

Singer of Folk Songs

RECENTLY *The Listener* interviewed a young Australian instrumentalist who was blowing her way round the world on her clarinet. Last week 2YA had another visitor, an Englishwoman who is seeing the world on her voice. She is Mercy Collisson, a mezzo-soprano. She had neither advance agent nor publicity expert to proclaim her musical capabilities, but she brought letters of introduction from Sir Adrian Boult, the



MERCY COLLISSON

Arts Council of Great Britain, Dr Martin Shaw and Mary Ibberson (Director of the Rural Music Schools Association of Britain). Her New Zealand tour, she told us, was under the auspices of the Community Arts Service of the Adult Education Centre.

Miss Collisson uses her voice in an unusual way because more often than not she sings without accompaniment which, she says, is the best way of interpreting her speciality—old English folk-songs. She started out a year ago from her home in Bedford, England, where for six years she was Director of the Bedfordshire Rural Music School. Or the first lap of her campaign on behalf of British music she went to America.

"In the United States," she said, "all I was armed with was a visitor's visa. But I was able to cover my expenses. My most interesting experience was being asked to sing at a technical school in El Paso—a school with a roll-call of 900 children. Here I was faced with a swarthy mass of young Mexicans to whom I sang unaccompanied."

It is by talking about music by British composers from the 16th century to the present day, and about folk-songs, and by singing them that Miss Collisson is getting round the world. She has made some recordings for the NZBS and these will be heard in due course.

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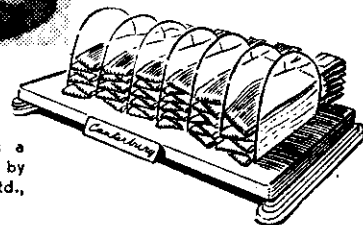


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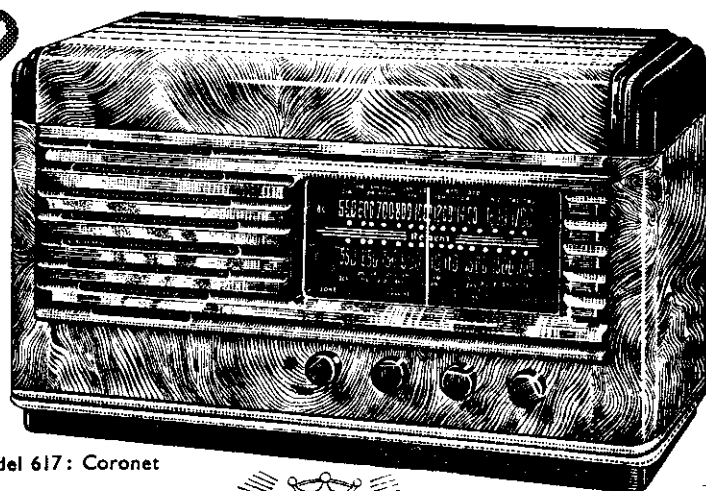
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