

IS IT THE BAND OF THE YEAR?

IF you want to hear something new and exciting in dance band music, go to the Palm Court on Sunday, when Earl Gill will again direct the new augmented 14-piece orchestra, the biggest in the country. It made its debut on Sunday week and I can tell you it's outstanding, with saxes, strings, brass and rhythm sections all blending beautifully. Hear Dick Dorney singing the new "hit," "Give Me Your Word," accompanied by the violins, and you'll agree that this is the "Gimmick of the Year."

The Villa Ballroom, Bray, will reopen on Saturday, having received a new bandstand, flooring, wall-lights and other comforts. Leo Singleton's band will play for first-night patrons, but a resident band may be appointed later. Formerly known as the Ace of Clubs, the new Villa, situated on Bray's famous esplanade, should attract good business when the finer weather comes.

In brief

Stephen Garvey will open his 36th year touring with his ten-piece band at the New Hall, Ennis, on Sunday. The Castlebar man comes to the Mansion House on May 5th, after a long absence, and has a tour of the English Midlands and London lined up for October next.

That much-travelled ceilidhe band, led by Malachy Sweeney, moves over to Galway from its Armagh base for Easer, with dates all over the West for the week.

Chick Smith takes to the road again on Sunday, with a date in Glenamaddy, followed by another on Monday in Falcarragh. Trombonist Frank Dunne joins the line-up from the Olympic. The band, of course, goes to Bundoran's Astoria for the summer season.

Leo Singleton, who has been engaged for most Saturday nights in the Orchid Ballroom, Dun Laoghaire, begins a regular Tuesday night date in Donnycarney parish hall soon.

Dick Dorney

That popular Leesider, Pat Crowley, is fully booked up between Easter and the 22nd May, when—yes, you're right—he goes to Ballybunion for his 26th summer season.

Tom Ivory has done it again! Following his successful bookings of the Gay McIntyre and Kevin Woods bands for the Olympic two-band sessions at recent week-ends he is bringing Dave Glover and his famous Dixieland band from Belfast with B.B.C. vocalist Lynne Shaw for a big two-band presentation on Sunday March 6. With Sean O'Brien's House band of twelve playing at its peak just now, this should break all Dublin ballroom records.

An appearance by Kevin Wood's band anywhere these days means one thing—queues and an early HOUSE FULL notice. The man from Drumshanbo tells me he has increased his Dixieland library and is just "Rarin' to go to town again." You'll be hearing more about Kevin and his star attraction, coloured trombonist and vocalist Carl Riely, before the summer is over.

The Palm Court loved this two-band Dixieland session

Many would welcome a "jar" during a dance, but not this kind! That's only for cattle. Actually, these "cows" are part of the attendance at the Agricultural Students' Dance in the Metropole, Dublin, lately. They are preparing for a cabaret.

DANCING DIARY

IT was "Dixieland night" in the Palm Court last Saturday week. For the first two hours the Earl Gill bandshow served up a programme of traditional jazz that surpassed anything I've heard this youthful outfit do. Then at ten p.m. Kevin Woods's eightpiecer went on. The crowds sat back to listen to the boys from Drumshanbo. But they didn't sit back for long! Before the first number was finished they were unable to resist the exciting beat and sparkling performance.

From then until midnight, the seven instrumentalists in the Woods' outfit showed the Dublin dancers why they are such an attraction in the provincial dancing world.

Fronted by tenor saxist Woods, who, I noticed, concentrated on leading his group and wisely left the announcements to bassist Noel Gaffney and the singing to Tony Johnson and other members, the band is better dressed and presented than most, and takes a minimum rest between numbers so that its almost non-stop dancing.

Never falters

The singing of vocalist Tony Johnson is first-class, and the vocal groups and solo instrumental numbers provide the right amount of variety without letting the beat falter.

My plans last Wednesday night were to visit Dundrum to hear the Flying Carltons in the Astor, then

Dun Laoghaire to see the Top Hat Trophy and Sammy Leckie and partner demonstrating, and Clery's for the Shamrock Rovers' dance. But with snow and ice making the roads impassable I had to stay in town, and once I got inside Clery's I was loath to leave its comfort and the enjoyable company of the Rovers' directors, players and friends.

By DANCALOT

Besides, Billy Watson and his band were beating out such wonderful dance music that after awhile you even forgot how you were going to get home afterwards! I got the surprise of my life that night, for making their debut as guest artists were two of the prettiest girl vocalists I have seen in many a day. The harmonising duets of these girls of Maestro Watson's (he's been coaching them for months) stopped the dancing.

VERA SINGS LIKE BETTY HUTTON AND ALMA COGAN

WHILE I don't agree a hundred per cent. with the statement made by an experienced musician recently that "a good vocalist is half the band," I know that a lively singer can inject more "life" into a band, encourage it to better performances and generally sell it to the public.

For that reason I have sympathy for the provincial band leaders who generally have difficulty securing and holding a personality singer. Unlike their Dublin counterparts who have a reservoir of talent at their disposal, the country leader has to import his singers from abroad for few city vocalists like living out of town and out of touch with radio broadcasts or theatre appearances.

BEATS THE PROBLEM

One man who always beats the problem is Kevin Woods. He never fails to present a class singer with his streamlined outfit. On a trip through County Meath recently I came across the Drumshanbo man's band and heard his latest discovery . . . a vivacious brunette with the style of a Betty Hutton and Alma Cogan rolled into one.

~~But the biggest surprise of~~
all was that nineteen years
o'd Vera Morgan (at right), a
Dublin girl. How was it that
Dublin ballroom owners didn't
discover her?"

NEVER before have I known so many provincial bands to hit the city circuit at the same time as has been the case since Easter. Even with the best will in the world, I could not get around them all, nor does space permit a detailed report on those I did hear.

There were the Melody Aces in the Olympic on a recent Saturday night. It's been some time now since I heard this Newtownsteward combination, and how they've improved in the interim! Musically they are now quite good and can turn in some nice tempo, while the vocals are being taken in a more relaxed manner and are all the better for it.

NEW ROUTINES

MALACHY SWEENEY'S ceili band made their debut in Barry's Hotel for the Leaside Social last Tuesday week and, although ceili and old time is not exactly my cup of tea, I must say I did enjoy the swiny way that leader Johnny Pickering took the band through the numbers.

The Regal band, the Castleblayney one this time, came to the Hibernian Ballroom on Saturday last, and I found them still the same hard working bunch I had heard before on visits "down the country."

Bassist Frank Gormerly was in fine voice and, with the help of leader Sean Farrelly, put over the "Top Ten" and "Oldies" with great gusto.

Speaking of the Hibernian, I was impressed on my visit at the way this old established dancery has improved since John J. Daly took it over at the year-end. John J. of course has been active in Dublin dancing circles since 1935 as a promoter

SAYS DANCALOT

mainly of Ceili and Old Time. He has been running the Leaside Social in Barry's Hotel every Tuesday for twenty years and had a Sunday dance in the Shelbourne Hall for eleven years non-stop.

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Tuesday for
Shelbourne



SIXTEEN

IT'S CUT PRICE WAR

IN DUBLIN DANCELAND

NOW that we know for certain that the dance tax is not coming off, perhaps the ballrooms and dance promoters will reduce their prices officially. I say "officially," because for some months there has been an underground cut-price war in existence, in Dublin anyhow, with the distribution of "concession tickets."

These are specially printed tickets admitting the bearer at a reduction of anything from sixpence to one and sixpence and in some cases allowing two dancers in for the price of one!

For although the ballrooms in Dublin agreed when the tax first went on to increase their charges all round it was not long before they realised that the younger dancers couldn't afford to go as often as before. So in some cases the prices went down, unofficially and in a limited way.

Apart from anything else the practice is grossly unfair. For the idea behind it seems to be that if

200 concession tickets are issued and 80% of them are taken up then the expenses for the night are covered.

Then everyone who comes to the box office without a ticket and pays full price is providing the profit.

CONCESSION

IT'S UNFAIR TO THE PEOPLE WHO DON'T GET CONCESSION TICKETS THAT THEY SHOULD HAVE TO PAY FULL PRICE WHEN OTHERS ARE GETTING THE SAME VALUE FOR LESS.

Furthermore as a ballroom half full or less is bad for everyone's morale and a damper on the full enjoyment of a dance, surely it would be better to fill the ballroom at say 3.6 a head than half full or less at five bob?

The Kevin Woods band rated by Eddie Downey one of the three best bands he's booked since opening the Ritz, are at present doing a tour of the South.

They play in the C.Y.M.S. Enniscorthy at a pre-Puck Fair get-together dance in Killorglin, in the St. John's Hall, Tralee, and in Kanturk.

They played opposite the Vic Lewis combination in the Hangar, Galway, last week when they impressed the members of the London orchestra.

IMPRESSED

They impressed me too when they played in the Ritz, Ballyfermot recently for they took the briefest of intervals between numbers and presented the nearest thing to non-stop dancing I've seen yet.

Their Dublin girl vocalist, Vera Morgan, is still their star turn for this bundle of vivacity can handle everything from the Top Twenty to the corniest of "come-all-ye's" with a freshness that commands attention.

The Moore ballroom in Ballydangan, Co. Roscommon, has Dave Webster's outfit on Sunday next and the Ken Austin orchestra from the Embassy Ballroom, Derry on the 18th.

REBOOKED

THE MELOTONES MADE SUCH AN IMPACT ON THEIR FIRST APPEARANCE IN THE