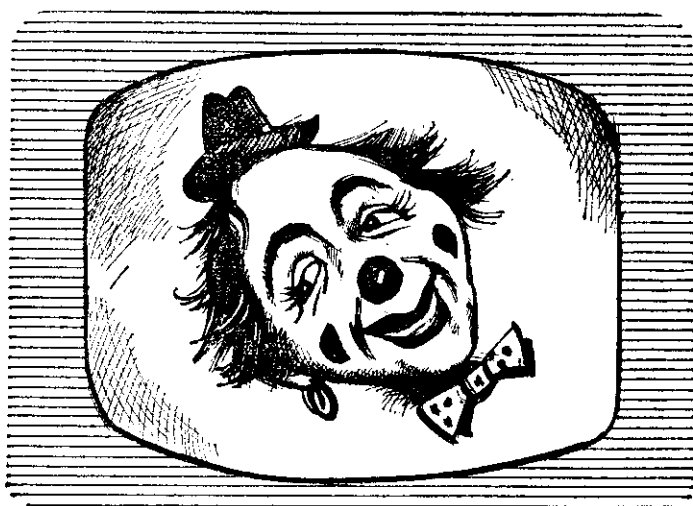


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Radio Review

CAMPAIGN VOICES

I SEEM to remember some discussion in Parliament not long ago about the "affected" voices of radio announcers and the desirability of hearing some "good New Zealand voices" for a change. Of course, any speaker who shapes his sounds with precision is likely to be thought "affected" by a good many in our sloppily-speaking society. But recent election campaign broadcasts almost suggest to me that our politicians have set out to give practical illustrations of the disadvantages of Kiwi intonation. 'St-st-st' and 'What's-his-name, and also You-know-who (the task of filling up the blanks I'd rather leave to you) all have colourless, monotonous voices, disfigured by the coarse vowels, nasality, and careless enunciation of our ordinary speech. Doubtless they all had something valuable to say, but in only one case did I think it was said with clarity and effectiveness. In some American rural areas, candidates speak in braces and shirt-sleeves, to show that they are "just folks." I can't help wondering if the thick spreading accent in recent campaign broadcasts is not a similar device to attract voters who would not dream of voting for any "superior" type who speaks as clearly as a radio announcer.

The Other Playwrights

A POWER failure at 1YC made me give up listening to the NZBS *Much Ado About Nothing* last Sunday, after a determined effort to follow Beatrice and Benedict through a thorny forest of static. So, missing my weekly play, I was left meditating upon why, when the NZBS adapts verse-drama, Shakespeare is invariably selected, and

his contemporaries and successors so completely neglected. Every radio play I hear convinces me that verse-drama is the ideal type for broadcasting. And in the plays of Peele, Greene, Beaumont and Fletcher, Webster, Massinger and Ford is enough magnificent poetry and high drama to make Christopher sound like a young fry of treachery. The busy NZBS play-parers could reduce these works to manageable radio proportions, streamline them, and so introduce to 1YC listeners the riches of the greatest period in British drama. No copyright problems, and the finest script-writers of them all ripe for the plucking. What do they know of Shakespeare who only Shakespeare know?

—J.C.R.

Bright, and Dull

ALTHOUGH *Radio Roadhouse*, heard over the YAs, is wonderfully boosted along by its live military audiences, and although it owes something to *TIFH* and certain American sessions, it remains a worthwhile programme in its own right. To listen is to laugh, more especially because many of the jokes are topical—to wit, the crack about the "New Zealand Slayers," or the phoney weather forecast delivered with that strong Scottish burr. All this is in marked contrast to 3YA's *Hurrah For Us*. This has its brighter moments, like the take-off on *Book Shop*, but in the main it is pedestrian. The Calypsos, one for each session, though possibly composed by a West Indian, don't have the interest of their originals; and the address on the Y.C.G.—Youth Club for Girls, you know—is embarrassing to listen to, probably because you sense that here someone is trying, oh, so desperately, to be funny and yet you can't oblige with the belly laugh.

Scholar-Pilgrim

THE U.S.A., Mecca of a thousand scholarship - sponsored pilgrimages, has her own way of seducing the imag-

(continued on next page)

★ The Week's Music . . . by OWEN JENSEN ★

MUSIC, they say, is universal. It certainly had something of this flavour in the United Nations Day Unesco programme (YA link), for most of the six or so choirs of this "International Concert" went a-roving in their choice of music. While the Berlin Motet Choir stuck firmly to its guns of Bach and German folksong, the London Girls' Choir of Ontario, Canada, reflected on Ye Banks and Braes of Bonnie Scotland, Temple University Choir went to French folksong for their choice, a Brussels group contributed Mozart's "Ave Verum," and an excellent French children's choir sang Palestrina.

The best singing in this Unesco programme, however, was that by the boys of the Devon Blundell's School Motet Club. If you heard them, I think you will agree that their performance of Purcell's "In These Delightful Pleasant Groves" and Weelkes's beautiful "Hark All You Lovely Saints Above," was very fine indeed.

No doubt these were all special choirs, tuned up for the occasion; but, remembering that everyone has a voice, one wishes we could hear more of this sort of singing hereabouts, and one wonders why we don't. I suppose it's because, despite all our singing, we haven't acquired yet a "choral tradition."

Maybe, too, few of us take singing seriously enough.

Talking about this tradition business, national music and all that, you couldn't have got a better idea of how it works out among the English than by listening to *Passing Pageant: Her Majesty's Theatre* (ZB link). In this survey of 250 years of music and drama, we were able to hear a substantial slice of the life of English musical comedy. Whether it was the "seductiveness" of *Magyar Melody*, a trip to the East with Oscar Asche in *Cairo*, or a little sentiment from Florence Desmond in *Funny Side Up*, it all came out pretty well as variations of "I do like to be beside the seaside" cum pierrot troupe frolicking. Mind you, none of this music was any the worse for this, but English as it was, is, or may be, it was as different as chalk from cheese, from Strauss, Offenbach or, for that matter, Richard Rodgers.

Of course, tripping about in music you must use your imagination a bit, as the announcer probably understood when he advised us that "We now turn to music of the East. It is not composed by an Eastern composer, nor has it an Eastern atmosphere." So what have you! No other than "On the Road to Mandalay," sung by Antony Vercoe in a programme of agreeably chosen and brightly played light music by the Harry Botham Salon Orchestra (2YA).