



Whistling as an Art

"PEOPLE DON'T WANT to see a guy whistling while they're having dinner," a New York night-club owner once told Fred Lowery.

That café impresario deserves a page in theatrical history all to himself—as the world's worst talent scout! For the musician he turned away—a lad from the little town of Palestine, Texas—has been applauded in night clubs and theaters from coast to coast, has been featured on top radio shows, and could live comfortably on the royalties from his recordings alone.

As if that were not enough, he has won critical recognition from John Charles Thomas, Alec Templeton, Fritz Kreisler and others. Kreisler, in fact, was so impressed with Lowery's talent that he did a special arrangement of his Caprice Viennois

for whistling.

Lowery first learned to whistle by imitating birds in the Texas cotton fields. Orphaned as an infant and partially deprived of his sight by a childhood illness, he spent ten years in the State School for the Blind at Austin. Summers he picked cotton on his grandmother's

Perfect Whistler. In this picture America's foremost whistling virtuoso, Fred Lowery of California, shows the correct way to whistle. A concertmaster once said that the partially blind whistler's pitch and tone were "as true as any piccolo I have ever heard."

farm. When a whistler named Ernest Nichols visited the school Fred got an audition and was advised to make a career of whistling.

make a career of whistling.

Within a year he was giving concerts, and soon afterward got a staff job with a Dallas radio station. New York was the next step and there, despite many rebuffs, Lowery was soon whistling with bigname orchestras and appearing on network radio shows.

One of the secrets of his success was knowing the right and wrong way to whistle, almost from the start. The right way, he says, is with lips relaxed, not puckered. Puckering minimizes the wind content of the mouth and creates a narrow rush of air and harsh tone.

"The lips should be held almost normally, but firmly," Lowery points out. "When you achieve good tone at any pitch, you can start double-noting. To do this, you place the tongue as if to make a T-sound, and permit the air to flow over and under it."

Between engagements Lowery lives in North Hollywood, California. There, to the delight of his five-year-old son, he holds whistled conversations with the birds.

You would expect Lowery to be a completely happy man, considering all he has achieved. But his happiness won't be complete, he confesses, until he has made whistling a recognized art.

мау, 1947