



"LET ME GO LOVER"

(A Dream Story Come True)

This is the Cinderella Story of a girl who made good. It's the kind of story that Hollywood dreams up, but THIS TIME IT IS TRUE! An American Television producer was putting on a coast to coast television show in which the chief character was a disc jockey and was looking for a song that could be put on record and sung by an unknown singer. Our American Artist and Repertoire Chief Mitch Miller was approached and he picked a song that had had mediocre success two years before, "Let Me Go Devil". Mitch renamed it, altered the lyrics and it emerged under the title of "Let Me Go Lover". He then started searching around for a new voice and finally decided on

JOAN WEBER

Joan recorded the number little knowing what she was starting, because after the record had been played in the Television Show all switch boards were jammed and this unknown song and singer swept into the No. 1 position of National Parades in 24 hours. By the following week, this version was No. 1 on all American Hit Parades. Other recording companies quickly recorded the song but... the Joan Weber version still remains the first choice of the public in America, England and Australia. Unfortunately it will not be possible to follow the progress of this number on New Zealand hit parades because the Broadcasting authorities have restricted its use over the air. However we have no doubt at all over the sales potential of this sensational hit. Incidentally the sales of this record in the first five weeks following its release in America totalled ONE MILLION! The pint-sized (5 feet 2 inches), brown-eyed Joan who is just over 18 years old has been over-whelmed by this sudden success and says quite frankly "I never thought that I was that talented". Well... you can be the judge, for "LET ME GO LOVER" is now available at all Philips Record Retailers throughout New Zealand. CATALOGUE No. B21493H.

The reverse side "MARIONETTE"

is a lovely ballad which suits Miss Weber's voice admirably.

Musical support on both sides is by Jimmy Carroll and his Orchestra.

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Novelists Without a Future

IT is salutary for writers to glance at the judgments passed on their predecessors. A history of the English novel, written lately by Walter Allen,* will remind them again of the flimsiness of literary reputation. Posterity, from whom so many of them expect verdicts more discerning than the opinions of their contemporaries, is not really to be trusted. Mr. Allen is severe with writers who in their day were highly regarded. True, he is speaking for himself, and readers do not always listen respectfully to critics. Instead of arguing about Dickens, they read him. And although Somerset Maugham gets only two pages from Mr. Allen, his books may be giving pleasure when James Joyce, who receives more than five pages, is suitably embalmed as an Influence.

In their saner moments, no doubt, writers understand that they can put no faith in posterity; but they need their strong feeling about the future. It is all very well to say that a man who feels the creative impulse will write whether he can be sure of an audience or not. At the beginning he is convinced that his audience is waiting, and will presently discover him; and the dream of success will urge him forward if, in spite of failures, he continues to produce books, and is able to get them published. A time will come, he thinks, when the world will be ready for him.

At present, however, writers cannot rely too much on the distant view. It has become possible for them to wonder, in all seriousness, if posterity will exist. Life has always been hazardous; and the written word, frailer than monuments of stone which now lie

broken in the deserts, has so far persisted through wars and collapsing civilisations. But destruction by the H-bomb threatens to be comprehensive. Although the vainest of authors may not expect his works to survive indefinitely, he likes to think that he will be read in the next century. And who can say what men will be reading in 2055, or indeed if they will be reading at all?

In these bomb-happy days, with new explosions occurring almost every week, and with scientists warning us of genetic consequences if we venture too far with nuclear experiments, it is harder than it used to be to embark on a large creative enterprise. There are other discouragements. Writers are being told, or are saying themselves, that the novel is either dead or dying. Nobody seems to be certain what a novel really is, or should be: Walter Allen, for instance, suggests that it is too often confused with fiction, which apparently is something else. A novel may have a story, but it can exist without one. Still, it cannot have a long existence if nobody will buy it; and the drift of the market suggests that people insist on being entertained. And so the novel, as we have come to know it in recent years, seems to be in no need of assistance from the bomb as it moves towards extinction.

Yet writers have always been pertinacious. If one field is closed to them, they will enter another; and if they cannot be sure about posterity they will speak for the moment. The bomb will not silence them; but it may be enough in their thoughts—as it is in the thoughts of plain people who simply want the world to be safe for their children—to have an inhibiting effect on the imagination. Danger in small doses can be a stimulus: too much of it is paralyzing. These are not times in which we can look for greatness in the art of narrative.

*THE ENGLISH NOVEL, by Walter Allen; Phoenix House Ltd., through A. H. and A. W. Reed Ltd., N.Z. price 22/6.

N.Z. LISTENER, APRIL 22, 1955.