

Then, at long last, it was time for David to put this music on tape.

Wes took him through every number first, explaining the arrangement to him and suggesting different ways he might like to approach certain passages. David would mark the suggestions down on his score and then try the song through different ways, till he hit one that felt right to him and sounded good to Wes and any other musicians who happened to be listening.

And David still hadn't used a mike! But by this time, he felt pretty well at home with the song, and he knew it right through without having to look at the score once. He was nearly ready . . .

The next step was to get the musical tracks cut. Strictly speaking, David wasn't really needed for this stage, but he usually stuck around.

"I'd sit by Bob and Wes and watch them working the controls . . . Maybe ask them some questions when they weren't too busy. And gradually I began to get the hang of how it all fitted together, and where I came in."

As David listened to the backing track, he'd add the vocals in his imagination, making sure he knew precisely when he had to come in at each of his entries.

"Everything always went perfectly at that stage," he smiled. "It was when I actually went into the studio that the trouble started!"

It was all a question of nerves. Out there, in the control room, David knew it didn't matter how many mistakes he made—so he didn't make any!

But once he was in the recording studio, with earphones on and the mike in front of him . . . Well, that was a different story altogether!

"It was mostly nerves," he explained, "Plus lack of experience. Those first few tries were like a nightmare! You see, I knew that I had to be relaxed for my voice to come out well. And the more I worried about being relaxed, the more tensed up I got, and the more tight and thin my voice sounded.

"Then, of course, I'd try to push it to make it louder, and it would get a horrible harsh, strident quality about it. So on play-backs I could hardly believe that was me singing at all!"

It was just a question of time, really, and Wes understood that. In fact, he was impressed by David's quick and natural grasp of the basic techniques.

It was David who was dissatisfied because he

seemed to be making such heavy going of it!

"I reckoned I must've been the dumbest guy that ever got stood in front of a mike," he smiled. "I just thought they were all too nice to tell me so straight out."

But even David recognised that things were improving before too long. And of course, as soon as he realised that, he relaxed and everything started to move.

His voice sounded warmer and fuller on the play-backs now—and he didn't wince everytime he heard it!

He was amazed at some of the effects Wes could get by pulling up the treble or bass. In fact, he was soon so fascinated by the electronics of recording that he forgot to be nervous at all!

## RECORDING

It all started to be fun.

Sometimes he'd meet up with Shirley at the studios and she'd give him one or two hints about how he could make his performance even better. He made firm friends with several of the studio musicians, some of whom had been in the recording business for years.

Studio 2 at Western started to feel like home. Well, that sure was lucky 'cos, for about a month that summer, David spent a lot more time there than he did at his actual home! He'd usually get there around nine in the morning and sometimes he'd still be there at ten at night!

Of course, he wouldn't be singing all of the time. But he was soaking it all up, and beginning to realise that this was the life he wanted for himself . . . Music.

What David didn't realise at the time was that this was a comparatively easy 'running-in' period for him.

Before too long he would start filming at Columbia Ranch. That would leave him only evenings and weekends for recording at Western. And it would mean that his voice would be under strain for up to eighteen hours a day, six days a week.

