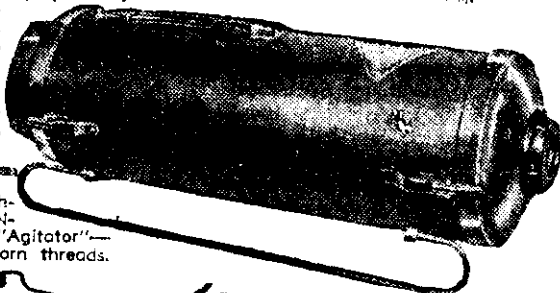




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# RADIO VIEWSREEL

## What Our Commentators Say

### Fourth Dimension

**THE MOUSE**, a play by G. Murray Milne which came over 2YC the other Sunday night, was one of radio's more successful excursions into the fourth dimension. We have had a fair ration lately of figures from the past showing themselves, in vindication of Mr. Dunne's theory, to dwellers in the present, but they prefer to haunt desolate Highland moors ("That croft ye visited, my lady, was burnt to the ground 200 years ago at the time of the Bonny Prince"), or to tread the borer-dust of a deserted manor-house. The setting of *The Mouse*, however, was a night club in some town back of the Burma front, and the astral emanation was of the future, not of the past. A difficult theme, handled in a sensitive yet adult manner. My only quarrel was with the title which, though firmly rooted in the mainspring of the plot and adequately grounded in the Burns quotation:

Still thou art blest, compared wi' me!  
The present only toucheth thee,

had the unfortunate effect of making me want to ask the junior subaltern the classic question, "Are you a man or a mouse?" whenever he sat silent for too long beneath the gibes of his senior.

### Straight Shaw

MR. SHAW was fortunate in being born at the right time, in casting his intellectual bread upon the waters at a period when audiences were prepared to swallow didacticism with their drama. And I think he was also fortunate, in living well into the age of radio. For as I listened to *Man of Destiny* last Friday I thought how delighted Mr. Shaw would have been at the sight of so many earnest drinkers in of the undiluted word. For G.B.S. was never one to delight in the dramatic trappings which are the perquisite of the theatre-goer. Immaterial to him whether his characters are true to life, provided they are true to their creator. When we see *Man of Destiny* upon the stage we are perhaps inclined to question the historical truth of this particular montage of the Napoleonic legend. The figure is obviously Napoleon's—there is the uniform, the stance, the gestures to prove it—and the incongruity between the Napoleonic shell and the Shavian kernel distracts us. Moreover, in the stage presentation we can escape the tyranny of Shaw's idealogical brilliance by distracting ourselves with the Lady's changes of attire, appearance, and reappearance. But a radio audience Mr. Shaw has just where he wants it—we listen and like it.

### Folk Music of the Sea

THE new 42B Sunday night feature, "Ocean Echoes," should prove entertaining to most listeners if Noel Robson continues the good work begun in the first broadcast. The four sea shanties chosen were lesser-known ones, each preceded by a short description containing details of the type of shanty, its history and origin. "The Hog's Eye Man" (included here, together with "Shenandoah" and others), contains unusual phrasing; in this it resembles many of the old folk-tunes with varied and quaint rhythmical groupings. This is surely a proof that man's natural

musicianship will produce its own crop of original and beautiful songs if left to bloom unaided; but it seems futile to protest that Tin Pan Alley, in forcing us to accept its monotonous four-beat rhythms and four-bar phrases, is gradually and effectively stifling the production of real folk-melody. In "Ocean



Echoes," as well as the shanties, we had that old and trusted favourite "The Diver," which must have been in the repertoire of every bass singer since its first appearance; sung by the bass Norman Allin, this old song revived memories of the time when people made music for themselves, instead of passively listening to the radio while going about their daily and nightly duties.

### Challenge of the Cities

NICE Aucklanders and Wellingtonians tend to look a little self-conscious when outsiders draw attention to the intensity of their parochial loyalties, but the ZB's have capitalised the entertainment value of this inter-city rivalry. The result is Saturday night's *Challenge of the Cities*. Each of the four cities taking part brings out into the light of the studio one of its particular claims to fame, and points are allotted accordingly—though on what basis I am at a loss to determine, since the programmes presented by the four contestants are too various to provide a basis for comparison. On a recent Saturday Auckland started the ball rolling by dilating on the geological cuteness of its 63 extinct volcanoes, though personally I thought this is in rather poor taste, since for a city to boast of geographical endowment is equivalent to an individual's claiming credit for the blue-bloodedness of his ancestors. Christchurch struck a lighter note by basing its claim upon the fact that it had more pie-carts than any other New Zealand city, but could not decide whether this was due to the fact that its citizens were lonelier, more sociable, or just hungrier. Dunedin claimed the first New Zealand-made piano (it was brought to the studio to perform), and Wellington offered the Dominion's first Olympic champion, Ted Morgan, who proved as difficult to get to the mike as Auckland's extinct volcanoes. My vote to Christchurch, on grounds of public interest.

### Ballet on the Air

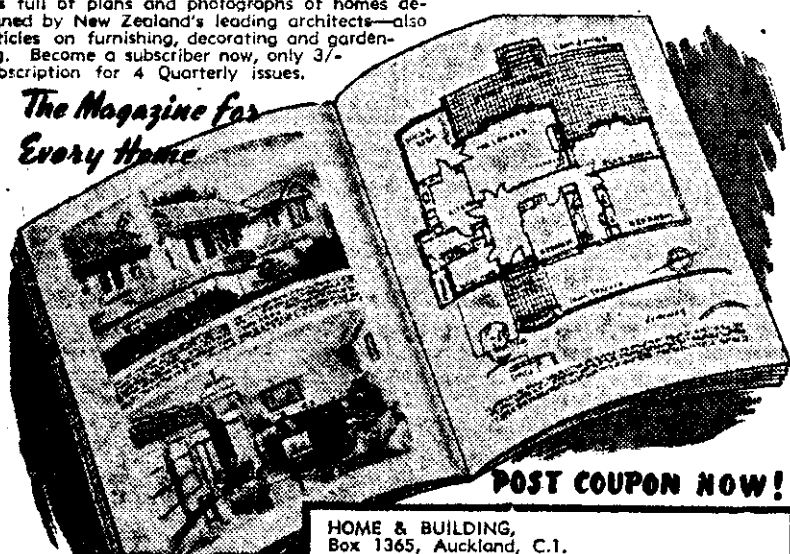
THE inadequacy of verbal descriptions of ballet was brought home to me while listening to a radio presentation of *Adam Zero*. The Bliss music is a stimulating work of art which can take its place in the orchestral concert or radio programme on its own merits. Since this ballet hasn't, to my knowledge, been included in the repertoire of any ballet

(continued on next page)

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