

# *She's a cheerful, singing Crusader*

## FOR THE ABORIGINAL RACE

Aboriginal soprano, Miss Lorna Beulah, believes that by simply appearing on stage before different kinds of audiences she can, in a quiet and unspectacular way, help bridge the gap between Aborigines and white Australians.

That's one reason why she wants to become a regular concert performer.

The other is for the sheer joy of singing. "I was always one of those singing and dancing sort of children," said Miss Beulah, in her deep, cheerful voice.

"I want to sing in Australia only, so that the community can see what aborigines can do . . . I think it's best for people to see for themselves, rather than just read about it," she added.

Not that she is a very militant crusader for aboriginal rights. Nor that she has ever had very close links with their problems. For the greater part of her life she has led a fairly average suburban life and has few, or no very deep-rooted, colour complexes.

Her husband, Mr. Thomas Oliphant, a refrigerator mechanic, is a white Australian. They have two children, Tom aged 13, and Tanya, 20 months.

Her mother is white and her father, a retired wharf labourer, a quarter-caste aboriginal.

The fourth in a family of five children, including two boys and three girls, she was born at Forbes and at the age of seven moved with them to Toongabbie. She was educated at Parramatta Home Science School.

Like his parents were before him, her father is a staunch member of the Salvation Army—and was a well-known cricketer and footballer in the Forbes district.

It was he who taught her not to be bitter if she were taunted about her colour. "Dad used to tell me right from when I was little that although people might say cruel things often it was because they didn't understand what they were talking about," she said.

Both her parents insisted on all the children receiving a musical education.

"I don't know how they did it . . . they must have had to make great sacrifices," said Miss Beulah.

"I learned the piano, my sisters both played the violin, and my eldest brother was a cornet player in a Salvation Army band when he was quite young.

"I started singing in the Toongabbie Methodist Church choir when I was 12, and when I was 15 my mother took me to Parramatta music teacher, Mr. Eric Gormley.

"I only studied for two years before marriage put a stop to my lessons. But I continued to sing at weddings," she said.

Then five years ago, with the full approval of her husband, a devotee of classical music whose criticism over the years, Miss Beulah says, has given her a

