

THE "Melody Storyteller," who broadcasts from all ZB Stations, beginning on Thursday, August 15, at 7.30 p.m., tells in simple song and story form, the interesting tales which lie behind some of the beautiful old ballads with which listeners are familiar.

Although there are many songs which we practically know by heart and which we hum over to ourselves as we are busy at work, or join in a sing-song around the piano on a winter's evening, we are perhaps not aware that many of these ballads have intriguing histories.

One favourite is "The End of a Perfect Day," by Carrie Jacobs Bond; and the story of its composition can be cited as one of the most interesting.

## A Perfect Day

About 20 years ago Carrie Bond spent a day motoring with friends through the flower-laden drives of Southern California, past ivy-covered banks, and through hedges of exquisite Gold of Ophir roses. The day was glorified with a dreamy sort of happiness, and at eventide Carrie Bond stood on the top of Mt. Rubidoux and watched the sinking sun splash the sky with all the gorgeous colours of a painting by the immortal Turner. As the great ball of burning gold sank into the calm and mysterious Pacific, she said to herself: "Truly this has been a perfect day." Words and phrases began forming in her mind. A song of praise and thanksgiving welled up in her heart, and while the spell was still hot upon her, she dashed off two stanzas of a poem. After a while she found herself humming a tune. The thing was done—

a musical miracle had been performed, for without effort she had created a song that was destined to have a greater sale than any other piece of music since Gilbert and Sullivan launched "Pinafore."

## "Silver Threads"

We all know and love "Silver Threads Among the Gold," but how many of us know the story of how this immortal ballad came to be written.

The composer of the haunting melody was Hart Pease Danks, a composer and singer who lived in America. In the year 1872 a set of poems was sent to him and among them was "Silver Threads." He purchased this poem from Eben Rexford for three dollars. Danks, who was very much in love with his wife, felt comforted by the words of the poem that "although life was fading fast away" there would always remain the great consolation of undying love; and so the composer gave to the world something more than a mere tune; for the words and music of this song contain a haunting restfulness which dissipates the fear of old age between two lovers, whose fidelity is strong against the ravages of time.

Upon completing the manuscript, Danks sold it to a publisher in Philadelphia, who forwarded it to Chicago, where it was sung by minstrels, the only method of publicising a song in those days.

It was an instantaneous success and it sold throughout the country until it had passed the two million dollar mark. Many famous tenors have included this song in their programmes. It is over 68 years ago since it was written, and yet it is still sung by countless numbers of people.

## Other Immortal Melodies

The "Melody Storyteller" also tells how Robert Schumann composed two of his greatest songs, "Thou Art Like a Lovely Flower" and "The Evening Song."

Another included in his repertoire is Schubert's "Who is Sylvia?"

The "Melody Storyteller" has the art of storytelling, and apart from giving much listening pleasure he imparts something which adds to the musical knowledge of listeners.

# MEMORIES OF THE THEATRE BY "UNCLE PERCY"

"Uncle Percy's" session "Theatrical Reminiscences," is on the air from Station 4ZB on Friday evenings now at 9.30 and replaces the session "Musical Souvenirs." There is possibly no one in New Zealand better qualified than "Uncle Percy" to deal with the old days of the theatre.

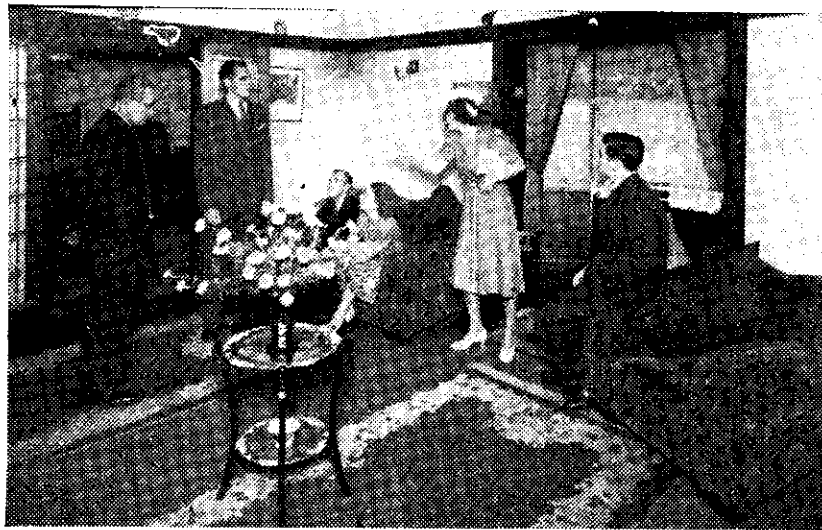
In times gone by "Uncle Percy" appeared in vaudeville under the aegis of Rickards, Dix's and Fullers'. He has also been associated with countless dramatic and musical-comedy shows, and has piloted many of the concert

luminaries through their tours of the Dominion. He can tell anecdotes about practically all the shows that held the boards from the "gay 'nineties" onwards.

In his first session, "Uncle Percy" related incidents gay and grave about the days when movies first saw the light of day in New Zealand, and many were the memories he revived. He has a very pleasant singing voice, and he presented several songs of the "gay 'nineties" period which were much enjoyed.

During the day or two following his initial session, "Uncle Percy" received mail from all over Otago, including letters from several people who were personally associated with the early theatrical days in this country.

"Theatrical Reminiscences" is a session worth hearing from Station 4ZB every Friday evening at 9.30



The human drama of "Dr. Mac" claims a big following over the ZB stations on Tuesdays and Thursdays at 7.15 p.m. Left to right: Lou Vernon, who plays the leading role in "Dr. Mac", Howard Craven, Brian Wright, Lyndall Barbour, Queenie Ashton, and Ron Randall

## 4ZB'S NEW PROGRAMME DIRECTOR

### Barend Harris Transferred From Head Office

A TRANSFER of note is that of Barend Harris, the National Transcription Officer of Head Office of the NCBS, to Station 4ZB Dunedin, as Programme Director.

Mr. Harris, who has been with the Commercial Broadcasting Service as Transcription Officer since its inception over three years ago, will be missed by his friends at Head Office.

Listeners are no doubt familiar with his voice over the air, as he has sung at concerts, recitals, and over the radio, for several years past.

He showed extraordinary vocal ability at an early age, and after having studied with Signor Cacialli at the Sydney Conservatorium, he soon became known as one of the leading singers in Australia. He toured the capital cities of Australia for the Australian Broadcasting Commission; he appeared on concert platforms, and at theatres in every State. He was one of the first to broadcast in Australia, and introduced an entirely new programme to Australian radio, that of a presentation of Maori songs and lyrics.

On his arrival in New Zealand, Mr. Harris joined the National Broadcasting Service, and made three tours of the main centres, giving a series of recitals which no doubt many listeners will remember.



BAREND HARRIS