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# STAGECRAFT FOR AMATEURS

## Hints to Country Listeners

IN response to a request from a South Island listener the NZBS has arranged a series of talks on the subject *Stagecraft for Amateurs*. The purpose of these talks is to provide help for small amateur drama groups, in country districts, who want to produce their own plays but who lack experience, are not in touch with the major amateur theatrical bodies, and have to work with the imperfect facilities provided in many small towns. *Stagecraft for Amateurs* was written by Elsie Lloyd, of the Productions Department of the NZBS.

There are five talks in the series. The first deals with the person who is "the most important member of the team"—

"How to Select Plays," and "Rules Governing the Production of Comedy and Tragedy."

Since these talks are not intended to form a complete guide to amateur theatricals, or even to cover the whole field in such a complex subject, some drama groups may find parts of them superfluous. Those who will find Mrs. Lloyd's talks most useful are the actor who is just beginning and the members of a group that is in process of being formed.

*Stagecraft for Amateurs* will be broadcast at weekly intervals from 2YH, 3ZR and 4YZ. The first talk has already been heard from 2YH (on Tuesday of this week), and the remainder will follow at the same time on succeeding Tuesdays. From 4YZ the series will begin on Thursday, February 19, at 7.15 p.m., and from 3ZR on Sunday, February 29, at 4.15 p.m.



ELSIE LLOYD  
Talks for Beginners.

## MR. PARABLE'S PIANO

NEW ground has been broken by the NZBS in *Mr. Parable's Piano*, a dramatic representation of the life story of a concert grand. Containing a concerto and songs specially written for the play, and excerpts from some of the world's great piano music, *Mr. Parable's Piano* is an unusual type of radio drama.

The story begins in 1894, when Mr. Parable, a young apprentice at an English piano factory, forms a passionate desire to own a piano he is helping to make—a special instrument being built for the great virtuoso Louis Bernard. For 15 years, while Bernard and his piano are thrilling concert-goers, Mr. Parable has no hope of achieving his desire. Then when the pianist collapses and dies at one of his performances, his piano is sold to Ruby Rooker's Singing Academy, where it is used for the next few years to pound out the accompaniments for a succession of scraggy sopranos and barking baritones. From there it passes to "The Minaret," a rowdy music hall of the 1920's, and eventually, during the Second World War, Mr. Parable succeeds in buying the now scarred and battered instrument.

The play relates through a series of flashbacks not only the story of the piano's life, but the life-stories of all the people who have been connected with it during its chequered career, heard through the lips of Mr. Parable himself as he talks to a soldier in the Army Camp to which he has finally donated his instrument. The script of *Mr. Parable's Piano* was written by Gale Pedrick, the special songs by Bessie Pollard, and the concerto (composed for the original BBC production) by Alan Paul. The play will be heard from 2YA at 9.32 p.m. on Sunday, February 22.

the producer. Mrs. Lloyd shows why the producer must know more about the principles of stagecraft than all the rest of the group. He has to fuse together his actors, dialogue, costumes, colour-schemes, and everything else into a whole that is not finally complete until the play reaches the audience. Each step that the producer must take in his work—the first reading, the assigning of parts, arranging rehearsals; getting a prompter, instructing the electrician and the carpenters, and a whole host of other things—is carefully explained in this first talk.

### The Acting Side

The second deals with the acting side, mainly from the point of view of common pitfalls to be avoided by amateurs. Attention is drawn to faults such as the wrong use of personality, untidy acting, selfish acting, "upstaging," and the incorrect use of gesture. Other problems which beset the amateur player, how to make the most effective entrances and exits, for instance, and pace, audibility, posture and movement, are all discussed in a clear and straightforward manner.

Of the remaining three talks, one goes into the question of "Make-up," and the others give some general advice on

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