

CAPACITY AT BATLEY!

For Corrigan's Crowd-Pullers

LINES from
LANCS by
JAMES HARTLEY

If you wanted a good hiding to nothing you'd pick a tiny town in tough Yorkshire where they are noted for demanding more than value for money and open a club designed to cater for crowds of 2,000 or so.

That is precisely what JIM CORRIGAN (backed all the way by his lovely wife-partner BETTY) did — he hasn't got a good hiding but what he has got is an exceedingly good proposition, an entertainment-centre to rival anything of the kind in the UK, to boot, BATLEY VARIETY CLUB.

Not only do the natives customarily frequent the place by BATLEY VC pulls in patrons from within a radius of 100 miles — and even further afield.

How is it done? Simply by booking the country's finest entertainers — at very substantial fees — and not only the British headlines but acts with an international reputation as well.

I was there recently to see capacity business nightly for a bill comprising THE DRIFTERS, ZARAEDA WITH JOHNNIE ST GEORGE, PAT O'HARE, PETER WALLIS, AND MAXINE BARRIE — everyone a bill-topper in his/her own right.

Compared with London's West End the fare the Corrigan's offer fully

warrants the reasonable entry fees charged, and once inside, you can dine well and, by to-day's standards, inexpensively. Drinks too are reasonably priced and the amenities generally are of an order such as to be commended to the most fastidious of folk.

Needless to say, with the quality of entertainment on which Batley has built its reputation over the past nearly 11 years, the back-stage arrangements ought to be so-so — they are — the KEN NEWTON VARIETY SHOWBAND is superb (it must be a treat for artists to work with such talented musicians) the lighting is spot on, and the sound system out of this world.

No matter how voluminous the clamour and acclaim of the packed house, an artist at the mike can be clearly heard everywhere in the spacious auditorium — a highly satisfactory state of affairs in no way due to excessive decibels but to well maintained equipment and unusually good acoustics.

Although not topping the bill when I called the AMAZING ZARAEDA (pretty nearly a fixture at Batley these days) was putting on his mind-boggling ESP performance which over the last decade he has presented at this club for a record of 63 weeks. It's still a spell-binder.

From MERLIN to URI GELLER the soothsayers have both respected and suspected, and ZARAEDA is in the true line of the great extra-sensory prophets. He has many accurate forecasts to his credit including world-shaking events, and, of course, he has worked with some of the most illustrious entertainers of the day, including DAVID FROST with whom he was seen in a mem-



● Zaraeda — whichever way you look at him, he's amazing!

orable television interview.

Z's background is well prepared by colleague JOHNNIE ST GEORGE who himself is a first-class compere and strong balladeer in the polished Sinatra style. They have been together for 17 years now and one might well imagine that after so long an association both performance and presentation would have become stereotyped — not so — Johnnie has a seemingly endless eloquence, manifestly sincere in its content. As for Zaraeda, though his predictions are usually so bafflingly accurate, he himself in performance is unpredictable. Every performance is different — you never know how it will end, nor does Zaraeda.

I have seen his act — if act it be — on at least 100 occasions and every performance has been marked by the unexpected challenge most adequately dealt with.

My own experience of Zaraeda's uncanny perception has indeed been remarkable — if he is not abnormally gifted then it is undoubtedly the cleverest illusionist in the business. My own judgement is not suspended — I really believe in his integrity.

Glad to hear from you anytime at 144a Reads Avenue, Blackpool.

Obituary

CRESS
SONNY CRESS, internationally known as one of the foremost of alto saxophonists, has died aged 50 in Los Angeles.

He was prominent with the STAN KENTON and BUDDY RICH ORCHESTRA and from 1962 to 1965 he was based in Europe, making a number of appearances in London.

HOT FROM SCOTLAND

By Gordon Irving

Her name is DIANE DeFORGE, but she began as Diane Smith seven years ago at the age of eleven in a LEX McLEAN show at the WHITEHALL THEATRE, Dundee. Now she's back to play the Fairy and lead the Marie Ashton Dancers in "Jack and the Beanstalk."

Says Diane: "Since leaving Scotland four years ago I've always wanted to return to Dundee." She has a fascinating link with yesterday — her grandmother, known as Doris DeForge, was a dancer with the Estelle Gadsby Dancers over 60 years ago. There's tradition for you.

Tenor DAVID YOUNG, originally from Saltcoats where his parents live, is back from three months of cruising with the Norwegian-American Line Ship Vistafjord, visiting Russia, Turkey, Greece, Rumania, South America, Mexico, the West Indies and America. "The kilt is maybe more popular now with foreigners," he says. "Most of my passengers were Americans and Germans, and they love the 'auld Scots songs.'" Wearing the kilt was how David started in the business in 1961 at the old Edinburgh Palladium. He hopes, one day, to get the chance to sing them in Scotland again. He keeps writing to Scots agents, but they don't reply.

Pantomime pickings: MONICA DELL, playing the Prince in "Sleeping Beauty" (King's, Glasgow) sang in France for ten years, featuring at the Casino de Paris and appearing with EDITH PIAF at the Deauville Casino; she has toured Europe with her own musicians... RICHARD AVON, from Bristol, is playing his third Scottish pantomime as the Baron in Glasgow Pavilion's "Cinderella"; he now spends most of his time on the cabaret and club circuit... Comedian EDDIE ROSE, of Pitlochry, Perthshire, recently back from a tour of North America, collects Scottish

recordings and has over 300 LPs... Keen theatre man from the same county is ARTHUR JACKSON, of Luncarty, Perth, who worked with a younger DAVID NIXON in CSE... BERNIE WOODS, general manager at the EMI Club, Clydebank, has produced his own show "A Good Old-Fashioned Christmas Show"...

Lighting expert FRANCIS REID, 45, up to add his expert eye to lighting pantomime at Edinburgh and Glasgow, is a Scot, born Prestonpans, educated Edinburgh, now based on a river bank of the Norfolk Broads at Wroxham, and glad Air Anglia has brought Scotland so close. He got his first taste of theatre in pantomime at the Theatre Royal, Edinburgh, and the King's, Edinburgh.

He said: "My earliest theatrical recollection, one that's crystal clear, is of DAVE WILLIS, climbing a ladder with collapsible rungs." In the late 1950's and early '60's, he stage-managed for Howard and Wyndham, including the original one-and-only "A Wish for Jamie."

"By the time I get home Christmas Eve I'll have worked on 25 pantomimes over 17 Christmases. The seven barren Christmases when I didn't do panto seemed all wrong."

Francis devotes a lot of his time now to writing and lecturing, has just completed four years as Editor of "Tabs" and is selling briskly his Stage Lighting Handbook both in the U.K. and America. Every two years he gives a course at the Candian National Theatre School in Montreal.

Memory corner: Theatre buff HENRY RINTOUL, of 4 Main Street, Elphinstone, Tranent, East Lothian, collects autographed photographs of performers, and has a collection of well over 5,000. He's keen to get photographs to go with signatures of GEORGE WEST, MA and PA LOGAN, character actor ERIC WIGHTMAN. Henry sends me a fascinating playbill of the New Theatre, Hawick, with HARTLEY POWER on the bill as Harry C. Power. The best seat in the circle was 1s. You could get a 2d seat in the gallery — but, alas, no half-price in that section!

Recording producer DAVID SILVER, who lives in the West End of Glasgow, has launched a new and modern studio, and can offer facilities for performers to try out their work. He welcomes Scottish country dance bands, folk groups, singers, instrumentalists; already he himself has nearly 100 LPs to his credit on the Lisamor and Decca labels. You can reach David at 041-339 3167.

KILMARDDINNY THEATRE Group, at Beardsden, near Glasgow, staged "The Cherry Orchard," DEIRDRIE MURRAY directing; she's an expert on the Chekhovian theatre... DAVID FRASER is new publicity manager at the MacRobert Centre,



● Diane de Forge, leading the dancers in Dundee.

Stirling, was previously with the Scottish Philharmonic Society at Edinburgh... Ayr Gaiety has opened with "Mother Goose"; ditto, Glasgow Citizen's... Scots variety agent PETER DE RANCE did a good job introducing the cast of "Cinderella" at a Glasgow Pavilion reception... So what else is NEW or NEWS? I'm off for a Christmas-New Year break in the South African sun, so mail all your news for the next few weeks to my deputy JOHN MOORE, 20 Woodend Road, Alloway, Ayr, who'll be HOT-ing it FROM SCOTLAND down the Ayr Gaiety and Burns Country way, though with an all-embracing Scottish slant. Happy festive days and nights.

Obituary

McCRAE

JOSH McCRAE, 44, well-known folk singer, has died. He was planning a return to the Scottish folk music scene, and died after a one-night stand at Aberfoyle.

Born in Strathmiglo, Fife, he worked mainly in Glasgow, and won fame with his recording of "Messing About on the River" and a song about the space success of the Russian cosmonaut, Yuri Gagarin.

The address at his funeral was given by JIMMY MACGREGOR, the folk singer, who attended the Glasgow School of Art with McCrae.

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