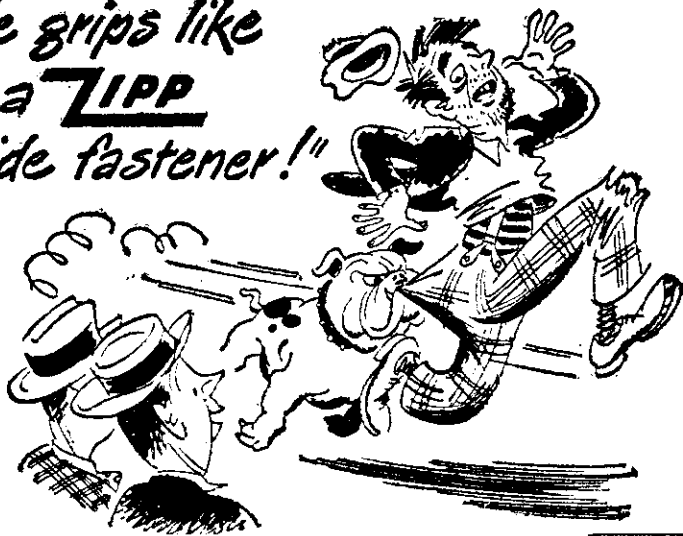


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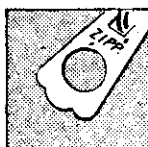


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MUSIC AT MASTERTON

Adult Education Holiday School

THE vacation Music School to be held in Masterton during the May holidays is an experiment on the part of the Regional Council of Adult Education, and one that they are confident will be worth repeating. Its aim is to help those who are interested in leading various musical activities throughout the community, so that through it more and more people who now enjoy their music passively can take an active part in music-making.

I had had no idea how far this aim had been accomplished already till my recent conversation with Miss Haddon-Jones, the music tutor to the Regional Council, and one of the moving spirits in the vacation school. Miss Haddon-Jones will serve the casual reader as an example of what the Music School hopes to turn out, and though few of the graduates of the eight-day course will be as highly-qualified as she is, their work will be on similar lines.

Miss Haddon-Jones, whose district covers half the North Island and part of the South, spends a considerable amount of time travelling among her various little groups. And she deals with all manner of music-making activities. The morning I saw her she had just come in from Khandallah, where she has a group of mothers who are interested in forming a small choir. The meetings of the group are held in each house in turn; the perambulators are parked in the next room and the mothers get quickly down to Dominion Song Book VI. There is another group at Karori, by now adept at part-singing and well-launched into madrigals. Many of the groups have no piano, rhythm is taught by the French rhythm names (the "ta taffy taffy ta" method familiar to all training college students) and pitch by tonic sol fa.

"I am particularly pleased with my Maori groups," said Miss Haddon-Jones. "None of the girls had any previous knowledge of musical notation but they are now reading music quite well."

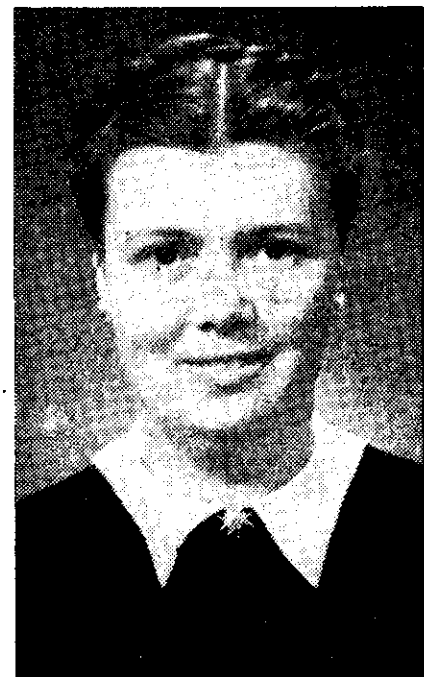
Bamboo Pipe-band

She also has a group at Waiwhetu getting good results with bamboo pipes. The girls make the pipes themselves, the seven holes give the full eight-note scale, and the combined pipe-band is most pleasing. "You'll understand my enthusiasm for the pipes when you realise that the two chief hindrances to the spread of music-making in the country are shortage of sheet-music and shortage of instruments. At the school we hope to teach students how to make bamboo pipes and recorders."

"On my last tour of the area I went into the question of building up a library of sheet music. I should also like to see a library of instruments, so that people would have a chance of trying out several before choosing what is best suited to them."

"I suppose for most children a musical education means the piano."

"Yes, but it's surprising how an orchestra can be built almost from



MARGARET HADDON-JONES
"The means may seem humble, but the satisfaction is out of all proportion"

scratch. I was thinking of Professor Vernon Griffiths, who will be director of the Music School. When he first came to New Zealand he was put in charge of the music at the King Edward Technical College, Dunedin. Of 800 pupils there were only six who sheepishly owned up to 'learning' the violin. Yet at the end of six months he was able to stage a school concert with an orchestra of 60 and a choir of 200. According to Professor Griffiths New Zealand children have a natural aptitude for instrumental music. The main thing seems to be to get the group as a whole doing things before the individual enthusiasm has time to wilt. He found that in a comparatively short time the senior pupils were competent enough to help the beginners with their practice."

I asked Miss Haddon-Jones whether the Music School regarded brass band playing as "merely a strenuous form of athletics."

"A form of athletics, yes," said Miss Haddon-Jones, "in so far as all active music-making is a form of athletics. And a very valuable branch of music-making. Professor Griffiths, in his *Experiment in School Music-Making* has a lot to say about the importance of brass bands in school and community. It's easier to obtain satisfactory balance and general effect from a brass band than from any other instrumental group. In school music particularly you can get immediate results from the brass band, and immediate results are necessary if enthusiasm is to be retained."

After the vacation school Miss Haddon-Jones hopes that there will be many more people available to act as organisers in their own districts, so that the love of music, and still more important, the joy of creating it, will be extended to more and more people. The means may seem humble (bamboo pipes and percussion bands and little groups of temporarily unharassed mothers singing *The Shepherds' Dance*) but the satisfaction generated in both teachers and taught is out of all proportion.

—M.B.

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