

Late Night Listening

THE traditional time for telling macabre or mysterious stories falls in the late hours of the night. Those who listen are supposed to crawl shivering to bed, not forgetting to take a frightened peep in the clothes closet first. Bodies dead or alive, or even half of each, are to be expected in every shadowy corner.

Stranger perhaps than any of the possible nameless things under the bed is that a fair proportion of the human race likes to spice its nightmares in this way. Broadcasting networks in America and Australia have found many of their most popular crime serials are those broadcast late at night. For thousands of people a late-night session by the radio has taken the place of "that ten minutes with a book in bed."

With the extension of broadcasting hours, New Zealand listeners too are to have a stronger brew of bedtime stories. At 10.30 p.m. on weekdays all ZB stations are to broadcast quarter or half-hour radio thrillers. The first two scheduled are an American series of self-contained detective stories entitled *Box 13* and an Australian serial written by the crime writer A. E. Martin entitled *Dark Destiny*.

Probably best-known for the magnificent torso he exhibits so extensively on the screen, Alan Ladd stars in *Box*

13 as Dan Holliday, a newspaperman with adventure as a sideline. In the classified columns of his paper he advertises: "Adventure wanted: will go anywhere and do anything. Reply Box 13." His first reply takes him to the home of a dowager millionaire, Matilda Courtland, who still lives in the 19th Century, while meddling occasionally in the affairs of the 20th. Holliday's vow to "do anything" is severely tested when the imperious old lady demands his hand in marriage. This, she says, would make him her heir and thwart the "gold-digging" plans of her nephew's fiancée Peggy Wright. The scheme goes awry in several respects, but then, the number of Holliday's box must have some significance...

Dark Destiny takes listeners to a small island on which are marooned six people: a millionaire, a penniless Negro, an Irish lad emigrating to Australia, a professional gambler, a handsome ex-war hero studying for the ministry, and Bull Davis, a former boss who aims to be king of the atoll. The unhealthy competition that develops between these men, especially after an attractive young woman makes her appearance, leads to some dark plotting, death and near-disaster. A. E. Martin, who wrote the



FOUR of the cast of "Dark Destiny," the new ZB late-night serial: From left, R. Ivon Vander, (who plays Blitzheim), Brian Wright (narrator), Harp McGuire (Swindon) and Rodney Taylor (Amos)

story, has been awarded prizes for stories contributed to *Ellery Queen's Mystery Magazine*.

The two late-night features will start from all ZB stations in the week begin-

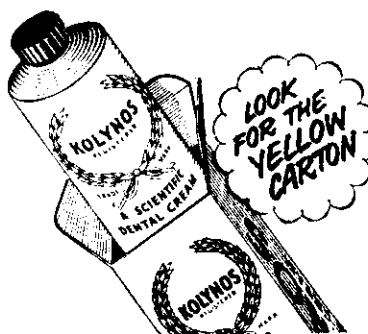
ning April 5. *Box 13* is scheduled for broadcast on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays, and *Dark Destiny* on Tuesdays and Thursdays. The starting time in all cases will be 10.30 p.m.

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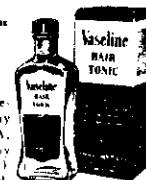
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