.

Then there's son Anthony, who joins dad for a most likeable father-and-son spot. The George Mitchell Singers do a grand job, too.

A girl not to be omitted is Fay Lenore, who, I think, does a wonderful job in the "Italiana" scenes before the interval, and has star quality in her own right. Fully acknowledged in London or elsewhere. Performers as experienced as Fay don't grow in every show.

Howard and Wynonah have excelled themselves in spectacle via Dick Hurran's ingenuity. I hand it to whoever dreamed up the CinemaScope-style film opening, which looked like the rank of Second-Lieutenant. He was presented with the epaulettes, bars and badges at a company party. This makes him half civilian, half officer!"

Opening-night pleases: Seen at Stewart Cruikshank's after-show champagne stage supper—Scots artists, Andy Stewart, Calum Kennedy, Rudi Fulton, Jack Milroy, Kenneth McKellar, Alan McLean, Jack Short, May Dalziel, Freddie Carpenter, Hymie Stahl, Danny Regan, Maura Brody, Irene Campbell and many more... Eddie Fraser, BBC's senior variety producer, telling me he takes over production reins from Freddie Carpenter after the first fortnight of the Kenneth McKellar summer show at Aberdeen; Freddie is off to produce in Australia... The Kenneth McKellars infatigating in December... Arthur Guy, Howard and Wynonah party-booker, introducing his son Peter into the Scots theatre field... Aberdeen's Herbert Donald jumps up from London in his capacity as London-based publicity manager for Howard and Wynonah.

LINE-UP of show business personalities for the charity golf match at Hags Castle, Glasgow, on May 19, includes the football-crazy Tommy Trinder as a non-playing captain, Ben Warriss (captain), Jimmy Jewel, Eric Sykes, Dickie Henderson, Max Bygraves, Ted Ray, Paul Carpenter, Michael Medwin, Macdonald Hobley and Leslie Sarony.

It's all in the good cause of the Duke of Edinburgh's Awards scheme. I hear the Tiller Girls from Glasgow, and a Scot comic or two, will also be around. Passing thought: Isn't it odd how few of the Scots comics are golfers?

I've always wondered why so many people use the word "Command" when discussing Royal Performance. How wrong it is. The big show at Glasgow Alhambra on July 3 will be, simply, a Royal Performance which the Queen will attend during her visit to Scotland. It's wrong, even, to describe it as a Royal Variety Performance.

Early details of the gala night (America's Connie Francis is a hot new name due to be announced in Glasgow this week. It's a safe bet that Max Bygraves will be one of the stars, that much of the "Five-Past Eight" show will form the basis of the new production, and that talented guest artists from London and America will join the resident company.



Jane Lindsey, the Scottish soubrette who is touring Aden, Kenya and the Persian Gulf for CSE in a show featuring Edna Savage. In addition to her own song and dance numbers, Jane features the memory act and feeds the comedian.

SCOTSMAN Johnny Farlane keeps busy in Europe. Home for a few days, he tells me he leaves for a month's tour of Turkey in June.

"Then I go on to Capri and Verona in Italy for two weeks, and follow with a full month in Paris in August."

His Turkey tour is for the American bases, and Cherry Wainer, the rhythm organist, is on the bill. In Germany, by the way, Johnny was made an honorary member of the 48th Maintenance Company at Mannheim, holding the rank of Second-Lieutenant. He was presented with the epaulettes, bars and badges at a company party. This makes him half civilian, half officer!"

THINGS-THAT from a "Five-Past Eight" reception in Glasgow: Max Bygraves telling me he's been invited to star at the next London Palladium pantomime... Lionel Blair, Britain's "Fred Astaire of the 60's", enthusing as always over show-business... The Croft Twins proving the answer to press photographers' prayers... Alma Michaels discussing her precious dogs, just in from America... Dick Hurran estimating the production at £50,000, a minimum.

THINGS-I-LIKE dept.: Dennis

Spicer's wonderful vent, act on Palladium TV: Glasgow sees Dennis in the second edition of "Five-Past Eight" in July... David Hughes' breezy comping of "Housewives' Choice"... Dickie Valentine's all-embracing, all-round entertainment spot at Glasgow Metropole, even though some of his eggs were real "corny"... Eileen Keegan's personality song act, soon to be seen in Rothsay summer show.

Scots performer Dick Powell (he's really Hamish Dick, from Dalruis West) set to be song-and-dance man in summer floor-show at the Hermitage Hotel, Guernsey; he's a former worker in John Brown's shipyard in Clydebank... Margo Henderson chosen to be one of Maurice Chevalier's guests in a forthcoming ATV spectacular.

WILL Sammy Davis junior, sport the kilt on his two concert dates at Glasgow Odeon on May 15/16, 17?

The colorful entertainer will be a wow if he does. I hear he's travelling straight from Leeds to Glasgow, and leaves from Scotland for a couple of nights at the Brighton Hippodrome.

The Glasgow Odeon may well take the place of the old Glasgow Empire (now being demolished) as the main Scottish venue for top U.S. stars.

(Gordon Irving's address: THE VIEWER, Theatre Royal, Glasgow. Tel. Glasgow DOUGLAS 9999. Ext. 155.)

S O S

F. ROBINSON of Allied Capital Productions (Little France, Edinburgh 9) writes that he is arranging a series of shows for the "Hunger Campaign" and would be glad to hear from artists willing to help.