

Lines from LANCES

by JAMES HARTLEY

IT WAS A great day for John Mawdsley and his Burrows when they were introduced to one another in Liverpool four years ago and discovered their mutual interest in songwriting. They joined forces, pooled ideas, and there's no doubt about it, their combined talents and "commercial" understanding have given birth to a number of very promising samples of melodic invention, one or two of which could well add up to a "hit" material.

Their output is no less than prolific and some of their work has already been tested out by well-known musicians and entertainers in the Merseyside area with results so favourable as to boost their hopes for bigger things to come. Eventually they have ideas of persuading Vince Hill, Ken Dodd and Des O'Connor (there's one palatable morsel especially styled for Jimmy Tarbuck) and other top balladeers to lend an ear.

Here is some good and entirely unexpected news for them: a few days ago I approached Irish recording star, Joe Cuddy (the Eirean representative in the forthcoming July Yugoslavian Split Festival) with one of their compositions. He was so impressed that he has retained it — with promise of rehearsal and try-out with his own ensemble now based in Dublin's Clare Manor. Thus we should get a fair idea of its true potential," he told me. Young Cuddy also had another happy thought: he suggested that the Mawdsley-Burrows team should submit some of their numbers for trial in the Castlebar International Song Contest. A capital idea.

AGENT-IMPRESARIO Ernie Mack staged yet another of his famous summer showcases at the Liverpool Broadway Club last week. The bait which attracted a glut of first-rate club and cabaret acts was prospect of overseas contracts. Ernie's last mammoth talent parade at this popular Merseyside rendezvous resulted in seasonal engagements for Lee Williams (to the Isle of Man), Johnny Gett and Mandy Williams (to Butlin's), Mike Hayden, Beryl Carter, Day and Night, Jan and Derek Lee, Peter James (to Jersey), Joey Kaye, Steve James, Ian Ross (New Brighton) and Bill Edwards (Cliffonville). E.M.'s showcases really count for something (I regret that owing to a family bereavement — my sister Dorothy Crookes, Midlands concert violinist and orchestra leader, died in Leicester — I was unable to attend the show). Who were the lucky ones this time Ernie?

IT'S AGES since Ken Palmer last enjoyed a break: he has been working continuously, 365 days to the year, since he signed up with Terry Cantor at Leeds City Varieties in 1969 — till last weekend when he came over to Blackpool for a "holiday with pay" to "chair" the Celebrity Music Hall (with Bruce Lochie, Jane Bell, Alex Millar, Freddie Platt and Brian Kelly) at the Tower. What a personality, radiating warmth and geniality, he's fairly blossomed under the old Chubbychops' direction — as Mr Interlocutor in OTMH, Baron in pantomime, spesh in summer shows and variety — and now, with the exception of the odd cabaret date ("The rent man is still a regular caller") he will be

resting on his laurels till the summer season comes round and he settles in at Lowestoft for 10-12 weeks. As chairman of GM Productions' Music Hall at the Pier Pavilion he will be introducing Kim Cordell, Sandy Lane, Tommy Bruce (principals) and a supporting cast of redoubtable strength, and presenting his own specialty lightning cartoons, paper-tearing, singalongs) in the bargain. The show opens on June 26.

WHEN it comes to commanding the crowd of club takers, a Cavendish in Blackburn (a Bailey stronghold) takes a back seat to none: in the way of live entertainment for the mods Blackburn has never had it so good. During the course of any month of the year, this lush town-centre night-spot (with roof-top car-park) uses enough No. 1 acts to make up a star-studded London Palladium bill — and public response to the tune of 5,000-6,000 customers a week makes it all well worth while.

This month's big-name draws include Little Mr Large, the Baron Knights, White Plains, Bobby Bennett, Dave Berry; and the June parade will be headed by Tommy Hill. On the bandstand, backing the artists and playing for dancing, Jeff Ludlow wields the baton, and resident singer Julie Sheridan introduces the acts. Six resident dingles keep the customers happy in the Go-Go annexe, and Alan Pye is the popular young DJ running things in the 2001 disco. You've got to hand it to manager Sid Stewart — he's right on top of the job — every department plainly reflects his efficient direction.

AS THE door closes... in fact a couple of noted northern night-ers shut up shop almost coincidentally with Terry Phillips' launching of Mr Pickwick, a bright new night spot in Liverpool's Fraser Street where with the accent on current musical trends and top line variety, success already seems to be a foregone conclusion.

Terry's no newcomer to the game: he is concerned in the direction of a number of well-favoured Mersey clubs including the Wokeye — hothouse for potential stars — where his friend and former colleague Alan Webster now rules the roost. Following in the illustrious footsteps of Lovelace Watkins here, Zarada (formerly Ossie Rae) aided and abetted by sincerity-songster Johnny St George, has just finished a stint, stirring it up with some remarkable revelations stemming from his "second sight" demos. The pair should have returned for the umpteenth time to star in summer show at Bangor-Down next month but owing to a change of heart, they have opted for a change and are joining Tony Dowling and Frank Tomasso for a 20-week season in Jersey instead.

ELAINE PEARLMAN

THE DEATH of Elaine Pearلمان on April 17, only eighteen days after the passing of Delysia Wheeler on March 30 brings to an end one of the most fruitful partnerships in West End show business.

The two were close friends, working together as teachers of stage dancing in their studio at Max Rivers in Great Newport Street. Many of today's most successful professional dancers owe much to their expertise and all who passed through their hands will remember their kindness and understanding.

THERE is no doubt about it, when it comes to the nitty-gritty of cabaret on an international scale, artists such as Frankie Vaughan and there are surprisingly few of them about — fly hands down over all the wily-night pop singers and earnest young 'collegial' performers who might manage to fill the Royal Albert Hall once.

Frankie Vaughan is making his sixth appearance at the Talk of the Town and there is no reason that I can see why he should not do at least another six seasons there. For he seems to have managed to attain a timeless appeal. We know for instance, that his act will be based on a mixture of old-time vaudeville songs and those numbers that he himself took into the charts in the late fifties and early sixties. The fact is that his 'programme' does not really matter in itself. The important thing is Frankie Vaughan's own personality, which has brightened even further, if that is possible, by his recent show business journeyings in Australia and Hong Kong.

He is just as lithe and vibrant and much more a master of his audience, as he was on his variety debut at Kingston Empire back in 1949, and the intervening years have given his voice a greater richness which suggests that he could if he so wished put in one of the better contemporary ballads.

One thing is certain — the response of the Talk of the Town audience to his act is greater than ever, and quite a few of those present will be making tracks for the local record shop to buy his latest disc "Paradise" prominently featured in his recital, which is enthusiastically backed by Roy Moore directing the string augmented house orchestra.

THE SETTLERS were formed nine years ago, and this is a not unimportant fact, for it means that they have weathered many a trend movement in pop music and have absorbed the best of what has happened since 1963. When I first mentioned them in this column they were a group of five, together they could have been categorised as a folk group but what has distinguished the Settlers and has enabled them to survive and thrive is that very early in their career they decided entertainment values were as important as their sound. So, over the past few years, their date sheets disclose an astonishing variety of work — cabaret in every type of venue, theatre, and a host of appearances on radio, dozens of TV appearances and quite a few discs, none of which with the possible exception of "The Lightning Tree" has quite won them the acclaim they merit.

The concert the other Saturday at the Queen Elizabeth Hall — their fourth appearance in this somewhat forbidding auditorium — represented a splendid fusion of their many talents. From a purely musical point of view there can be few better groups in the world today for their intonation and cohesion are faultless, being best illustrated by their second encore "The Rhythm of Life." Yet I suspect that much of their lasting success has been due to the careful blend of relaxation and discipline that characterises their performances. Many of their songs demonstrate a religious as well as a social conscience but they do not rub this aspect in and switch from the serious to the humorous with an ease that compels admiration.

The best of their comedy numbers are "Down Waterloo Road," (with what used to be called "novelty accompaniment") and "Rhubarb Tart," but they are perhaps most impressive with the joyful "Gospel" medley, with the voice of Cindy Kent ringing out loud and clear. An item that really took my fancy however, was "Ewan MacColl Meets Elvis Presley", in which the three boys John Fyffe, Mike Jones and Geoffrey (whose surname is, I believe, almost unpronounceable) give a brilliant impression of

"Blue Suede Shoes" as it would be sung by a trio of traditional English folk artists.

NOW THAT London is gaining ever greater prominence as a tourists resort, I believe we can expect an increasing number of tourist-orientated restaurants and places of entertainment on the lines of the Stewart Room, which has opened recently in Baker Street.

"Orientated" is exactly the right word to use in this context, because on my visit a high proportion of the diners were Japanese, tucking in manfully to helpings of haggis and listening quite fascinated to Robert Pearson, the restaurant's resident pianist.

Equally interesting to overseas visitors is the singing style of Christina Lang, of North Uist, for this young lady is an exponent of "port-a-beul", the Gaelic "mouth music" an art form which is seldom encountered outside the Scottish islands, and never before, as far as I know in a West End restaurant.

Completing the trio of tartan-clad artists is Diana Lorenz, who is Scottish by adoption (unlike me, who is Scotch by absorption) and was in fact mentioned the other week in connection with Dino Pardi's recent variety show at Chiswick Town Hall. Diana, who actually sings in several languages and accompanies herself on guitar, is a lovely and talented girl, making a hit last year in summer season at Teignmouth.

I DON'T know whether to believe or not, but Lew Lane of Churchill's assure me that he has got his summer specialities lined up for 1973, let alone this year — which makes a change after visiting clubs that do not know what acts are booked next week!

But as there's many a slip twixt cup, etc, perhaps I should not mention names as yet and should just say that this summer Sam and Sammie and the Three Pillars will be sunning themselves in Bond Street, and that for the merry month of May there are two newcomers in the club who are not confused with Dieter Oswino) and American magician Tony Marcus.

Actually, I have failed to mention previously that recent acts in the Churchill's spotlight have included Yvonne Dichel and Eric, presenting their exciting but somewhat violent drama in Montmartre, the Keeners, most polished and elegant of male cabaret acts, one of the few balancing acts which invited audience participation, and Marquee, who is quite likely tired of my describing her as matchless but I really cannot think of a more suitable adjective.

While Charles Yates has been on holiday, a notable deputy has been engaged in John Hale, making an almost anonymous return to the club where he started for he is now better known as Glenn Weston, a name to which he will doubtless revert when he resumes his busy round of solo engagements.

A SMALL club which has been bravely putting on some multi-act shows is the Georgian, and its owner Gerald Stricks, is I have decided, quite definitely paying the artists a compliment when he describes the cabaret as a "disaster."

Moving with considerable popularity through the Bury Street disaster zone of late have been Rosalinda and Garth, whose adagio act is performed with such taste that one is inclined to forget they have nothing on for half of it, and exotic Lorelei, a beautiful redhead who sounds disconcertingly like Matt Monro, until you realise that she is disarming discreetly to taped accompaniment.

Vocally, Nancy Waters, caught the eyes and ears the other week, for here is a girl with something of the vitality of Millie Martin, and for good measure the Georgian has presented two of London's roaming residents Honey Brown and Peter Brent, whom I mention to men to let me sure people are beginning to talk!

YORKSHIRE RELISH

by James Towler

LEEDS'S own Duggie Clark is, I learn discarding his O.T.M.H. chairman's garb in order to take over the role of host and principal comedian in "Showtime '72" at Bridlington's 38's Theatre Bar and Restaurant (the re-vitalised Grand Pavilion) opening on May 26. And just to prove its all true he's sent me a brightly coloured poster to ram the message home.

What is more Bridlington Corporation look to have lined up a winning team for this year's show, for, in addition to Duggie, the company includes the vivacious and talented Vanessa Kind, who did so well at Filey a couple of years ago; Bunty Nield, a magician who has an insatiable diet for razor blades; multi-instrumentalist Syd Marx and that most attractive of song and dance couples, Mark and Madeline, who were such a big hit at Brid a couple of years ago.

Rounding off the show are one of clubland's favourite vocal-instrumentalists, The J. C. Combo, who have earned themselves a return booking following last year's success. With the additional attraction of 15 first-class comedians in "Sunday Showtime" it looks as if the 38's is set fair for another good season.

CHRIS AND EILEEN O'CONNOR continue to turn in a good spot. Their recent visit to the Wakefield Theatre Club was enhanced by the splendid backing they received from the Willie Hurst Orchestra and if pianist Johnny Harrison looked pleased with himself he had every reason to be — for he was responsible for some of the excellent arrangements including a particularly scintillating version of the old Box Toss hit "The Letter."

LATEST publication to land on my desk is "Fiesta" — the newspaper of Europe's Top Night Spot. And while there will be those who challenge that assertion, there is little doubt that the management of Sheffield's Club Fiesta are to be congratulated on the successful launch of their own paper.

Coming at a time when so many clubs are lax in selling themselves, this brightly produced house journal regarding the club, its key personnel and — most important of all — its coming attractions. Top marks to Keith and Jim Liphorpe for a splendid effort.

A LOT of stars complain of the shortage of new faces but few of them do anything about it. Perhaps it is because they fear the competition. Top marks, then, to O'Connor, who does not seem to have to worry about competition anyway — for using his current TV series to include many of the better acts in the current season in his cabaret. Like singer Martin Dale for example who was doing his own thing on the box just the way he does at the Wakefield Theatre Club where he is also Managing Director as well. Well done, Martin; well done, Des. Opportunities like these are still too few and far between.

Obituary

COUNTESS ZENA ROSAIRE COUNTESS ZENA ROSAIRE, matriarch of the famous Rosaire Circus family, died, recently, at the age of 94, at her home, in Bileny, Essex. She was buried next to her husband, the late COUNT FREDERICK ROSAIRE at Brentwood Cemetery.

Countess Rosaire were prominent as Circus owners and performers for over 50 years. In 1942, on the outbreak of the war, she put a special Circus programme in the presence of King Peter of Yugoslavia, and the Duke of York and Prince of Wales, with TOMMY TRINDER as Ringmaster.

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'RAISING KANE'

By Tommy Kane

IS THE NASHVILLE ROOM — that West London pub with the international C&W reputation — where near the end of the trial? Nope, answered Kane, having rode thataway. Far on a typical Tuesday night, the old corral was as packed as it was, say, some two years ago — hot diggity dawg and yes!

Indeed (and having flickered his eyes over the clientele therein), where near the end of the trial? Nope, answered Kane, having rode thataway. Far on a typical Tuesday night, the old corral was as packed as it was, say, some two years ago — hot diggity dawg and yes!

AT THE Royal Naval Club in West Ham, one had bumped into that club personality who has never really made his debut in the column before. JIMMY McKAY.

Now this is surely an oversight on my part, for our Jim Lat is highly-popular, has a shrewd pen, and is surely a goldmine for courses, and for the past three years, to my knowledge, has been responsible for providing many artists with work and many venues with grand nights of entertainment.

And having come this far in the column mentioning personalities rather than clubs and cabarets, it might as well now go the whole hog and introduce another artist in the type of artist who has been mentioned in the column before. A worthwhile mention it is too; for Dorothy, who represents the type of artist who might well be considered the rank outsider in any talent contest, was the dark horse who was beaten by a photo-finish in the ICC Talent Finals.

An attractive lass with a powerful voice, our Dorothy demonstrated that she knew what it was all about when she first set 'em up with "The Lord's Prayer" and the bowled 'em over with a rousing old-time medley, and a experienced artist who quickly dominated the stage and who, just as a further bonus, provided a party with some thunderous singing from one and all!

STORIES we'd LOVE to unfold... the artist who attended a bar-racker in the audience... of the act who almost set fire to a West End theatre... the artist who forgot to charge Kane for a cup of tea... of eight singers who, at the Wafoord Social, won the first heat of "THE PEOPLE" talent 'test'... of the columnist who accepted two Dinner / Cabaret dates taking place at the same time but twenty miles apart — hey, it's all happening!

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