

Blind boy pianist to fly to U.S.

Express Staff Reporter

WITHIN the next three weeks, Jimmy Osborn, nine-year-old blind pianist, of Chestnut Glen, Romford, Essex, will be flying to America to be trained at the expense of U.S. servicemen in this country.

This is the story of his

DISCOVERY

Captain John O'Connell, U.S. airman, introduced Jimmy at a U.S. Red Cross centre.

He sat him, in pullover and shorts, on the piano stool, but his legs did not reach the pedals. They made him comfortable on cushions and books. And he played.

First an all-Service madley—"Anchors Aweigh," "Over There" and the "Air Corps March."

Then some boogie-woogie, a concert arrangement of popular tunes and, to round off, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto.

The Americans carried him round the room, sang "For He's A Jolly Good Fellow," and loaded him with doughnuts, ice cream and lemonade.

They discovered he had never had a lesson in his life.

They adopted him and decided on

THE PLAN

They resolved that the best musical tuition in America should be made available for Jimmy.

Airmen stationed close by organised dances, parties and carnivals to raise the money.

They collected £2800 and appointed Captain O'Connell to approach Jimmy's parents.

There the captain learned about Jimmy, about

THE PAST

Jimmy was blind from birth. His mother, Mrs. Mary Osborn, said:

"When he was two he clambered on to the piano buffet and played the signature tune of 'Monday Night at Seven'.

He said he heard it on the radio. "He used to correct his sister Valerie, who was learning to play.

"At three he composed a piece of his own. At four he would play the gramophone and strum off what he had heard on his key-board."

Jimmy's most talked-of composition is "Siren Symphony," based on two local sirens.

Father, Albert Osborn, is a bus driver who served in the Royal Flying Corps in the last war, when one of his best friends was an American sergeant.

In this war the house in Chestnut Glen was thrown open to Americans.

Last night Captain O'Connell told of the plan-completed, of

THE FUTURE

He said: "Our problem was to get sponsors in America. Today I got a letter saying that three families have offered Jimmy a home."

"Also Temple, the blind composer and pianist, has been contacted and it is expected that he will turn Jimmy into a polished pianist."

Blind Boy Pianist is U.S. Mascot



FEBRUARY 28 will be "Jimmy's Day" at a big U.S. Air Force station in Britain. Scores of Americans will hand over money from their pay-packets.

And the fund which Captain J. O'Connell is helping to raise for nine-years-old Jimmy Osborn, blind pianist, of Hornchurch, Essex, will be near the £1,000 mark.

Jimmy, son of a bus driver, is the station's "mascot." Since he played at a camp concert the men have been anxious to launch him on a musical career, and the idea of the fund is to put him under first-class teachers in America.

In the Daily Mail picture above you see him teaching himself by gramophone.

14/2/45.

Mrs. Mrs. Albert Osborn,
22 Chestnut Glen,
Romford
ESSEX

Nav. Mes.
Capt. BRANNICK

Yuse N.A.A.F.I

Organ 230, EX. 55.

John Osborn
22 Chestnut Glen,
Romford
Essex

14/2/45

St. Paul
8484
EX. 500

Major Melady
8484
EX. 384
H. Ross

X-10-2P80
MR. GEMMEL L.

Contact:-

Meet Capt. BRANNICK, at the boy's home,
at 11 a.m., TUESDAY, 20TH FEBRUARY.

Address:- 23 Chestnut Glen,
ROMFORD, Essex.

Capt. Brannick will then take you to the
Air Station and show you the location, etc.

FJP

Shed story Thursday.