

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD

wide repertoire, and was particularly well received here for his playing of Chopin.

CICELY COURTNEIDGE, the famous British comedienne, is such a popular broadcaster that to many of her



BBC photograph

CICELY COURTNEIDGE

listeners, especially those with memories of the good old days, she is just "Cis." Although she was born in the later years of Queen Victoria's reign, "Cis" has the vitality of many women less than half her age. She is a queen of the burlesque type of humour, and her gallery of eccentric portraits is enormous. She can put over a sentimental number, or a patriotic one, with a sureness of touch that brings a tear to eyes which refuse to blink for most other artists. "Cis" has appeared in musical comedy, revue, variety and films, and has broadcast in a great many programmes. She holds a secure place in the affections of the British public not only for her unquestioned skill as an artist but also for



JOE "FINGERS" CARR

N.Z. COMPOSER

Vernon Griffiths

THERE are few aspects of music which have not been touched on by Dr. Vernon Griffiths, Dean of the Faculty of Music at Canterbury College, Christchurch. In addition to his work in schools, churches, amateur music groups and the University, he has taken a keen and active interest in brass band work. He has given a number of public lectures at Canterbury College, with illustrations by the Woolston Band, to emphasise the importance of the brass band movement. His short cantata, *Peace and War*, written for chorus and brass band, has had numerous performances in New Zealand, and is now being published in England. He has also been associated with, and has conducted, the National Orchestra.

To celebrate the Royal Visit to New Zealand he composed a "Festival March," which was included in the organ recital by Dr. V. E. Galway that preceded the Royal Concert by the National Orchestra last January. This work is heard in a programme of Vernon Griffiths's compositions in the series *Music by New Zealand Composers*. In the same programme are several pieces of his church music performed by the Christchurch Cathedral Choir directed by C. Foster Browne (organist). They are excerpts from his *Missa Simplex*, *Missa Innocentium*, and *Evening Service in D Major*. The programme also includes two songs, "Binkie and Me,"

her great zest, which enlivens all those who watch her from across the footlights.

IN the middle of 1950 a record by a mysterious pianist called Joe "Fingers" Carr, playing "Sam's Song" and "Ivory Rag" with a hot ragtime flavour that was reminiscent of the 1920s, became an unexpected hit. Soon everyone

was trying to find out the identity of "Fingers" Carr, who has since established himself solidly with the public. "P.C.A.," writing from Patea, has asked us to publish his photograph and some biographical details. Carr's real name is Lou Busch, and he hails from Louisville, Kentucky. He got his musical start with Clyde McCoy, and then worked with the famous Hal Kemp Band as an arranger and pianist. He later worked with such wonderful old bands as those of Dave Rose, Ray Noble, Vincent Lopez, George Olson and Henry Busse, and was for a time in the music department at Columbia Films. He now lives in Beverley Hills, California, with his wife, the singer Margaret Whiting, who is a daughter of Richard Whiting, one of the all-time masters of American popular song-writing. They have one daughter, Deborah Louise.

Musical purists don't rate "Fingers" very highly, and say that his ragtime is not the real thing but a slick imitation of the genuine old



and "A Boy's Song"; and the part-song, "The Rolling English Road," performed by the Christchurch Harmonic Society.

Vernon Griffiths was born in England in 1894 and educated at Norwich School and Pembroke College, Cambridge. Following service in the First World War he was organist and choirmaster at Pembroke College and later senior music master at Downside School and St. Edmund's School, Canterbury. In 1927 he became Lecturer in Music at Christchurch Training College; later he was director of music at King Edward Technical College, Dunedin; and in 1942 he was appointed a Professor of Music in the University of New Zealand.

style of the honky-tonk days. But with the general public he goes down well. Such albums as *Bar-Room Piano* and *Rough-House Piano* are favourites with listeners, and there is a new LP Album called *Joe "Fingers" Carr and his Ragtime Band*. Under his real name of Lou Busch he has recorded some serious accompaniments for such singers as his wife, Margaret Whiting. He says, incidentally, that his next desire is to form a quartet called "The Tickle-Toe Four."

"EX-SCARBORIAN" writes: "In your issue of September 3, you state that B. C. Hilliam is a Canadian, when, in fact, he was born in Scarborough,

Yorks., and was educated at Scarborough College. He was

taught to play the piano by a gentleman who, last year, celebrated his hundredth birthday, and was paid a visit by the same B. C. Hilliam." Our correspondent is correct. It was, however, in Canada that Hilliam made his name as a variety artist. He and his mother emigrated to Vancouver not long after he left school. After success as an Entertainments Officer in the Canadian Army, Hilliam wrote popular musical comedies for Broadway before returning to England in 1925.

ANSWERS TO CORRESPONDENTS

J. ANDERSON, of Wanganui, asks for information about the organist Ken Griffin, but so far it has proved hard to get. He began his career playing organs in cinemas, then moved on to playing in night clubs. After service in the armed forces during the war he made a few recordings, one of them the hit number "You Can't Be True, Dear." That song established him as a recording artist, and since then he has continued in that field.

D.Y. (Levin): Sir Hubert Pimm's recording of "I Wanna Say Hello" has a straight piano accompaniment, not a roller or player piano. Sir Hubert's real identity appears to be a carefully kept secret, and all we can find out is that the name is the pseudonym of a well-known American society pianist.

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