

# POMPEII AND AFTER

HENRY REED, the distinguished poet and broadcaster, made his first broadcast in September, 1945. Since then, he has had about thirty scripts specially commissioned by the BBC, one of them being *Emily Butter*, his skit on modern opera and its presentation. *The Streets of Pompeii*, however

(a feature to be heard from YC stations this week), is the author's favourite, and was awarded the international Radio Italiana Prize in 1953.

The theme of this mosaic in sound is the thoughts and activities of four groups of people wandering through the ruins of Pompeii on a hot summer day. An unusual, but appropriate member of the cast is the lizard, a voluble creature played by Carleton Hobbs. There are two romantic young Italians, Francesca (Gwen Cherrel) and Attilio (Robert Rietty), their idyll contrasting with the sordidness of decadent Pompeii's past; the author seems to suggest that their love could "that slaughterous bloody past atone." Then there is the Silent Old Gentleman (Ronald Simpson) accompanied by an equally silent Old Lady (Susan Richmond). They are English, of course. The two down-to-earth Scotsmen (James McKechnie and Duncan McIntyre) are far from silent. The last group consists of four typical young English tourists. Above and beyond them all sits the Sibyl of Cumae (Flora Robson) as part of a linking pattern, with Marius Goring as The Traveller setting the scene and weaving into a whole this picture of Pompeii, past and present.



BBC photograph  
CARLETON HOBBS

And with that thought we say "Farewell" to old Pompeii and move on to wildest Wales for *The Legend of Waldo Watkyn*, a BBC production to be heard as the second half of a *Double Bill* from 1YA on Friday, September 21. This comedy by Henry Williams tells of Waldo Watkyn who, thirty years before, had taken a poetic talent, a great thirst and a load of debts to London. No one had shed a tear when his brother Joe made it known that the dissolute scribbler was dead. However, the arrival of Professor Pratt, of the University of Mississippi, with his revelation that Watkyn is now mentioned in America in the same breath as Keats and Shelley, could not be more inopportune, for the very shrine the Professor has come to visit, the farm on which Waldo was born, is just about to be sold to a rich industrialist from Australia. The production is by Emyr Humphreys and the cast couldn't be more Welsh.

Many listeners will remember with delight the Alec Guinness comedy film, *The Captain's Paradise*. Next week's Surf Radio Theatre, from the ZBs, 1XH and 2ZA on Saturday, September 22, will star Richard Davies in the Guinness role of the captain whose navigation was based on the toast, "Sweethearts and wives. May they never meet!"

The NZBS play for ZB Sunday Showcase on September 23, is *It's An Ill Wind* by Winston Clewes. Whatever



RICHARD DAVIES

you may have heard from Danny Kaye, this not a play about an oboe. It concerns Bert Taylor (Roy Leywood), who is appointed manager at his factory—which brings all the men out on strike. In the Taylor family, life is no more peaceful, with son against father, daughter against boy friend, and mother trying to keep the peace all round. Though this may sound like vocal all-in-wrestling, we are assured that *It's an Ill Wind* is indeed a comedy.

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