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RADIO VIEWSREEL (Cont'd.)

so much better than the average "light drama" that they deserve to be kept on record and to reappear, after a suitable interval, for the amusement of those who haven't as yet heard them. In this class I might place *The Lady From Abroad*, by Mabel Constanduros and Howard Agg, of which the NZBS unit has made a fast-moving and successful production. Obviously designed with no other ambition on the part of the author than a desire to amuse, it succeeds in its object far better than many more pretentious plays; yet being put together with a due regard for construction, timing, and characterisation, it has merits which raise it well above the average play used for filling up the wide and deep chasm above-mentioned.

Moralities and Marlowe

THE initial talk in the *History of the Theatre* series from 4YA, on Greek drama, was followed by a discussion of the medieval and Elizabethan plays by D. Grey, Lecturer in Philosophy at Otago University. In this talk the speaker confined himself to playwrights

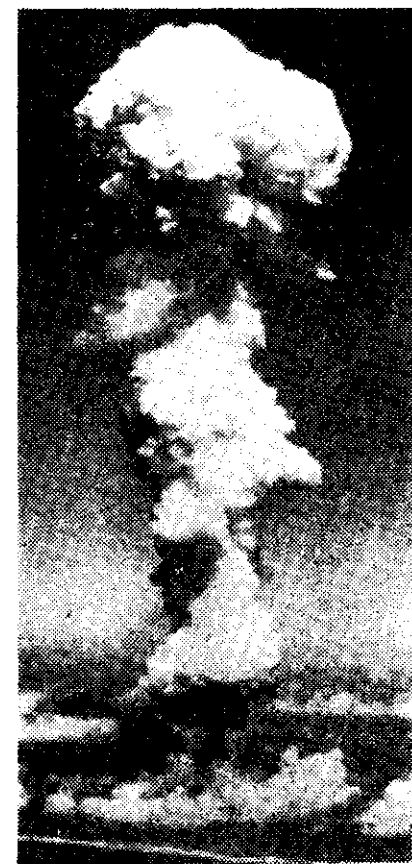


other than Shakespeare, who, we were told, would be dealt with in our next. Even without Shakespeare, the scope of the subject was enormous, and the speaker made the fullest use of his opportunities, giving us, together with the historical background, a taste of the Morality plays and a generous slice of Marlowe. The gap between the Greeks and Marlowe didn't seem so amazing as the gap between the Moralities and Marlowe; an analogy exists, possibly, in painting, if we contrast an Italian primitive with something by Raphael—or in music, if a Gregorian chant be contrasted with a madrigal. In these later examples, whether of painting, poetry, or music, a flower is seen in bloom whose full beauty could scarcely have been predicted by observation only of the bud. The illustrations to this talk, I thought, were not quite as effective as those to Greek drama in the preceding programme. In

the examples from the early plays such as the Moralities, the extracts were just right—but Marlowe? Unfortunately *Dr. Faustus* has been broadcast several times recently, as produced by the BBC, and after the agony of the final speech in the *World Theatre* presentation, any other rendering of the scene must come as an anti-climax.

"The Desolate Star"

LISTENERS to 4YA lately had the pleasure of hearing an extended work by a young New Zealand composer, Dorothea Franchi, of Auckland. This was her song-cycle, *The Desolate Star*, one of the two works which shared the Philip Neill Memorial Prize for 1947. Sung by Douglas Stock (baritone), with the composer at the piano, it was a notable feature of the presentation that every word was audible. I was particularly grateful for this, as a new song-cycle loses half its appeal if the words are not made as clear as the music; in this case the text was a group of poems by Robin Hyde. Miss Franchi has succeeded in producing a true song-cycle, and not merely a series of songs strung together. The words express moods of sombreness and moments of exaltation, and although the composer has given us the climaxes with fire and abandon, she has kept the general emotional mood of the words by the use of an underlying similarity of idiom in all five songs.



"THE POWER OF THE ATOM," the first of three talks on atomic energy recently given from 1YA by Professor F. J. Llewellyn, will be heard from 2YA on Monday, August 16, at 7.15 p.m.

NATIONAL FILM UNIT

THE National Film Unit's Weekly Review No. 362 for release on August 13 contains the following: "Maori All Blacks v. Taranaki"—fast Rugby played at New Plymouth; "After the Smash"—some scenes of the clearing-up after the recent railway derailment at Paremata; "Rough Riding"—rodeo at Christchurch, and "Clay Modelling," showing children at Wellington's Clyde Quay School expressing their own ideas in modelling clay.



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