



"I saw you, quite recently, run for a bus  
In spite of the Dust and the Heat,  
Jump onto the platform, and climb up the Steps,  
To the top where you filled up a seat."  
"Ah Well!" Father William replied to his Son,  
"Some men at my age could not do it.  
How much spryer they'd be if they acted like me  
And took Andrews. They never would rue it."

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## RADIO VIEWSREEL

### What Our Commentators Say

#### A Real Test

WHEN the NZBS decides to broadcast an entire concert by an artist, as in the case of Lili Kraus's recital from the Dunedin Town Hall, no complaints can be made if listeners decide to stay at home instead of patronising the concert. Having decided to be lazy about it, I was admonished for fireside listening by various friends who declared that I would thereby miss half the enjoyment—namely, that intense psychological effect, akin to musical mesmerism, which this particular artist's vital personality exercises on her audiences. For me, on the other hand, it is a test of real worth if the music sounds as exciting through the non-emotional radio as in the concert hall. Well, Lili Kraus passes this test; her interpretations lose nothing, to my mind, by being heard in a disembodied medium such as radio or recordings; all the magic remains. The highlight of the programme was the Schubert A Minor Sonata. To New Zealand audiences, fed for years on a sonata-diet of almost nothing but Beethoven, Lili Kraus's inauguration of a Schubert and Mozart revival comes as welcome relief.

#### Too Fine an Art

I HAVE read "Death Has Four Faces" as a story as well as hearing it lately as a radio play, and the same weak point of this thriller struck me on both occasions. It concerns a young man who has just lost all his money in a casino; a beautiful girl; a crook who offers the young man easy money in return for his smuggling pearls through the customs. It concerns a dark street over which periodically a lighthouse beam sweeps, and, of course, a murder for which the innocent young man is blamed by those ridiculous people (always good for a laugh) the French gendarmerie. The young man is proved innocent, likewise; but the method of murder is the most clumsy and improbable it would be possible to imagine. The murderer leans over a parapet at the top of a tall house, in the dark, drops a wallet for the victim to pick up, chooses a moment when the street is lit by the lighthouse beam, and simply drops a heavy carving knife smack into the victim's back. Quite remarkably easy, no? One feels like writing to ask the author whether he ever played marbles as a boy, and if so, whether he found it easy to drop one marble smack on top of another, as is the custom of small boys—let alone finding his mark so neatly and dexterously in the dark, with a human target and a carving-knife.

#### Unintentional Joke

A GENTLEMAN is never unintentionally rude and a serious radio talk is never unintentionally funny. Yet towards the end of the talk on Alexander Graham Bell (2YA the other Monday) there came a moment of unwitting bathos, when the speaker announced that as the body of Alexander Graham Bell was laid to rest all the telephone lines in America went dead. The subsequent explanation that this was as a mark of respect to Bell's memory failed to banish completely the picture of baffled subscribers angrily jangling. The fact was, of course, that in this very

pedestrian talk the listener was apt to seize on anything that promised entertainment. The actual material of the talk was not dull, but the treatment was unimaginative. An attempt was certainly made to vary the monotony of presentation by using the device of two voices, but since one took over from the other at purely arbitrary points in the script, the effect was merely reminiscent of that superseded schoolroom practice of reading round the class. A pity, since the subject was a significant one, that its treatment could not have had some of the revolutionary quality of Bell's own work.

#### Hanoverian At Home

I THOROUGHLY enjoyed last Monday's talk in Mary Wigley's series *Friends of Famous Queens*. The talk was equally divided between the home life of George III and Queen Charlotte and Fanny Burney's reactions to it. Both were interesting. To one accustomed to think of George III merely in his public role of the Personification of the Obstinate Negative, the glimpses of him as Domestic Paragon vouchsafed us by Miss Wigley



were illuminating—his devotion to the Queen, his absorption (perhaps to the ultimate benefit of the American colonists) in the affairs and interests of his 15 children. Queen Charlotte was revealed as a domestic jewel in incongruous platinum setting. And after hearing the extracts from Fanny Burney's diary relevant to her stay at Court read us by Miss Wigley I have no difficulty in understanding why she resigned her position as Queen Charlotte's confidential attendant to rush straight (after a decent year's interval) into the arms of the gallant General D'Arblay.

#### Ghost or Grandmother?

IT all hinges on whether Phoebe Hessel was a real person. If she is, then the play in which she appears may be mysterious, but is not imaginative; if she isn't, then it may be imaginative but is hardly mysterious. So in either case *The Church by the Sea* is scarcely qualified to appear under the generic heading of "Mystery and Imagination." I have so far listened to two of these (the other Lord Dunsany's *Golden Dragon City*) and have decided, perhaps on insufficient evidence but evidence that is likely to remain insufficient, that the salient feature of this 2YA Friday night series is the fact that it gets nowhere. *The Church by the Sea* concerns a young man and young woman of the early 1800's who talk with a mysterious old lady on a church porch. Later they come to the conclusion (definitely on insufficient evidence) that the mysterious lady is Phoebe Hessel, who died recently at the age of 104, after a life of unprecedented adventure for a female. But though you would expect drops of quintessence of human experience to fall from her lips she contents herself with safe generalisations, such as that bankers are very useful people or that nowadays things are made too easy for the young folks, all in a voice very like Ethel Barrymore's.