

Variety Ahoy!



BECAUSE a man whistling once signalled the start of a mutiny, naval ratings today are forbidden to whistle. There is, however, no rule against laughing, singing, yelling, cheering, or otherwise giving vent to pleasure and exuberance. Officers and ratings alike exploited this fact with a will last year when the BBC took its cheery new show *Variety Ahoy!* on the rounds of the naval establishments of Southern England. They had plenty to shout about, for on stage were artists of the calibre of Eric Barker, Cyril Fletcher, The Keynotes, Jon Pertwee, Robert Moreton

and Murdoch and Horne and Carole Carr. Furthermore, the shows were free, always an advantage in a serviceman's eyes.

Seven programmes of *Variety Ahoy!* are now in New Zealand, and will shortly be broadcast by National stations. The setting for the first is H.M.S. Collingwood, a training establishment at Fareham, Hants, and the names on the bill are Derek Roy, the Stargazers, Bill Kerr and Barbara Sumner.

During the series listeners will hear shows at seven places bearing the prefix

"H.M.S.," none of which is a ship. H.M.S. Mercury, for instance, is the appropriate name of the naval communications school, and Daedalus and Hornbill are, of course, naval air stations. Eric Barker was in his element at Daedalus, for he has made humour with a naval setting his speciality. With him in that show are Avril Angers (who has appeared in the BBC's *Navy Mixture*), Alma Cogan (now a *Take It From Here* artist), and the Malcolm Mitchell Trio. Jon Pertwee, who heads the bill for the show at H.M.S. Mercury, is also no stranger to naval audiences. He saw the war through in the R.N.V.R., forming a friendship with Barker there which led to his appearance in a number of Barker's programmes, notably *Merry-Go-Round* and *Waterlogged Spa*.

For the show at H.M.S. Victory, *Variety Ahoy!*'s producer, John Foreman, took along Harry Locke, Benny Hill, Betty Driver and the Francesco Cavez Quartet. The show was not, of course, inside the wooden walls of Nelson's flagship, but

at the Royal Naval barracks at Portsmouth—Pompey to the men—where the old ship is enshrined.

The musical accompaniment to each programme is provided by Harold Smart at the organ, James Moody, piano, Jim Bell, bass, and Jock Cummings with his drums.

Variety Ahoy! is in this issue's programmes for 1YA, 3YA, 4YA and 4YZ. It will start later from other YA and YZ stations.



ERIC BARKER



CAROLE CARR

BBC photos

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