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younger comedians of *Variety Band-Box* and some of the American programmes seem to me to lack both vigour and individuality. Save for an occasional phenomenon, such as Danny Kaye, I find that the most dynamic and satisfying entertainers are old-timers like Jimmy Durante, Cicely Courtneidge, Fred Allen, Jack Buchanan, and the rest. Has, perhaps, the tradition of the kind of personal entertainment in which these people were raised, been killed by the gag-spouting artifices of the Bob Hopes? Such reflections were prompted by hearing Maurice Chevalier for the first time in a decade, reborn in new recordings in which, as he talked his way tantalisingly through gay cabaret pieces, his voice sounded as young, exuberant and infectious as it did when I first heard him. (how many years ago?) in *The Innocents of Paris*. So long as such Peter Pans are with us, the radio is unlikely for some time to suffer the same fate as the movies have suffered since the disappearance of the great comedians of the silent films.

—J.C.R.

Children Singing

I HAVE always admired very greatly the children's singing, directed by T. J. Young, of the Wellington Teachers' Training College, in the *Broadcasts to Schools* session. The two broadcasts with which he ended this year's performances, however, were highlights in listening. In them he had the assistance of Alex Lindsay's string orchestra, led by Ruth Pearl, a splendid combination to accompany the limpid purity of youthful voices. The whole effect was enchanting. Surely such singing could be recorded for rebroadcast in the evening, to give pleasure to those people who cannot listen in the early afternoon. The songs were chosen with impeccable taste and gave a wide variety—from folk song through the standard classic to the delightful little children's songs by Alec Rowley. The singing was pure and crisply rhythmic, but there was one small blemish. Whenever the children had several notes to sing legato to one syllable they gave each note with a small explosion of the breath amounting almost to an interpolated consonant. This is so difficult and unnatural that the children seemed to have been trained to do it. The effect is disastrous, not perhaps so much in bright rhythmic numbers like "The Mermaid," as in "Away in a Manger" where surely a legato flow is essential.

—D.M.

Report on Drama

KEEPING us informed of what is going on elsewhere in New Zealand is radio's bread and butter work. It isn't designed to tickle the palate, it serves up information, not art, but if, for example, you were hungry to hear what had been going on this year in New Zealand dramatic circles, you could make a very satisfying meal from the report *Drama in New Zealand*, presented from 4YA on November 25. Beatrice Ashton's report on Wellington drama was the most interesting, because she spoke so well and because she had the most to chronicle. Other centres may well envy the obvious vitality of Wellington drama with the range and variety of its productions. The reports from the South

seemed dim by comparison. That from Christchurch was largely a threnody upon the departure of Ngaio Marsh, and, though Barbara Manton did her best for Dunedin, she hadn't much to record. Several speakers mentioned the box office difficulty which paralyses the good intentions of the big Repertory Societies and tends to produce "highly-polished mediocrity," and all were unanimous that what New Zealand needs in each city is a properly equipped Little Theatre, to cater for smaller groups, producing plays of more limited appeal upon smaller budgets.

The Hungry Gramophil

GRAMOPHILS—who may be arbitrarily defined as connoisseurs of the best recorded music—are a depressed class in the community. They suffer the scorn of the performer who sees them as the victims of unnatural appetites, preferring canned music to the concert hall, the artificial to the real. The dealer, too, looks askance at their small numbers and doles out a grudging list of new recordings—a mere trickle of importation from the flowing founts overseas—and blandly places the blame on the broad shoulders of Mr. Nash. Even over what records the gramophil has acquired loom the spectres of the microgroove and the wire recorder. His case is pitiful. The radio, alas, which might rescue him from isolation, treats him instead with maddening indifference. He looks up *The Listener* and is not fed. Certainly he finds scattered there such an array of recordings as he can never hope to own himself. But he comes to believe that some malignant god presides over the choice of records, inflicting upon him aged or vilely recorded discs, under the thin excuse of the exigencies of programme arrangement. At present the gramophil's is a lone voice piping in the wilderness, but it would pay stations to heed it and examine in time the standard of their classical recordings. Some of them ought never to have been acquired: others are overdue for the scrap-heap.

—K.J.S.

Lots in a Name

IN that cocky's classic, *Cold Comfort Farm*, Stella Gibbons has a brief reference to the importance of names, and quotes the case of *Odour of Sanctity*, a rather dull history of drainage reform from 1840 to 1873, which sold like hot cakes because everyone thought it an attack on Victorian morality. I was reminded of this when listening to the BBC feature programme *Queen Victoria was Furious*, which turned out to be a very lively account of women's fight for freedom, and not (as I supposed) one of Mr. Housman's little numbers. The title was almost grossly misleading, but the programme so excellent that few listeners can have resented the deception. It occurred to me to wonder whether such christening tactics could not be employed on our own New Zealand programmes, since the provocative title serves equally well for purposes of advertisement or concealment. A Home Science talk on modern trends in sportswear could provoke listener attention with "Elementary, my dear Gussie," but would Aunt Daisy attract even more listeners if her morning session were retitled "Mrs. Beeton Beaten"?

—M.B.

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VI-MAX Xmas Recipes

XMAS CAKE

8oz. butter	4oz. cherries
8oz. sugar (light brown)	4oz. almonds
4oz. white flour or fine wholemeal	4oz. peel
4oz. VI-MAX (Fine)	1 dessertspoon cinnamon
6 eggs	1 tablespoon spice
8oz. sultanas	¼ teaspoon nutmeg
8oz. currants	2 tablespoons wine, sherry or brandy
1lb. seeded raisins	Grated rind 1 lemon

METHOD: Cream butter and sugar, add beaten eggs alternately with sifted flour and VI-MAX. Add prepared fruit and lastly wine, sherry, or brandy. Beat well. Bake in greased tin for 3½ to 4 hours.

XMAS PUDDING

3oz. VI-MAX (Coarse or Fine)	1 dessertspoon treacle
3oz. white flour or fine wholemeal	¼ teaspoon salt
2oz. breadcrumbs	4 tablespoons milk
6oz. suet	4oz. brown sugar
4oz. currants	1 teaspoon spice
4oz. seeded raisins	1oz. peel
4oz. sultanas	1 level teaspoon soda
½ teaspoon nutmeg	2 eggs
	2oz. almonds

METHOD: Prepare fruit and mix with all dry ingredients. Mix with beaten eggs in which treacle has been dissolved. Add soda dissolved in milk and put into a greased basin. Cover and steam at least four hours.